

# *The Messenger*

First & Wesley  
United Methodist Church  
89 Center Street  
West Haven, Connecticut 06516  
203-933-8795

**December 2023**



## **“How to Enjoy Jesus’ Birthday”**



When each Christmas season came, I would ask the children a question about their Christmas Day in my children’s sermon. “Do you know that Christmas Day is the birthday of a very famous person? Do you know who that person is?” Because they believed that Christmas is a day for children like themselves, they usually couldn’t answer right away. Then, I let them know it is the birthday of Jesus Christ. Not only children, but many adults also don’t recognize it well or don’t really care that much about it. It shows in our current Christmas culture its’ religious meaning is no longer necessary to celebrate this season. We only enjoy the season of Christmas for ourselves.

However, what if we restore this day as the birthday of Jesus Christ? This is Jesus’ birthday. What do we have to do? The birthday party cannot be left out. Just remember how you prepare a birthday party for someone. We prepare food, decorations, and gifts. Then we invite our family, friends, and neighbors. And finally, we celebrate the birthday and enjoy all together with good food, gifts, and a happy atmosphere. I believe this is what should happen in the season of Christmas as Jesus’ birthday. Christmas is a day that we invite our family, friends, and neighbors and share our love and grace with them together. So, as Jesus already did in his ministry, it is a day that we embrace the people not only whom we know, but also all who are marginalized in the world. Christmas is not a day for ourselves, but a day for others. It is because Jesus came into the world not for himself, but for us.

In this Christmas season, I hope we all stay in the love and grace of God with our family, friends, neighbors, and also people who need God’s help and support from their particular situations. I also hope God’s love, grace, and joy overflow among God’s people who are invited to your Christmas birthday party. Amen.

Pastor Jinha Choi  
First & Wesley United Methodist Church



# Lectionary Readings for December



## December 3, 2023

- [Isaiah 64:1-9](#) • [Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19](#) •
- [1 Corinthians 1:3-9](#) • [Mark 13:24-37](#)

## December 10, 2023

- [Isaiah 40:1-11](#) • [Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13](#) •
- [2 Peter 3:8-15a](#) • [Mark 1:1-8](#)

## December 17, 2023

- [Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11](#) • [Psalm 126](#) or [Luke 1:46b-55](#) •
- [1 Thessalonians 5:16-24](#) • [John 1:6-8, 19-28](#)

## December 24, 2023

- [2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16](#) • [Luke 1:46b-55](#) or [Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26](#) •
- [Romans 16:25-27](#) • [Luke 1:26-38](#)

## December 31, 2023

- [Isaiah 61:10-62:3](#) • [Psalm 148](#) •
- [Galatians 4:4-7](#) • [Luke 2:22-40](#)

## Healing Prayer Circle

When: Tuesday, December 5th  
When: 7:00pm - 8:00pm  
Where: Sanctuary

Pastor Cindy Dodd will lead a time of healing prayer, with music and scripture, for you or a loved one. We will meet on the 1st Tuesday of each month. Bring your prayer concerns to God's altar, and those who gather will pray for you and those you are concerned about. You do not need to have a prayer concern to attend. We will also lift up the prayer concerns from our congregation. All are welcome for this time of intercessory prayer.



December

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					<b>1</b> 6p Leadership Meeting (Zoom)	<b>2</b> 9:30a - 10 Craft Corner 10:30 Install Nativity
<b>3 1<sup>st</sup> Advent</b> 11:00a Family Worship Service, Communion, Birthday/Anniversary celebration and Sunday School (begins after Children's Sermon) Deadline for Gift Card orders	<b>4</b> 7p Adult Monday school	<b>5</b> 7p Healing Prayer Service in sanctuary	<b>6</b> No adult Group Study	<b>7</b> 10a-12p "K" Café 5p Youth Choir 6p Bell Choir 7p Adult Choir	<b>8</b>	<b>9a -11a</b> Free Christmas Breakfast with Santa
<b>10 2<sup>nd</sup> Advent</b> 11:00a Family Worship Service & Sunday School (begins after Children's Sermon) 12:15 p Church Council Gift card orders delivered Bless Mission Gift Cards	<b>11</b> 7p Adult Monday school  7p Cooperative Parish Council	<b>12</b> 7p Finance	<b>13</b> 7p Adult Group Study	<b>14</b> 10a-12p "K" Café  5p Youth Choir 6p Bell Choir 7p Adult Choir	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b> 5p Agape Meal (Free) All Welcome
<b>17 3<sup>rd</sup> Advent</b> 11:00a Family Worship Service & Sunday School (begins after Children's Sermon)	<b>18</b> 7p Adult Monday school	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> 7p Adult Group Study  <i>*Articles Due for the January Messenger</i>	<b>21</b> 5p Youth Choir 6p Bell Choir 7p Adult Choir	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>24 Christmas Eve</b> 11:00a Family Worship Service & Sunday School (begins after Children's Sermon) 7p Candle Lighting Service	<b>25 Christmas</b> 6:30a Christmas Morning Service	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b> 10a-12p "K" Café	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>31 New Year's Eve</b>						

For more information go to the church website at [www.firstwesleyumc.org](http://www.firstwesleyumc.org)

**MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR!**

## FROM THE LAYLEADER

I put the poem below which was written by Valerie Kingsley in the newsletter last year and because I love it so. It is a reminder for me to stay focused on the reason we do things!

*If you look for me at Christmas,  
You won't need a special star.  
I'm no longer just in Bethlehem,  
I'm right there where you are.*

*You may not be aware of me  
Amid the celebrations.  
You'll have to look beyond the stores  
And all the decorations.*

*But if you take a moment  
From your list of things to do  
And listen to your heart, you'll find  
I'm waiting there for you.*

*You're the one I want to be with,  
You're the reason that I came,  
And you'll find me in the stillness  
As I'm whispering your name.*

*Love,  
Jesus*

### **“Breakfast With Santa”**

On December 9<sup>th</sup> from 9am-11am, we will have a FREE continental breakfast, craft projects for children, FREE hats, and gloves (many hand knitted) for children (several sizes available) and of course, Santa. If you can help out, please contact Jen Werle at 203-430-7116. Come and enjoy the fun!

### **AV**

Thank you to everyone who is helping with operating sound, the camera, and creating. We could still use a couple more people to learn these skills so that we have a solid base who knows how to operate camera, sound, and put PowerPoints together. Please let Christine Chan, Jian Chan or Helen Smith know if would be willing to share your time and talents.

Thank you to all who donated candy for our Halloween trick-or-treaters. We had several bags left over so we donated the remaining candy to Ronald McDonald House. We received a thank you note from them thanking us for donating our unused Halloween Candy to them. They were VERY appreciative!

## BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday night, 7pm – ONLINE

Schedule for December is:

December 6 – NO Bible Study

**December 13<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> – Advent Bible study**

December 27<sup>th</sup> & January 3<sup>rd</sup> – NO Bible Study

Starting on January 10<sup>th</sup>, we will be doing a Bible Study on the 1<sup>st</sup> season of “The Chosen”.

The format for this is to watch the episode for the Wednesday night discussion BEFORE Wednesday night. The episodes are free on several streaming services and on YouTube.com. Also, at <https://watch.thechosen.tv/#carousels>

If you do not have access to any of the above, we will be streaming it live from our church Sanctuary every Sunday, starting January 7<sup>th</sup>, at 12:30pm. This is the Zoom link (same as for our worship service) <https://zoom.us/j/147691027>

## *Holiday Gift Card Fundraiser*

This gift card fundraiser is going to provide a way for you to contribute to First & Wesley while spending what you normally spend on gift cards at Christmas. The way it works is very similar to the ShopRite gift card fundraiser we already do (if you would like to make use of this ongoing gift card fund raiser, please contact Dave or Helen Smith). You purchase the gift card and the church receives a percentage of the face value of what you bought.

### HOW TO ORDER:

1. You fill an order form (in this newsletter) to order the gift cards in advance. You order and pay for the gift cards ahead of time
2. On the order forms, there are 39 different retailers or restaurant choices:  
(Amazon.com, Apple.com, Buffalo Wild Wings, Barnes & Noble, Best Buy, Boscov's, Bob Evans, Carter's, Chili's, CineMark Theaters, Cracker Barrel, CVS, Dick's Sporting Goods, Dunkin Donuts, Game Stop, Home Depot, iTunes, Kohl's, Lowe's, Mobil, Olive Garden, On the Border, Outback Steakhouse, Panera Bread, Pet Smart, Shell, Staples, Starbucks, Subway, Taco Bell, Target, Texas Roadhouse, TGI Friday's, Walgreen's, Walmart).
3. On the order form is the % amount of the face value that the church will receive.
4. **Orders need to be submitted by December 3rd. (Order form is on next page)**
5. Ordered gift cards would be available on December 10<sup>th</sup>.

*Thank You For Supporting The Mission And Ministry Of FWUMC!*

## GIFT CARD FUNDRAISER

We are providing First & Wesley members and friends of the church an opportunity to buy gift cards for Christmas gifts and at the same time support the church financially. Simply fill out the form below & send form to First & Wesley Methodist Church, 89 Center Street, West Haven, CT 06516 or give to Helen Smith  
**ALL ORDERS need to be received by 12-3-2023**

RAISERIGHT  
ORDER FORM



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail (for confirmation) \_\_\_\_\_

# cards ordered \_\_\_\_\_

Amount enclosed \_\_\_\_\_

**Submit the order form to the church or Helen Smith by December 3rd**

**Email order: [fundraiser@firstwesleyumc.org](mailto:fundraiser@firstwesleyumc.org)**

Ordered gift cards will be available for pickup starting on Sun. 12/10(after church)

**All checks make payable to FWUMC - please put "gift card fundraiser" in memo line**

#	Store/Business	Amount	% earned	Subtotal		#	Restaurant/Food	Amount	% earned	Subtotal
	Amazon.com	\$25	1.70%				Bob Evans	\$25	10.00%	
	Amazon.com	\$100	1.70%				Buffalo Wild Wings	\$10	8.00%	
	Apple Store,Apple.com	\$25	5.00%				Buffalo Wild Wings	\$25	8.00%	
	Barnes & Noble	\$10	8.00%				Buffalo Wild Wings	\$50	8.00%	
	Barnes & Noble	\$25	8.00%				Chili's	\$25	11.00%	
	Best Buy	\$25	4.00%				Chili's	\$50	11.00%	
	Best Buy	\$100	4.00%				Cracker Barrel	\$25	8.00%	
	Bosco's	\$25	8.00%				Dave & Buster's	\$25	13.00%	
	Carter's	\$25	10.00%				Dunkin Donuts	\$10	3.50%	
	CVS	\$25	6.00%				Dunkin Donuts	\$25	3.50%	
	CineMark Theaters	\$25	4.00%				Olive Garden	\$25	8.00%	
	Dick's Sporting Goods	\$25	8.00%				Olive Garden	\$100	8.00%	
	Dick's Sporting Goods	\$100	8.00%				On the Border	\$25	11.00%	
	Game Stop	\$25	5.00%				On the Border	\$50	11.00%	
	Home Depot	\$25	4.00%				Outback Steakhouse	\$25	10.00%	
	Home Depot	\$100	4.00%				Outback Steakhouse	\$50	10.00%	
	iTunes	\$25	5.00%				Panera Bread	\$25	8.00%	
	Kohl's	\$25	4.00%				Panera Bread	\$50	8.00%	
	Lowe's	\$25	4.00%				Starbucks	\$10	4.50%	
	Lowe's	\$100	4.00%				Starbucks	\$25	4.50%	
	Mobil	\$50	1.50%				Subway	\$10	4.50%	
	Pet Smart	\$25	5.00%				Subway	\$50	4.50%	
	Shell	\$25	1.50%				Taco Bell	\$10	5.00%	
	Shell	\$50	1.50%				Taco Bell	\$25	5.00%	
	Staples	\$25	5.00%				Texas Roadhouse	\$25	8.00%	
	Target	\$25	2.50%				TGI Friday's	\$25	9.00%	
	Target	\$50	2.50%				Wendy's	\$25	6.00%	
	Walgreen's	\$25	5.00%							
	Walmart	\$25	2.50%							
	Walmart	\$50	2.50%							

FREE COMMUNITY  
BREAKFAST  
WITH  
**SANTA**



Enjoy the Continental Breakfast, create a craft, FREE mittens & hats, and photos with Santa (bring your camera!)

SATURDAY  
DECEMBER 9TH  
9-11 AM



First & Wesley United Methodist Church  
89 Center Street, West Haven  
Handicap accessible

[FIRSTWESLEYUMC.ORG](http://FIRSTWESLEYUMC.ORG)



## Fellowship

Every Thursday – Koinonia Café, 10am-12pm  
(in-person only)

Please note: If you would like to help Myrna Clinton with this, please contact her.  
Every 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of each month – 5pm

FREE Agape meal followed by games.



### Prayer Shawl Ministry First and Wesley United Methodist

There will be NO meeting in the Month of December.

Our meetings will resume in January 2024

Our Prayer shawls are in the Church Office if someone needs one. Be sure to sign your name and the person it will go to. You can also contact Edith Mulligan – (203) 821-7533 or Linda Kopec – (203) 804-2522

### 2023 Christmas Altar Flowers Order Your Poinsettias

I (We) wish to order \_\_\_\_\_ Poinsettia(s) Plant(s) for the Altar at a suggested donation of \$10.00 each. Please make check out to First & Wesley United Methodist Church and write “flower fund” in the memo section on the check.

PLEASE PRINT

In Memory of: \_\_\_\_\_ and/or

In Honor of: \_\_\_\_\_

Given by: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone # \_\_\_\_\_

Taking Plant(s) home: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ Plant(s) give to Shut-in: \_\_\_\_\_

Orders are to be received by **Sunday, December 10<sup>th</sup>**. Please leave the completed form in the offering plate or mail to the church.



## December Birthdays

- 3 - Diane Soars
- 5 - Judy Juzwiakowski
- 6 - Julia Werle
- 8 - Hannah Cascio  
Shirley Henrie
- 9 - Christine McGregor
- 10 - Bill Hunt  
Bob Clinton  
Hyacinth Young
- 11 - Lisa Ammon  
Tom Mark  
Jennifer Skipper
- 12 - Katelyn Hickman
- 17 - Michele Sablone
- 18 - Matt Heafy
- 20 - Jayden Abekah
- 21 - Mark Cascio  
Isaiah Singleton
- 29 - Raymond Geissler
- 30 - Florence Dzikas  
Stephanie Wilson
- 31 - Gina Quinn

## December Anniversaries

- 3 - Peggy and Jim Jerrell
- 11 - Helen and Dave Smith
- 16 - Becky and Tom Baker
- 27 - Linda and Dennis Kopec

**If you do not see your birthday or anniversary listed, please let the church office know so we can update our list and make sure you are not missed.**

*If you would like to include someone for birthdays or anniversaries, please see below. Example- name change, address change, marriage, birth, death, etc. Email: [firstwesleyumc@gmail.com](mailto:firstwesleyumc@gmail.com) or send to church office.*

## Being Alone in the Church

For those of you who need to go into the church, do not forget to sign in each time you enter the church and if you are going to be alone in the church, call one of the numbers below. Thank you!

### 2023 contact numbers

Helen Smith	203-444-2362	Layleader
Jim Stuhlman	203-435-1790	Trustee Chair
Peggy Jerrell	203-641-0929	Church Council Chair

## West Haven Elks Soup Kitchen

We invite our veterans, seniors, and anyone in need of a free hot meal, to join us the

1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of every month from  
5:30 pm – 6:30 pm

Open to West Haven residents  
265 Main Street



Please join us to learn about God's love. Children will attend Sunday school during part of the service. They will go to their classrooms with their Sunday School teachers following the Children's Moment. We listen to stories, do art projects, sing songs, and spend time together.

- You may register for Sunday School in person or online  
<https://www.firstwesleyumc.org/sunday-school-registration>

## The Craft Corner



The Craft Corner Group meets to make cards once a month on Saturday mornings. We have some Get Well and Thinking of You cards to send to people. Contact Gail Bartozzi if you would like a card sent to someone or have questions about the group. You can call the church office or e-mail Gail at [gbartozzi@yahoo.com](mailto:gbartozzi@yahoo.com)



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[www.firstwesleyumc.org](http://www.firstwesleyumc.org)

Email: [firstwesleyumc@gmail.com](mailto:firstwesleyumc@gmail.com)

Facebook Page at [www.facebook.com/firstwesleyumc](https://www.facebook.com/firstwesleyumc).

Pastor Jinha Choi

“Sunday Worship Time: 11:00am”

The December Newsletter



# STRONGER TOGETHER

“We can do all things  
through Christ who strengthens us.”  
(Philippians 4:13)

IN-PERSON & ONLINE SUNDAY WORSHIP @ 11:00 AM

**COME JOIN OUR CHURCH FAMILY!**