

December 10, 2020

Dear Friends in Christ,

"God is working his purpose out, as year succeeds to year, God is working his purpose out, and the time is drawing near; nearer and nearer draws the time, the time that shall surely be, when the earth shall be filled with the glory of God as the waters cover the sea."

These are the words of the beautiful and hopeful Advent hymn. It is made especially beautiful because the scripture reference comes from the little known Old Testament prophet, Habakkuk. Habakkuk is written as a prayer-filled conversation between the prophet and God. Habakkuk isn't afraid to ask God serious questions about events he didn't understand. He complained that God hadn't acted quickly enough to stop cruelty and injustice in Judah and punishment would come from the mighty Babylonians.

As we enter into these winter months still with the coronavirus surrounding us as well as other issues and conditions that rock our world, we, too, wonder "why?" and "how long?" But in this season of Advent, we hold onto the hope, just as Habakkuk did, that God is still in charge, still the Almighty One, and is with and often in spite of us, working God's purpose out. Through the coming of Jesus, the Light of God is drawing nearer and nearer. Even as we pray, Come, Lord Jesus, Jesus has come long ago in the form of an innocent human who grew as the Messiah, Savior of the world. His work, by the power of the Holy Spirit, is what is transforming our world.

Yet we wait for Jesus to come again so that God's good purpose will completely overcome the darkness. This is why we can have hope and find peace even in this dark season. So let us come to the God who gives light and worship. I hope you will join the service at 10:00 Sunday morning either on your electronic device or by phone: <u>https://zoom.us/j/127591875</u> Meeting ID: 127 591 875 or by phone: 301-715-8592 or 253-215-8782. Sunday School for our children will be at the same Zoom link but will begin at 11:30.

Please note all of the announcements that are at the end of the service. Even as we are doing church differently, our faithfulness remains the same. We can thank God that the Spirit inspires us to keep hope and joy in our hearts as we get creative in living out our discipleship.

Yours in Christ's service.

Pastor Su



Sunday Worship December 13, 2020 Advent 3 Draw near to God for God is waiting for you.

# LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH AND CALL TO WORSHIP

Our lists are long, even in this strange mess where we live these days. And we want to do it right, we want to be safe, but we want to be able to enjoy the season.

We've got work to do to put right what has gone wrong, to heal what is broken, to mend the relationships, and to prepare for the company that will come.

The prophet Isaiah reminded us that there is work to be done. "Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God."

When God comes in, then healing is to be found, but we need to make the way; we need to open the door into our lives. So, we light these candles as a sign of peace that the God we worship is not far from us and that we can clear the way for that God to come and dwell with us.

We light these candles as a symbol of peace and with faith that company is coming. O Come, O Come Emmanuel. (Light three candles)

# **OPENING PRAYER**

O God, you are a God of Life to us. You are our source of compassion as we struggle for whole relationships in our home, our communities, our nation, and our world. We recognize your presence among us in our life and worship, and ask your gentle Spirit to constantly open our hearts to the ways of justice and peace. You alone are holy, revealing to us true justice and peace. We pray for the power to be gentle, the strength to be forgiving, the patience to be understanding, and the endurance to accept the consequences of holding to what we believe to be right. Be with us as we strive to be peacemakers. Amen.

#### HYMN All Hail to God's Anointed

1 Hail to God's anointed, great David's greater Son! Hail, in time appointed, his reign on earth begun! He comes to break oppression, to set the captive free, to take away transgression and rule in equity.

2 He comes with succor speedy to those who suffer wrong, to help the poor and needy and bid the weak be strong; to give them songs for sighing, their darkness turn to light, whose souls, condemned and dying, are precious in his sight.

3 He shall come down like showers upon the fruitful earth; love, joy, and hope, like flowers, spring in his path to birth. Before him on the mountains shall peace, the herald, go, and righteousness in fountains from hill to valley flow.

4 Kings shall bow before him and gold and incense bring. All nations shall dore him, his praise all people sing. For he shall have dominion o'er river, sea and shore; far as the eagle's pinion or dove's light wing can soar.

5 O'er every foe victorious he on his throne shall rest, from age to age more glorious, all-blessing and all-blest. The tide of time shall never his covenant remove; his name shall stand forever, his name to us is Love.

# CALL TO CONFESSION

When Jesus was born, he came into a world filled with poverty, violence, and fear. He lived among people who

did not live perfectly, who often messed up. Jesus was no stranger to sin. Their sins did not come as a surprise to him. Similarly, we sin. We cause animosity and hatred in the world. We sow seeds of discontent. Yet, Christ's love and mercy should come as no surprise to us. Therefore, let us confess before God and one another.

#### PRAYER OF BROKENNESS AND CONFESSION

God, you share with us words of hope and Good News. But sometimes we are unable to hear them because the source is too familiar. You call us to share the Good News with those around us. But sometimes we are unable to share, because the people we share with know us too well. You encourage us to send messengers to other places where your message can be better heard. But we can be jealous, wanting the Good News to be for us and not them.

# In the multitude of ways we have subverted your message of freedom and healing keeping the year of Jubilee from happening. Yet, you still call upon us with your grace and lead us back.

#### WORDS OF BLESSING AND ASSURANCE

This is the time of God's favor, God's grace continues to proclaim release to the captives, sight to the blind, Good News to the poor, and freedom to the oppressed. We live as loved, forgiven, and free people through the grace of God! Embrace God's ever-expanding love, and know that you are forgiven, having new life in Christ. Remember: Jesus died for you. Jesus forgives you. Jesus loves you. Jesus is good to you. Amen.

#### FIRST SCRIPTURE LESSON Isaiah 61:1-11

The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; <sup>2</sup> to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; <sup>3</sup> to provide for those who mourn in Zion— to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, to display his glory. <sup>4</sup> They shall build up the ancient ruins, they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations.

<sup>5</sup> Strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, foreigners shall till your land and dress your vines;
<sup>6</sup> but you shall be called priests of the LORD, you shall be named ministers of our God;
you shall enjoy the wealth of the nations, and in their riches you shall glory.
<sup>7</sup> Because their shame was double, and dishonor was proclaimed as their lot,
therefore they shall possess a double portion; everlasting joy shall be theirs.

#### <sup>8</sup> For I the LORD love justice, I hate robbery and wrongdoing;

I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.

<sup>9</sup> Their descendants shall be known among the nations, and their offspring among the peoples;

all who see them shall acknowledge that they are a people whom the LORD has blessed.

<sup>10</sup> I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my whole being shall exult in my God;

for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,

as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

<sup>11</sup> For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up,

so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations.

# HYMN Of the Father's Love Begotten

1 Of the Father's love begotten, ere the worlds began to be, he is Alpha and Omega; he the source, the ending he, of the things that are, that have been, and that future years shall see, evermore and evermore!

2 He is found in human fashion, death and sorrow here to know that the race of Adam's children doomed by law to endless woe may not henceforth die and perish in the dreadful gulf below evermore and evermore.

3 O ye heights of heaven, adore him. Angel hosts, his praises sing. Powers, dominions, bow before him, and extol our God and King. Let no tongue on earth be silent; every voice in concert sing, evermore and evermore!

4 Christ, to thee with God the Father, and, O Holy Ghost, to thee, hymn and chant and high thanksgiving and unwearied praises be. Honor, glory, and dominion, and eternal victory, evermore and evermore!

# SECOND SCRIPTURE LESSON John 1:6-28

<sup>6</sup> There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. <sup>7</sup> He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. <sup>8</sup> He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. <sup>9</sup> The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

<sup>10</sup> He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. <sup>11</sup> He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. <sup>12</sup> But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, <sup>13</sup> who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

<sup>14</sup> And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. <sup>15</sup> (John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me."") <sup>16</sup> From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. <sup>17</sup> The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. <sup>18</sup> No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

<sup>19</sup> This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" <sup>20</sup> He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, "I am not the Messiah." <sup>21</sup> And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No." <sup>22</sup> Then they said to him, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?"

<sup>23</sup> He said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,'" as the prophet Isaiah said.

<sup>24</sup> Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. <sup>25</sup> They asked him, "Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?" <sup>26</sup> John answered them, "I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, <sup>27</sup> the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal." <sup>28</sup> This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

#### SERMON "Being a Lamp: Witnessing to the Light"

When I was a child, I was obsessed with mystery novels and TV shows. I devoured Nancy Drew and Hardy Boys mystery novels. I would watch History Detective on PBS, Scooby Doo, and any other mystery show that I could get my hands on. Still to this day, I love watching TV shows like Monk or House. If you were to ask me as a child what I found fascinating about the mystery genre, I am not sure whether I would have been able to tell you. Yet, looking back, there are a number of reasons why I enjoyed and still enjoy mystery. For one, I was a curious child, always driven by knowledge of the world. I would incessantly read encyclopedias and big hardback books with pictures which illustrated how things work. I would read books about space and the solar system, always on the edge of my seat, ready to be amazed by another recently discovered moon of Saturn. I am always renewed with hope when I see a child that has a similar sense of wonder as I had as a boy. It is the same joy and sense of wonder that a child brings to the mysteries of life and the universe which we cultivate each Advent season. We await anew each year for baby Jesus, always expecting something new and exciting to appear amidst this season of peace.

Most of you probably remember the computer-animated Christmas movie, *The Polar Express*. This was one of the first movies that I saw in theatres as a kid. It was one of my favorite movies because of its mystery-like quality. Most notably, it stars Tom Hanks in multiple roles: playing the conductor, the hobo, the Scrooge

puppet, Santa Claus, the narrator, and the little boy's father. What is even more fascinating is that the movie was created using live-action digital capture. The computer was able to capture Tom Hank's body movements and facial expressions, layering them onto the animated characters he portrayed. Tom Hanks acted out the motions for the little boy on the computer even though he doesn't voice the little boy. If you thought that the creating of the movie is spectacular, I think the plot is even more so.

The movie starts out with a little boy trying to fall asleep on Christmas night, but finding it hard to because he is skeptical about the existence of Santa Claus. Then, out of nowhere, a train called the Polar Express comes into sight, on its way to the North Pole. Reluctant at first, the boy gets on the train. From there, it is a wild ride. The boy helps a girl who has lost her ticket and encounters a variety of other children and characters along the way. More than a few times, it looks like the train isn't going to make it to the North Pole. When they make it to the North Pole, the boy is picked by Santa to receive the first gift of Christmas. He chooses a bell from one of the reindeer. He later loses the bell on the way home, but it arrives safe and sound as a packaged gift from Santa the next morning. The boy and his sister can hear it, but his parents can't and think it is broken. In the book, the story ends with the following line: "At one time, most of my friends could hear the bell, but as years passed, it fell silent for all of them. Even Sarah found one Christmas that she could no longer hear its sweet sound. Though I've grown old, the bell still rings for me, as it does for all who truly believe."

In our scripture passage from John today, we read of another story of great mystery. This is a story which has great importance upon our Christian lives. To understand this story, I am going to read the lines which precede those I read in the scripture reading. They read like a great hymn, singing about the great mysteries of God. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> He was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup> All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being <sup>4</sup> in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. <sup>5</sup> The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it." John begins not with a genealogy like Matthew, or a quotation from the prophet Malachi like Mark, or even the birth of John the Baptist like Luke. John begins with the beginning of all creation. He begins with darkness, before God created the universe. John writes that the Word of God played and continues to play a pivotal role in creation. Without the Word, there is no light shining in the darkness.

When you think of the Word, capital W, what is the first thought that comes to mind? You might think of Scripture. In the Bible, we find God's Word for us. Scripture contains God's Word for us, but God's Word goes far beyond words written on a page. We receive God's Word because God has interacted with his people in time. God imparts knowledge on his people by showing up, present in their lives. God revealed himself by creating the universe, light covering the darkness. In the Genesis story, Adam and Eve receive eternal life through the tree of life. Yet, then they eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. They no longer rely on God, darkness enters in again, and sin pervades over human life. In the Old Testament, God continues to care for and protect the chosen people, the Israelites, even when they go astray. But God also looks out for the poor and lowly. The people continue to harm one another, sow dissension, and harbor animosity. In Isaiah, God promises a suffering servant. One who will proclaim Good News to the poor and oppressed. One who will bring peace to those who need it most.

This is where Jesus comes in. Jesus is the Word-made-flesh. Jesus is a light upon the world, a beacon of hope for the lowly. Jesus isn't a physical light, but instead a light which shines upon all of the mysteries of our world and the universe. Yet, Jesus does not come to reveal mysteries in the way we would expect him to. He does not come with the riches of the world nor does he tell his disciples how to get rich quick or how to be happy. Instead, Jesus is God revealed in human form. Jesus is God present to the ones he cares about. Jesus teaches about our duty to love our neighbor, how we are to love even the least of those around us. Jesus comes to heal the sick, open the eyes of the blind, and mend the broken. Jesus shares communion with his disciples before he is taken away to be crucified. Jesus is the peace we are looking for in a world that doesn't seem to have it. But if Jesus is the peace we are looking for, how do we testify to that peace?

If we go back to before Jesus' ministry, things are not so clear. There were many different prophecies in the Old Testament which proclaimed that a Savior would be coming into the world. Besides the suffering servant in Isaiah, some believed that it would be the prophet Elijah, others believed that it would be a prophet like Moses. No one knew that the Savior of the world was to be Jesus. They all had their predictions but no one person understood who Jesus was and was to come to be. Actually, even after Jesus ministered here on earth, died, was buried, resurrected, and ascended, people were still confused. This is why parts of John are very clear that John the Baptist was not the light but was to witness to the light of the world. There were people living at the same time as early Christians who believed that John the Baptist was the true Messiah, Savior of the world. John writes his gospel partly as to set the record straight about who the true light, the light of peace, that we seek is. We seek to play a similar role in our own world. There are many people and things in this world which are vying for the title of peacemaker. But only one is the true peace.

Now, how are we to lead others to the peace that only Christ can give? One way that we can do this is by following John the Baptist's example found in John. John the Baptist is met by the priests and Levites because they were still looking for that figure that would lead the Israelites to an era of peace, free of suffering. John the Baptist acted like a prophet. He did prophet-like things. The priests think he might be the Messiah, he says no. Then some ask, well, are you Elijah? He again says no. Now, if you remember, Elijah was a prophet in the Old Testament, known for some pretty wild things. One thing that he did was confront the evil king Ahab. Elijah was a prophet who looked out for the people in need around him. Elijah also was known for being taken up by God into heaven in a chariot of fire. Therefore, it is not surprising that the priests believed that John the Baptist might be Elijah. John the Baptist even wore the same hairy garments as Elijah. However, as Elijah-like as John the Baptist might be, he was not Elijah.

Instead, John the Baptist was like the voice in Isaiah 40. He was crying out in the wilderness, preparing the way for the Lord! In this part of Isaiah, Isaiah is writing about the Babylonian exile, when the Israelites are taken to Babylon. Isaiah writes of the day when they will be returned to Jerusalem. The valleys and hills of the desert between Babylon and Israel will be made smooth, creating a superhighway for the Israelites to return. Similarly, John the Baptist is making a way for Jesus. He is denouncing all grand titles, instead pointing to the one who will bring peace. He is making it easy for Jesus to be seen and heard, removing all obstacles and pitfalls which would keep the message of the one to come from being heard.

In this passage, we find John the Baptist pointing to the light and the truth. Like a great detective, John the Baptist gathers up all the evidence for the mystery that has yet to be solved, let alone experienced. Jesus has not started his ministry yet, but John the Baptist is already pointing to the miracles and events to come. John the Baptist baptizes with water because he is pointing to Jesus who will baptize with the Spirit. Baptism did not mean what it means for us as Christians today, dying and rising in Christ. It was an act of purification, making one clean. Yet, John the Baptist sees what is not yet there but is to come. In a crime novel, the detective will often take leads and go down avenues which seem preposterous by themselves. Yet, in the end, all the crazy leads and clues and all the crazy out-of-place actions have a purpose and lead to a source, the solution to the mystery. Like the bell at the end of *The Polar Express*, one must truly believe for all of these actions and preparations to make any sense and ring true.

John teaches us that we are to wait for God incarnate. We are to wait for when God communes with us. Instead of attempting to make peace on our own, we are to make peace because it points to the Peace of Christ. From the beginning, God has had a plan for us, to commune with him and receive his grace. We can choose our own peace, serving only ourselves and our own needs, or we can wait for the peace only Christ brings.

Isaiah 61 lays out a clear path for what the Good News is. Peace for God is when the poor are lifted up. Peace is when others are released from their worries or their burdens. It is not just an ending of wars, but a setting right of inequalities. Peace goes hand in hand with justice. Those who have received disgrace and injustice will

instead receive double of blessings. Ruined buildings will be rebuilt, those who have none are to have plenty. Peace is not easy because it means going up against the status quo. It means not looking out for number one, being uncomfortable. Peace is not simply a treaty or an end to the fighting of two countries. It is when the people are not only treated fairly and kindly but given what has been taken or denied. Peace is when Scrooge gives up what he has in order to bless tiny Tim.

Most importantly, we don't enact peace for our own reasons. We enact peace like John the Baptist prepares the way for the Lord. We find ways to give peace so that others might experience the peace of God's love. We prepare the way so that the understanding which Jesus brings may be known to all. Being a lamp means pointing the way to something greater. A lamp is used to get to where you are going, but it is not the source. It is not the light or the great mystery. As Christians, we are called to be like lamps. We are peaceful because we point to Jesus as peace. We enact justice because Jesus brings justice. We light the road far enough ahead so that other might know and have communion with God.

Being like John the Baptist can be summed up in what Henri Nouwen has written about Christian leadership. We must be willing to be the wrong person. We must be willing to be in the wrong place. We must be the person without the answers. My prayer for you this challenging Christmas season is to take each of these prescriptions to heart. As we wait for the birth of Christ during the Advent Season, remember that sometimes peace means a willingness to concede. Opportunities to be peace to others happen every day. Often, we don't have the answers, we are the wrong person, and we are in the wrong place. But through our actions, as imperfect as they might be, we point to the peace that passes all understanding. Alleluia and Amen.

Let us pray, Dear God, Help us to point to Christ this Advent season. In the peace that we achieve and the good that we do, might others feel the presence of Christ in their lives. As this season ends in the birth of Christ, may our end goals also be about Christ. Sometimes we are the wrong person, in the wrong place, or have the wrong answers. Yet, Christ comes in to pick up the pieces, being the peace we were awaiting for all along. Amen

# PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

Make your ways known upon earth, Lord God, your saving power among all peoples. Renew your Church in holiness and help us to serve you with joy. Guide the leaders of this and every nation so that justice may prevail throughout the world. Let not the needy be forgotten nor the hope of the poor be taken away. Make us instruments of your peace and let your glory be over all the earth.

Lord God, you hold both heaven and earth in a single peace. Let the design of your great love shine on the waste of our anger and sorrow, and give peace to your Church, peace among nations, peace in our homes, and peace in our hearts, in Jesus Christ our Lord we pray and offer the prayer he taught us:

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever.

Amen.

# HYMN #366 Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

1. Love divine, all loves excelling, Joy of heaven, to earth come down, fix in us thy humble dwelling; all thy faithful mercies crown. Jesus, thou art all compassion; pure, unbounded love thou art; visit us with thy salvation; enter every trembling heart.

2. Breathe, O breathe thy loving Spirit into every troubled breast; let us all in thee inherit; let us find the promised rest. Take away the love of sinning; Alpha and Omega be; end of faith, as its beginning, set our hearts at liberty.

3. Come, Almighty, to deliver; let us all thy life receive; suddenly return, and never, nevermore thy temples leave. Thee we would be always blessing, serve thee as thy hosts above, pray, and praise thee without ceasing, glory in thy perfect love.

4. Finish then thy new creation; pure and spotless let us be; let us see thy great salvation perfectly restored in thee: changed from glory into glory, till in heaven we take our place, till we cast our crowns before thee, lost in wonder, love, and praise.

#### BENEDICTION

Be people of peace. Let peace live in your heart and share the peace of Christ with everyone. Share peace by acting out of concern and not fear. Share peace by listening to all sides of the story. Share peace by praying for our world. In this Advent season, we need to see, feel, and share peace. As you experience the wonders of God's Creation, share peace and hope in any way possible. Amen.

# Sunday December 13, 2020 - ANNOUNCEMENTS

**<u>SUNDAY SCHOOL TODAY</u>** - Join us today for Sunday school class for all ages at 11:30am on Zoom: https://zoom.us/j/127591875. For one half hour our children will be hearing stories, singing songs, engaging in activities and games about God and God's teachings.

Advent Study and the coming of the Messiah, Thursday December 17 at 7pm on Zoom

ttps://zoom.us/j/127591875 Meeting ID: 127 591 875 or by phone: 301-715-8592 or 253-215-8782. Led by Su Fall and Ryon Herin.

**Building restrictions resume** – Unfortunately, due to the rise in the number of coronavirus cases in our community, the church building is once again closed to all but the most urgent needs. Pastor Su and Susan Flanagan are limiting their time in the building as well but can be reached by phone or email. Pastor Su: pastorsu@forestgrovechurch.org or 609-510-0084, Susan Flanagan: office@forestgrovechurch.org or 267-481-1491.

# **2020 ADVENT SEASON**

# Sunday, December 20 – Sharing Favorite Christmas Songs/Poems/Readings during Worship.

All who plan to participate need to get their recordings to Pastor Su. If you need help, please contact Su.

**<u>CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP</u>** This year we will hold the service as a "drive-in worship" experience. At 6:30 all are invited to come to the church. Parking will be on the grass just beyond the graveyard. The sound will be broadcast on the radio so each can hear by just tuning in on your FM dial and remain in the safety of your own vehicle. Please bring your own candle. To make this service happen <u>we need volunteers for the following</u>: - Parking attendants (before and after the service) - Luminary makers - Luminary placers (put the luminaries in their place and light the candles) - Luminary clean up (remove and disassemble) Please contact Pastor Su or the church office if you are willing to help.

**Food Pantry:** Dee Tori will be making the last drop off to our local Food Pantry on December 16th. Please drop off all food items to the church (you may leave at the back door) by December 15th We do not have specifics as to needs but all canned and boxed items are all welcome. Also, think holiday side dishes, or even a ham.

**Stewardship update:** Thank you to many who have made their financial commitment to the church for 2021. If you have not remembered to do so and would like to make a pledge, please fill out a pledge card and send it to the church office. If you need another card, please contact Susan Flanagan who will send one to you.

In our thoughts and prayers: The Conner/Lang Family, Diane Dauer, Jim and Judy Ferguson, Aleena Lang, Natalie Pizza, Bill Wark