



# Church on the Cape Newsletter

December 2025

# MERRY Christmas

Church on the Cape sends joyful greetings as we celebrate the birth of Jesus. Please join us to worship our newborn King and Savior!

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## CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES:

Family Service with Children's Pageant 4:00 pm

Candlelight Service 8:00 pm

## CHRISTMAS DAY SERVICE:

Worship Service with Holy Communion 10:00 am

## WHERE DID CHRISTMAS COME FROM?

We are accustomed to a culture in which birthdays are recorded, remembered, and celebrated, but that wasn't true for the world into which Jesus was born. In those days, there were no birth certificates, and we don't even know how carefully poor people remembered birthdays. In a time with a high rate of infant mortality, it may not even have been a practice to remember the specific day of a child's birth.

That means that the early Christians did not have a clear way to know when Jesus was born. In fact, during the first century of Christian faith, there is no evidence that they commemorated his birth. The first Christian holy days centered on the crucifixion and resurrection. That is why we worship on Sundays, because it was the day of resurrection. Every Sunday, for them, was a celebration of Easter! Eventually, they settled on an annual celebration of the resurrection. The earliest convention seems to have been to set the date of March 25 as Easter. The problem was that March 25 does not always fall on a Sunday, and so eventually the church developed the system we still use to make sure Easter always falls on a Sunday—although that means it is on a different Sunday every year!

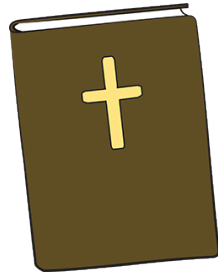
In the very early days, Christians turned to the Hebrew scriptures to form their understanding of Jesus. Malachi 4:2 became an important part of that understanding: "But for you who revere my name the sun of righteousness shall rise, with healing in its wings." Jesus was identified with the "sun of righteousness." Hippolytus, bishop of Rome in the late second century, believed that March 25 was the day of Jesus' crucifixion, and it was also the spring equinox on

the Julian calendar. This was also regarded as the first day of creation. For that reason, March 28 would have been the fourth day of creation when God created the Sun. An early Christian manuscript from that time reads, "O how admirable and divine is the providence of the Lord, that on that day on which the sun was made on the same day was Christ born...and so rightly did the prophet Malachi say to the people: the sun of righteousness shall rise upon you with healing in his wings." It is possible, then, that the first commemoration of Jesus' birth occurred in late March! However, shortly after that, we find evidence that the nativity was celebrated on December 25. It is likely that this date was derived from the story in the Gospel of Luke.

Luke tells us that John the Baptist was conceived while his father, Zechariah, was performing his priestly duties in the temple. It was assumed that this was during the holy days in the Jewish month of Tishri, Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. This would mean that Elizabeth conceived at the Autumnal Equinox. Luke then tells us that Mary conceived Jesus six months later. That would fall on the Spring Equinox. Assuming Mary carried Jesus to full term, he would have been born nine months later on the winter solstice, which, on the Julian calendar, falls on December 25. Sometime in the 200's, this date was chosen and became more and more popular throughout the Christian world. This tradition continues to our own time as we celebrate Jesus' birth together!

Rev. Greg Smith

## Scripture Readings for December



**DEC 07** | 2nd Sunday of Advent (Purple or Blue)

- Isa 11:1-10
- Ps 72:1-7, 18-19 (UMH 795)
- Rom 15:4-13
- Matt 3:1-12

**DEC 14** | 3rd Sunday of Advent (Purple or Blue)

- Isa 35:1-10
- Luke 1:46b-55 (UMH 199)
- James 5:7-10
- Matt 11:2-11

**DEC 21** | 4th Sunday of Advent (Purple or Blue)

- Isa 7:10-16
- Ps 80:1-7, 17-19 (UMH 801)
- Rom 1:1-7
- Matt 1:18-25

**DEC 24** | Christmas Eve (White or Gold)

- Isa 9:2-7
- Ps 96 (UMH 815)
- Titus 2:11-14
- Luke 2:1-14, (15-20)

**DEC 25** | Christmas Day (White or Gold)

- Isa 52:7-10
- Ps 98 (UMH 818)
- Heb 1:1-4 (5-12);
- John 1:1-14

**DEC 28** | 1st Sunday after Christmas Day (White or Gold)

- Isa 63:7-9
- Ps 148 (UMH 861)
- Heb 2:10-18
- Matt 2:13-23



## PRELUDE FAIR

**Saturday, Dec. 6<sup>th</sup>**  
**8:30 am to 1:00 pm**

The Prelude Ladies say, "It's time to sort your Christmas decorations." Which priceless treasures won't fit anymore? Set them aside until Dec. 4 or 5, when we'll accept and price them for the Fair on Sat., Dec. 6. As you sort your treasured housewares (it's not just Christmas items), we appreciate your willingness to share them with others in order to help our wonderful church.

Have an artificial tree too big to move?

Call Susie Goodwin 412-716- 8920.

**Drop off days: Thurs Dec 4 + Fri Dec 5, 9 - 12**

2025 Team Leaders

Susie Goodwin and Amy Hall

## COOKIE SALE



Our Holiday Fair is Dec 6th, barely 3 weeks away!

Thank you all for saving your tins. Now we need our loyal bakers to sign up to make 5 dozen of one kind of cookie. Sign-up sheets are on the table under the bulletin board. Please indicate the kind you plan to make (Decorated Christmas cookies are always festive.)

PS If cookie baking isn't your thing, all homemade goodies are welcome at the baked goods table.

Thank you, Joan and Debbie

## CHRISTMAS SURPRISE PACKAGE GIFT CARDS NEEDED

Gift cards of \$10.00 or \$15.00 with gift receipts attached from McDonald's, Wendy's, Michaels, Target, Reny's, Staples, Home Depot, Cosco, Movie Theaters, and others are welcome. Please leave gift cards in the church office for Debora Berry.

## NEW GIFT ITEMS WANTED

Gift items valued at \$10.00 - \$20.00, with the purchase price remaining on the item, are needed. Suggestions include coffee mugs, candles, and gift sets for ladies, men, boys, and girls.

Gift Items for children can range from ages 4 to 10.

DUPLICATIONS ARE ACCEPTED. Please leave gift items in a Christmas Surprise Box in the lobby under the table.



## MCCLELLAND FOUNDATION CONCERT SATURDAY, DEC 13. 2025 2:00 P.M.

Back by popular demand, Chris Humphrey will bring his signature Swing Era sound with his friends, The Vintage Vocal Quartet. The smaller ensemble honors the sweet harmonies of Glenn Miller's Modernaires, the Andrews Sisters, and Tommy Dorsey's Pied Pipers. Please join us for this free concert at 2:00 pm on Saturday, Dec 13, here at Church on the Cape

## VERTERANS DAY LUNCHEON

### A Veterans Day Prayer

God of all nations, you are our Strength and Shield. We give you thanks today for the devotion and courage of all those who have offered military service for this country ...

We ask today that you would lift up by your Spirit those who are now at war; encourage and heal those in hospitals or mending their wounds at home; guard those in any need or trouble; hold safely in your hands all military families and bring the returning troops to joyful reunion and tranquil life at home.

Give to us, your people, grateful hearts and a united will to honor these men and women and hold them always in our love and our prayers until your world is perfected in peace and all wars cease. Through Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen.

—Rev. Dr. Jennifer Phillips

## A MARVELOUS EVENT

*Ivan Collazo, Lester Evans, Jean Baracco, and guest Jen Murray*



*David Smith and Diane Hutchins*



Many volunteers assisted with the luncheon, including some from the Middle School in Kennebunk. The veterans invited all of us to lunch, as there was plenty to go around, including the chowder from Allison's Restaurant.

The Veterans discussed their reasons for joining the military and shared some of their experiences. It was a joy to hear the reasons they joined the military and even to make us laugh with conversations about mishaps they encountered while serving. All are looking forward to next year's celebration.

Article by Jen Murray, photos by Jen Murray and Marge Smith

## HIS MANY NAMES, OUR GREAT HOPE



Long before the manger in Bethlehem, the prophet Isaiah pointed God's people to the promise of a Savior. In Isaiah 9:6 (NIV), we read: "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

Even before Jesus' birth, his names revealed who he is and what he would bring. Each title carries a promise that still impacts our lives today.

- **Wonderful Counselor.** Jesus brings wisdom and guidance for every situation. In moments of confusion, we can lean on him to direct our steps with love and truth.
- **Mighty God.** He is strong enough to carry our burdens and powerful enough to overcome sin, fear, and death itself.
- **Everlasting Father.** Jesus reflects the heart of God the Father, offering care that is constant and unchanging. His love doesn't fade with time or circumstance.
- **Prince of Peace.** In a world filled with turmoil, Jesus offers a peace that goes deeper than circumstances, a peace that guards our hearts and minds.

At Christmas, we celebrate more than a baby's birth. We celebrate the fulfillment of God's promise, a Savior with many names. Each one reminds us of his eternal love and presence. This season, let his name bring you comfort, strength, and peace.

### DEAR LORD,

You have brought us to Christmastime once more. Help us not to get lost in the glitter and the glow, but to see the true glory of the birth of Your only begotten Son. Keep our hearts from clinging too tightly to parties, presents, and decorations, and turn our eyes instead to Christ, who bears Your very image and brings us Your message of love and hope.

In the glorious name of Christ, we pray. Amen.

Source: Newsletternewsletter



## November Sunday School News

We are so blessed to have the energy, excitement, and enthusiasm of the young children in our church. Pastor Greg is ready for them each Sunday. The children love to gather and listen eagerly to his story, adding their own creative contributions.

All Saints Sunday introduced the children to a favorite, wee little man, Zacchaeus. It is always fun to learn about this little man who

climbed a tree to see Jesus.

Another Sunday, the children heard the creation story and put pictures of the six days in order. There was a lot of discussion about whether it really happened in just six days. The main point of the lesson was to understand that God created the beautiful world we live in. Everyone could agree on that.

The Sunday before Thanksgiving was a day to explore the concepts of plenty and thankfulness. The children learned that some people put a cornucopia (also called a horn of plenty) on their Thanksgiving table to remind them that they have plenty. The children talked about what they had plenty of (toys, friends, family, food, etc.) and what they might do for others who do not have plenty. Taking items to the food pantry was at the top of their list. The children created thankful trees. Ben filled his tree with five octopuses, "for the five children in Sunday School," and three dolphins, "for the three teachers." Ben said he was thankful for his Sunday School class. Winston liked that idea and added five turtles and three fish to his tree. Isabella said she was thankful for the Earth and for God.

These children are true examples of God's light and love.

Article by Carol Nason



## **Church on the Cape**

### **A United Methodist Church**

We of The Church on the Cape represent various religious and cultural backgrounds and lifestyles. We are young, old, middle-aged, single, married, widowed, divorced, parents, grandparents, and members of extended families.

Above all, we are people who take risks, make mistakes,  
confess, repent, and try again.

At the center of our community is Jesus Christ, whose life, death, and resurrection are the reasons we are together. The life and hope in this community have more to do with Christ's faithfulness to us than ours to Christ.

Whether you are searching for a faith community or just passing through, we want you to feel at home. Whoever you are, whatever your history, your scars, your gifts;  
You are among people like yourself.

Join us from wherever you call home. If you like what you see here, we post our virtual Hymn Sing and Sunday Worship Service on our website, [www.churchonthecape.org](http://www.churchonthecape.org).

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