

ST. JOHN'S  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
WOODLAND



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**MAY  
MY PRAYERS  
TO YOU, O GOD,  
BEGIN FROM A PLACE  
OF THANKSGIVING,  
RECOGNIZING  
YOUR COUNTLESS  
GIFTS.**



**ALTAR LIGHT**  
**November 2023**



Hi Church Family,

We are about to enter the Holiday season, full of wonderful times for gathering, re-membering, and celebrating together. We gather around tables. We count our blessings. We share food and goodwill, gifts and grace. Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's are somewhat the modern equivalent of the Hebrew festivals: set times to get together and remember God's goodness, God's presence, and our own presence and agency within creation.

The liturgical season is Advent, defined as a coming into being, a notable arrival of an important event or a person. While it has often been associated with waiting, it is something much more than just sitting passively by. Advent is a period of expectation. It is hopefully preparing and watching for God's presence to be revealed among us.

I remember the advent of each of our children. We eagerly anticipated prepared for their arrival. We couldn't wait to hold them, meet them, and begin learning who they are. We were expecting.

I believe the core of Advent isn't just celebrating that God became incarnate in Jesus 2000 years ago; it is the current expectation that God is still seeking to become incarnate. That God is still present. That God is still seeking to reveal God's self in us, around us, through us.

Advent is so important because it trains our attention. It shifts our vision. We are adept at finding what we look for. If we are looking for evil in the world, we will most certainly find it. Advent is the reverse: it is looking for Christ.

Expecting God to be made manifest in the world around us. It is hoping for and believing in the divine to be present, for Good to be encountered in the least likely places, for Love to show up in every corner of creation.

This Advent, I wish you a period of hopeful expectation, for those who seek will find.

-Pastor Dan

## **Poinsettia Program**

This year we will be remembering our loved ones or honoring someone by placing poinsettias in front of the altar. A \$10 donation is requested to remember or honor a loved one. We will recognize the givers and individuals being remembered or honored in the Sunday bulletin. After the holidays we will give the poinsettia back to the givers.



This year you can purchase a Personal Poinsettia for the season for \$18. Please order by Sunday November 26. These

## **Stewardship Drive**

The stewardship drive will begin the first week of December. Your pledges help us to prepare our budget for the upcoming year.

## Preschool Report

*Submitted by Marilyn Mitchell*



On Friday, November 10th we had an in-service day for our teachers. On Tuesday, November 21st we had our annual Thanksgiving Feast in each classroom. The preschool will be closed November 22 – 24 for Thanksgiving Break.

Our Pie fundraiser was a great success. We sold 239 pies which were delivered on Friday, November 17th . One of our families sold 73 pies.

We are holding a Holiday Raffle from December 1st - 20th. Tickets will be available in the preschool office. Tickets are \$2 each, 3 for \$5, 6 for \$10 or 12 for \$20. On Saturday, December 2nd the Kiwanis Club will be preparing a pancake breakfast for the preschool in the social hall. The cost will be \$8.00 for an adult and \$4.00 each for children under the age of 8. Santa will be there to greet the children and for pictures with Santa.

Our Christmas program is scheduled for December 14th at 9:30 a.m. Our Polar Express Party will be on Thursday, December 21st. We close at noon on December 22nd for our winter break between December 25th – January 1st.

## Fiji Outreach



We will be sending more wardrobe boxes to Fiji which include clothes, shoes, and other items left over from the estate sale this month. In the last 5 years, we have sent 220 wardrobe boxes to three churches in Fiji.

## Gravy for Christmas Baskets

**Annual Christmas Baskets** - every year, the faith communities of WEMM contribute to the creation of Christmas Dinner Baskets with all the ingredients for a traditional Christmas dinner. Once again, we are providing the gravy. (Let no one forget: St. John's is gravy!) We have purchased the packets wholesale to get a discount. If you would like to contribute financially, just mark your offering envelope for Christmas Baskets.



More importantly, if you know of a family that could use a Christmas basket this season, let Pastor Dan know and we will reserve one for you to give to them.

## Volunteer Bell Ringers



The Salvation Army Woodland Service Center is looking for Bell Ringers this season. Volunteers serve during the following dates and times:

**Dates:** November 18 – December 23

**Times:** 12 p.m. – 6 p.m.  
in two-hour shifts

**Locations:** Bel Aire, Raley's,  
Walmart (Main, Gibson)

If you would like to sign up, or if you have questions, please call  
**530.661.0141** to leave a message.

The Salvation Army will return your call.

# You're Invited!

Ho ho ho!  
Contact Marilyn  
Mitchell for tickets!



ST. JOHN'S SOCIAL HALL  
**BREAKFAST  
WITH  
SANTA**

*Enjoy the Breakfast and see Santa!*

SATURDAY  
DECEMBER 02

ST. JOHN'S SOCIAL HALL  
08:30AM - 10:30AM



*Ticket: \$8 per Adult  
\$4 per child*

TICKET INCLUDES: DELICIOUS BREAKFAST OF  
PANCAKES, SAUSAGE, JUICE OF COFFEE AND  
VISIT WITH SANTA.

## Calendar of Community Events



### **Hanging of the Greens**

10 a.m. | December 3 | Sanctuary

### **Church Holiday Dinner with potluck deserts**

6 p.m. | December 6 | Social Hall

### **Community Christian Academy Christmas Program**

10 a.m. | December 10 | Sanctuary

### **St. John's Church Jr. Choir Christmas Program**

10 a.m. | December 17 | Sanctuary

### **Christmas Eve Morning Brunch with carols, Christmas Story and Scripture Readings**

10 a.m. | December 24 | Social Hall

### **Christmas Eve Service**

7:00 p.m. | December 24 | Sanctuary

### **New Years Eve Brunch**

Directly following church Service | December 31 |  
Social Hall

