

From the Pastor...

“For nothing will be impossible with God.” Luke 1: 37

These are the words spoken by the angel Gabriel to Mary when he informed her that she was to give birth to the Messiah. A poor peasant girl, Mary wondered how all this could possibly happen to someone as unimportant as she was. The words above are how the angel of God answered her. These words, so simple and yet so profound, are at the heart of not only the Christmas story, but indeed the entire life and mission of the church. One young woman said yes to God when she could have said no, when it made more sense to say no. But she said yes, and her yes changed the world.

Mary took to heart the words of the angel – nothing will be impossible with God. I think we should too. Now I am not saying we should act like this is some pie in the sky simplistic answer to every problem that comes our way personally or in the church. Far from it. What these words really mean for us is that God needs us to believe to the core of who we are that we can be the people God is counting on us to be. We can keep on trying to be the people of God and everything that means, even when it seems like we can't possibly respond to all the needs not only of this church, but also of the world outside our doors. We do have real concerns as individuals and as members of this church. We worry about money. We worry about having enough volunteers to tackle all the work needed to carry on our wonderful ministries in the building and in our community. We worry about the building itself. We worry. And it is in response to those worries that the angel's words most ring true – nothing will be impossible with God. In other words, we move forward, one step at a time, one day at a time, one task at a time, one worry at a time, knowing as we do that nothing will be impossible with God. Nothing *is* impossible with God.

We know this already. I know we do. I see it every week as people come to worship ready to listen and respond, loving the fellowship and kinship they find here. I hear it in your questions of concern about someone you haven't seen in a while or someone lifted up in the prayer concerns. I experience it in all the board and committee meetings where the work of the church, the mission of the church, takes on flesh and bone as we move forward together to address the reality of our daily life as a community of God's faithful followers here in this place. Your commitment to this church and your confidence that somehow,

someway, nothing will be impossible with God shines through everything you do. It has been especially evident to me in the Get Connected gatherings and your response to the annual Stewardship drive. For all of you who have already responded, my deepest thanks. For those of you still considering how you will participate, we look forward to your response soon.

So as we enter into this most joyous Advent season, I invite you to dare to act as though you really believe that for God nothing will be impossible. Dream big dreams about yourself, your family and our church and then work to make them into reality. Now that's a real Christmas gift – the perfect kind to leave at the manger this Christmas season. Wouldn't that be impossibly amazing?

Blessings,

Pastor Ruth

*Please pray for the following members
and friends of our church:*

Elizabeth Ball	Ann Brown	Jimmy
Charlie Wright	Barbara	Barbara Simmons
Madelyn Stratton	Sandi Davis	Fred
Catherine	Jeff	Jim
Millie Silver	Debbie	Shirley Harrington
Beverly and Family	Carole Lennon	Lisa
Vince Amkhamavong, U.S. Marines		John Dillon
Susan & Devin	Sheryl	David Jones
Doris		

If you would like anyone added or taken off this list for the next newsletter, please call the office or let one of our deacons know. Thank you.

Mission Memos

The **Christmas Fund Offering** (formerly Veterans of the Cross) will be received on **Sunday, December 23rd**. This Fund which is administered by the UCC Pension Board, provides a financial safety net to individuals and families in need through gift checks to low-income retired clergy and their widowed spouses; emergency assistance to clergy in financial need; and funding for pension and health supplementation plans for low income retired clergy and lay employees. An envelope was enclosed in last month's newsletter, but more are located at the back of the sanctuary.

We hope to encourage and increase our monthly donations to the **Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center** by providing you monthly with a specific foodstuff that is especially needed by the community. For the month of December, if you are shopping and can purchase an extra or two and/or see a great sale, please consider adding to your grocery cart: **baked beans, tuna in oil, Spam, Chef Boy-R-Dee, instant mashed potatoes, and canned fruit: mixed fruit, peaches, pears and pineapple.** Of course, any and all donations are so needed. There are red buckets in Fellowship Hall and in the upper parking lot sanctuary foyer. *Every second Sunday*, the Mission Committee will place an in-worship collection basket on the chancel (near the altar), to help remind us to make food donations part of our monthly or weekly offering. Thank you again for all you do for others in need. Remember the words from Micah 6:8: "...*what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?*"

REMINDER: The **WARM CENTER meal** for Sunday, **December 9th**, is going to be the responsibility of the *Mission Committee*.

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Happy Birthday to:

Rachel Allen – 3
Karen Meara – 7
Bob Sicilian – 9
Mark Dessaulles - 20
Devin Moynihan – 21
Trina Torres – 29

Happy Anniversary to:

Brian & Barbara Johnson – 12-1-79

Please add in your special days by calling the church office!

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Diaconate Schedule

<u>Date</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Telephone</u>
Dec 2	Brenda Cornell	(860) 599-3580
Dec 9	Melissa Stratton	(401) 596-4740
Dec 16	Gary Davis	(860) 599-4279
Dec 23	Pam del Pozo-Waldron	(860) 495-5389
Dec 30	Claire Calabretta	(860) 536-3625

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The Alcoholics Anonymous group that meets here on Thursday evenings will be having an **All Night event** from December 31st to January 1st.

REMEMBER...

The Christmas Season is upon us and there will be a number of ways for you to be involved in our many, and varied, worship experiences planned for this joyful season. Here are some of them:

- Five family groups are needed, one each week plus Christmas Eve to light the Advent wreath and share in a reading.
- Musicians of all sorts needed for our festive worship on Christmas Eve as well as on December 30th for our “Birthday Party for Jesus” worship celebration.
- We are looking for 3-4 people who would like to participate in offering the morning message on Sunday, January 13. You will be asked to speak for 3-4 minutes on the topic “My New Year’s Prayer for Our Church.”

One or more of these sound interesting? Good! Please be in touch with Pastor Ruth! Thanks!

- ***NEW! Thursday morning Prayer Workshop during Advent!*** You are invited to join with Pastor Ruth for three Thursday morning workshops on prayer in the “Praying Our Way to Christmas” series. We will be gathering at 11:00 am on the 6th, 13th, and 20th to learn about different forms of prayer in the first half hour and then to put those forms to use praying for each other and members of our church in the second half hour. Types of prayer we will be exploring include prayer journaling, praying with beads (the Protestant rosary) and lectio divina (praying with scripture). We will conclude our time together with a bag lunch. For more information, please speak with Pastor Ruth anytime.
- ***Still a few slots for the Women’s Day Retreat at the Abbey of Regina Laudis on Saturday, December 7.*** Sign-up sheet in Fellowship Hall or speak with Pastor Ruth for more information. Space is limited!

LIFE’S JOURNEYS

*Received into the arms of God’s mercy and eternal rest:
Pat Donovan*

For your convenience an envelope is enclosed in this month’s newsletter for those who wish to make a special offering to our church.

THANK YOU ...

*... to everyone who contributed to **Neighbors in Need**. We collected \$185.00.*

*... to everyone who donated items, full shoeboxes, or shipping for **Operation Christmas Child**.*

Souper Bowl Supper & Swing Music

Saturday, February 2nd

Open to the public.

*Mark your calendar and reserve February 2nd for another great evening. Once again, Jay Macko has some talented friends who are in a band called **Thames River Big Band** and they will be entertaining us with **swing music** for your listening and dancing pleasure!*

*Enjoy an endless bowl of homemade soups, delicious desserts, & wonderful live music. Start filling your bowl at **6:00 pm** and be ready for music following dinner (around 6:30 pm)*

Cost: \$10.00 – for an endless bowl of soup

**price includes our delicious homemade desserts and beverage*

When the sign-up sheet is available, please sign up to make soup and/or dessert, and to set up or clean up.

Our Advent and Christmastide

Worship Schedule

Sunday, December 2 – First Sunday of Advent

Family Worship with Communion –
“Lions, Bears and Cows – Oh My!”

Thursday, December 6

11:00 am – *“Praying Our Way to Christmas”*
Session 1 (followed by Bag Lunch)

Saturday, December 8

9:30 am – 7:30 pm – *“A Visit to Bethlehem – CT that is”*
Women’s Day Retreat to the Abbey of Regina
Laudis: Car pool leaving from UCCW at 9:30 am and
returning at approximately 7:30 pm.

Sunday, December 9 – Second Sunday of Advent

Worship and Sunday School – *“Follow the Leader”*

Thursday, December 13

11:00 am – *“Praying Our Way to Christmas”*
Session 2 (followed by Bag Lunch)

Sunday, December 16 – Third Sunday of Advent

Worship and Sunday School – *“The Servant of the Lord”*

Thursday, December 20

11:00 am – *“Praying Our Way to Christmas”*
Session 3 (followed by Bag Lunch)
6:30 pm – Blue Christmas Service

Sunday, December 23 – Fourth Sunday of Advent

Christmas Sunday featuring the Sunday School
Christmas Pageant, *“Jesus Our Brother”* and the Blessing of
the Crèches. Please bring one piece of your crèche from
home as we celebrate the nativity story of Jesus. We will
“build” a crèche and bless all the pieces at the conclusion of
the pageant.

Monday, December 24

7:00 pm Christmas Eve Service of Carols, Candles and
Communion – *Bring your bells!*

Sunday, December 30

Family Worship Sunday with a *“Birthday Party for Jesus”*

Sunday, January 6

Family Worship Service Epiphany Celebration with
Communion

Sunday, January 13

Laity Sunday – *“My New Year’s Prayer for Our Church”*