

United Methodist Church at Shrub Oak

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“OUR THIRD CENTURY IN SERVICE OF THE LORD”

Honorable Reverend Sandra B. Mantz, Pastor

December 2023 Vol. 45, No.12

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Dear UMCSO Family

Christmas time is right around the corner. It is a time to rejoice in the birth of our Savior. The stores are decorated with festive decorations. I enjoy singing the carols and, when I think of the many traditions that I was nurtured in, the season reminds me of love. Sure, it is hectic and busy but for me even the busyness does not keep me from the love that I have for God and I remember his gift of Jesus. A gift of a baby that changed the world and forever will change lives when we open our hearts to him.

What I enjoy most about Christmas is that it is a reminder to put God first in our lives. How? By study His word, by praying, and by worshipping in a community of believers. This makes the things of this world bearable because we are never alone: we walk together in faith.

Christmas Carols are special. So many are filled with memories and meaning. O “Little Town of Bethlehem is one of those.

1 O little town of Bethlehem,
How still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
The silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
The everlasting Light;
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee to-night.

“In [Philadelphia](#), at the Church of the Holy Trinity overlooking [Rittenhouse Square](#), there's a triptych behind the altar commemorating the church's connection to "O Little Town of Bethlehem." The words to this classic American carol were completed in 1868

by Trinity's young rector Phillips Brooks (later the Episcopal bishop of [Massachusetts](#)) and the music by the church's organist, Lewis Redner.

Further digging into the life of Brooks revealed that he greatly admired [Abraham Lincoln](#), and when the slain president's body lay in state inside Independence Hall during the Philadelphia train stop en route to [Springfield, Ill.](#), the rector delivered a sermon at his church on the life and death of America's Civil War president. Months later, still grief-stricken by the assassination and the horrors of the Civil War, Brooks took solace in a trip to the Holy Land.

"Brooks was impressed by Christmas Eve services at the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, and as he sat on a hill looking back at the village of Bethlehem, while shepherds still watched their flocks at night, he felt at peace," Clancy notes. "He later told friends, 'That experience was so overpowering that forever there will be a singing in my soul.' "

That singing became first the poem "O Little Town of Bethlehem" and then the famous carol."

Taken from "The Christian Science Monitor "Origins of America's favorite Christmas carols' by John Grossmann, Contributor /December 22, 2011

Christmas is more than gifts and family gatherings it is about Jesus who was born that we may live as redeemed people of God. Brooks adds a verse before the final one that bears witness to this reality...

5. O holy Child of Bethlehem,
Descend to us, we pray!
Cast out our sin and enter in,
Be born in us to-day.
We hear the Christmas angels,
The great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us,
Our Lord Emmanuel!

May the Holy Child truly take hold in your hearts that we as individuals and a community of faith can reflect his love. Open your hearts so that God can truly enter in and grant you peace, love and hope. Merry Christmas.

Blessings and Love,

Pastor Sandy

p.s. -

Please, make sure to check the December calendar so you do not miss anything, On December 24th we will have two services. Our morning 10:30 am service will be celebrating the Fourth Sunday of Advent. In the evening at 7 :00 pm we will have our Candlelight Christmas Eve Service. All are welcome at both.

**UPCOMING EVENTS
December**



SUNDAYS, 10:30 AM

WORSHIP WILL CONTINUE IN-PERSON & LIVE STREAMED

Dec 3rd:

Trim – a -Tree, following worship.

Dec. 9th:

Tres Dias Annual Open Christmas Secuela, 3-5 pm, All are welcome.

Dec 10th:

- Receiving of new members
- Caroling at JV Mall, 12-1 pm
- Pageant Rehearsal after worship

Dec. 16th:

- Pageant Rehearsal 5:00 pm
- Live Nativity – 6:00 pm

December 17th:

Christmas Pageant during worship

Saturday, Dec 24th:

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service, 7:00 pm

Christmas Service with Lessons & Carols,

Sunday, December 25th - 10:30 am

**KNOW SOMEONE WHO
COULD USE A CARD?**



If you know someone who is sick or having surgery, please let us know. Our dedicated members, Annette Reynolds & Lynne Schrot send cards on behalf of our church family. So, please let us know and we will send a card to cheer them up or encourage them.

Maxine Haigh

**UPDATES TO UMCSO
CHURCH DIRECTORY**



If you have any updated information or new emergency contacts, please get in touch with Marilyn Bucher, Maxine Haigh, or the office for updating.



**DECEMBER
BIRTHDAYS**

Fernando Arias	2
Emily Mantz	3
Cameron Stokes	3
Al Will	3
Yvonne Chung	8
Christopher Bucher	9
Kathleen Mareno	12
Doug Gaylor	13
Dianne Benincasa	15
Doreen Matthews	17
Aria Supino	18
Nicholas Aryee	19
Jordan Philips	19
Gary Speedling	20
Lisa Latasa	23
Meridith Gutowski	24
Dana Neal Young	27
Debby Speedling	27
Jennifer Goodman	28
Dwayne Hoffmann	29
Logan Reynolds	30



**DECEMBER
ANNIVERSARIES**

Glenda & William Geis, Jr.	22
Doris & Bruce Shields	27
Asha & Sundeep Thomas	27



ALTAR FLOWERS 2023-24

Thank you for your gift in providing Altar Flowers for the glory of God! Please see the sign up sheet in the breezeway or contact Michele Squibb squibbm14@gmail.com.



POINSETTIAS

The due date for Poinsettia plants to decorate the sanctuary is **Wednesday, December 5, 2023**. There are forms at the back of the Sanctuary for you to complete if you wish to provide a plant in memory of or in honor of a loved one.

Please Note: As of Jan. 1st, the cost of the altar flowers will be \$50 for both bouquets, or, families of the congregation can split the order if they prefer.

MEETINGS

Trustee's Meeting:

Mon, Dec 4th, 7:00 pm

Small Group Leaders:

Sat, Dec 2nd and 16th, 9:30 am

Teacher's Meeting:

Sun, Jan 21st, after worship



Also special thanks to all our volunteers who so freely and willingly give of their time and talent in the name of the Lord!

Choir

Al & Alice Fennell
Bev Goodman
Beverly Martinez
Marshall Moseley
Hank & Lynne Schrot
Twila Hunter
Jerome Marcelly
Stanley Mochulsky
Fran Davies

Liturgists

Annette & Russ Reynolds
Hank Schrot
Marilyn Bucher
Rachel Ward
Barbara Conklin

Education

Kathy Casey and Lisa Grace

Altar Flowers

Emsley Fund
Mary Vance
Cory Casey
Jean Engel
Asha and Sundeep Thomas

Communications & Chimes

Debbie Vesuvio
Marilyn Bucher
Cliff Cullum

Audio Visual

Cliff Cullum
Dylan Matthews
Joey Spina
Pheby Aryee

Greeters & Ushers

Annette Reynolds
Debbie Vesuvio
Doreen Matthews
Kathy Schiavi
Barbara Conklin
Linda Hoernes
Maxine Haigh

Children's Moment

Rachel Ward Pinto
Lisa Peterson Grace
Annette Reynolds
Peter Hoernes

Hospitality

Alice Fennell

SPR

Annette Reynolds

Social Activities

Kathy Schiavi

North West Co-op Parish

Dianne Benincasa

Sunday School Corner

“So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith.” ~ Galatians 3:26

Advent is here. For Christians, this season is a time of expectant waiting and preparation for our celebration of Christ’s birth. We are planning many activities to help our children and youth grow in their understanding of our faith during this important season.

During the fall, the elementary school students followed a curriculum of “Godly Play.” Each week, acts out a Bible story using small figures, and the create their responses to the story using various So far, the children have worked with puppets, Doh, and Legos. We have focused on the story and the people of Israel, and during the season, we will focus on the story of Jesus’ birth.



have a storyteller children materials. chalk, Play of Moses Christmas



Our preparations for Christmas started on November 18, when we gathered to pack 77 shoeboxes for **Operation Christmas Child** and share Christmas gifts with children around the world.



This month will be packed with other events that celebrate the season. On the first Sunday of Advent, **December 3, we will be holding our annual Trim-A-Tree event from 12:00-3:00 pm.** We are looking for volunteers to run tables so the children can create different types of ornaments. After the children make the ornaments, we will enjoy a lunch of pizza, salads, and desserts, followed by a Christmas sing-along and the decoration of the tree. Please mark your calendars and sign up!

On **Saturday, December 16**, our children will present a **Living Nativity** for the church at 6:00 pm. On **Sunday, December 17**, they will be acting out the story of Christmas in a **pageant** during the service. **Rehearsal will be held after church on December 10 and at 5:00 pm (before the Living Nativity) on December 16.**

Finally, mark your calendars for our annual **New Year's breakfast** to be held on **Sunday, January 7** after worship. Chef Jack "Flapjack" Casey will provide pancakes, and there will be a sign-up sheet posted for other items.

Enjoy this blessed season with your family and with our extended family of brothers and sisters in Christ. May each one of us feel the love of Christ as we celebrate the miracle of his birth.

Yours in Christ,
The Sunday School Teachers

TRIM-A-TREE
Sunday, December 3th, 12 noon



Join us on Sunday, December 3rd, 12:00 noon to 3:00 pm to assist in making decorations with our children to decorate the tree. Please contact Kathy Casey at luminany@icloud.com or the church office umsco.ny@gmail.com if you can help with a craft table. There will be pizza and carols sung as we trim the tree. All are welcome!

CAROL SINGING AT THE JV MALL
Sunday, December 10th, 12:00 – 1:00 pm



Come one, come all! On Sunday, December 10th, from 12:00 noon – 1:00 pm, we will be at the JV Mall doing our annual Christmas Caroling. It is a lot of fun, and the adults and children enjoy having us sing. Singing is a great way to worship our Lord and let people in our community know that we are a church who loves the Lord. Hope to see you there for this wonderful time.

Blessings!

Annette Reynolds

LIVE NATIVITY
Saturday, December 16th, 6:00 pm



Please join us once again for our 2nd annual Live Nativity on Saturday, December 16th in front of the Church. Please contact Annette Reynolds at 914-474-4033 if you are interested in helping.



Christmas is coming and as we prepare ourselves spiritually, we also start planning on decorating our sanctuary for the holidays. The poinsettias will be delivered and in place for the Christmas Eve Service. You may give these plants as gifts, memorials, or in honor of a living person, **PLANTS MAY BE TAKEN HOME AFTER THE CHRISTMAS DAY SERVICE.**

If you are interested in providing poinsettia plants, please fill out this form and return to

We will provide RED POINSETTIA PLANT(S) _____ (NUMBER OF PLANTS)

Name of Donor: _____ Telephone No. _____
(Please print clearly)

Person(s) to be memorialized (now deceased): _____

(Please print clearly)

Person(s) to be honored: _____

(Please print clearly)

Note: Your \$11.00 checks made payable to UMCSO. Add the word "Poinsettias" in the memo line. Thank you.

Michele Squibb or the church office. Please place your order by **Tuesday, December 5, 2023**. (See form in mailchimp.) If you have any questions, please call Michele Squibb at 914-393-5682. Plants are **\$15.00** each.

OF INTEREST TO SENIORS

ONE-ON-ONE CONSULTATIONS AVAILABLE FOR WESTCHESTER SENIORS AND THEIR FAMILIES



SENIOR LAW DAY
COLLABORATIVE



Registration opens at 7am on December 6th at seniorlawday.info



*Free 15
Minute
Consults*

via Zoom with an Attorney,
Certified Financial Planner or Care Manager

No cost & no obligation!

What You Need to Know:

- These are for members of the public and will occur via Zoom.
- Registration opens at 7am on December 6th and will close when full.
Go to seniorlawday.info
- Provide brief information on the nature of your request, so that we can match you with the right professional.
- We will assign you a time slot between 10am and 12pm on December 7th.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS YOU CAN ASK

A FINANCIAL PLANNER

When should I begin
collecting Social Security
Income?

AN ATTORNEY


What is involved in
preparing a will or a trust?
How do I enroll in Medicaid if
my spouse is still working?

A CARE MANAGER

Should I Change my Care
Plans for the rest of 2023?

*“A tithe of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees,
belongs to the Lord” ~ Leviticus 27:30*

The New Year is fast approaching along with Commitment Sunday. Just as God has been so committed to our abundant blessings, let us all prayerfully consider how we will renew our commitment to Him in our giving.



Receive Gratefully Give Generously 	Envelope Number (for office use)	FOR CHURCH RECORDS	FOR YOUR RECORDS
	Name _____	Date: _____	Date: _____
	Address: _____		<input type="checkbox"/> In response to God's gift of love through Christ and because I desire to empower the church's ministries, I plan to give for the year 20____ beginning _____ :
	Post Office _____		\$ _____ each <input type="checkbox"/> week <input type="checkbox"/> month
State _____	Zip Code _____		<input type="checkbox"/> For an annual total of \$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> In response to God's gift of love through Christ and because I desire to empower the church's ministries, I plan to give beginning _____ \$ _____ each <input type="checkbox"/> week <input type="checkbox"/> month			I understand that this commitment can be changed at any time by giving notice to the appropriate church officer.
<input type="checkbox"/> For an annual total of _____ \$ _____			Name: _____
Envelopes will be provided. Please check if you desire no envelopes. _____			
I understand that the commitment can be changed at any time by giving notice to the appropriate church officer.			
<i>The United Methodist Church at Shrub Oak</i> 1176 EAST MAIN STREET, SHRUB OAK, NEW YORK 10588-9801			

LECTIONARY SCRIPTURE READINGS

<p><u>Sunday, December 3rd</u> (1st Sunday of Advent)</p> <p>Isaiah 64:1-9 Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19 (UMH #801) 1 Cor1:3-9 Mark 13:24-37</p>	<p><u>Sunday, December 10th</u> (2nd Sunday of Advent)</p> <p>Isaiah 40:1-11 Psalm 85:1-2,8-13 (UMH #806) 2 Peter 3:8-15a Mark 1:1-8</p>	<p><u>Sunday, December 17th</u> (3rd Sunday of Advent)</p> <p>Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11 Psalm 126 (UMH #847) 1Thess 5:16-24 John 1:6-8, 19-28</p>
<p><u>Sunday, December 24th</u> (4th Sunday in Advent)</p> <p>A.M. service 2 Sam 7:1-11,16 Luke1:46b-55 (UMH #199) Romans 16:25-27 Luke 1:26-38</p>	<p><u>Sunday, December 24th</u> (Christmas Eve)</p> <p>P.M. service Isaiah 9:2-7 Psalm 96 (UMH #815) Titus 2:11-14 Luke 2:1-14 (15-20)</p>	<p><u>Sunday, December 25th</u> (Christmas Day)</p> <p>Isaiah 52:7-10 Psalm 98 (UMH #818) Hebrews 1:1-4 (5-12) John 1:1-14</p>



December 2023

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>EVERY SUNDAY IS FOOD SUNDAY</p> 			1	2	1 <u>Small Group 2</u> 10:00 am GP Room <u>Crafts for a Cause</u> 11:00 am	2 <u>Men's Group</u> 8:00 am <u>Small Group Leaders</u> 9:30 am
<p>3 (1st Sunday of Advent) (Purple) Praise & worship, Sanctuary 10:30 am <u>Worship, Sanctuary</u> <u>On-line Live Worship:</u> www.umcso.com Trim-a Tree</p>	4 <u>Women's Group</u> 7:00 pm <u>Trustees Meeting</u> 7:00 pm	5 <u>Bible Studies</u> 10:00 am GP Room 7:00 pm (ZOOM)	6 <u>Small Group 1</u> 1:00 pm (ZOOM)	7 <u>Prayer Group</u> <u>In-Person</u> 11:00 am Chapel	8 <u>Small Group 2</u> 10:00 am GP Room <u>Crafts for a Cause</u> 11:00 am GP Room	9 <u>Men's Group</u> 8:00 am <u>Tres Dias Secuela</u> 3:00-5:00 pm
<p>10 (2nd Sunday of Advent) (Purple) Praise & worship, Sanctuary 10:30 am <u>Worship, Sanctuary</u> <u>On-line Live Worship:</u> www.umcso.com <u>Receiving of New Members: During Worship</u> <u>Christmas Caroling at JV Mall</u></p>	11 <u>Women's Group</u> 7:00 pm	12 <u>Bible Studies</u> 10:00 am GP Room 7:00 pm (ZOOM)	13 <u>Small Group 1</u> 1:00 pm (ZOOM)	14 <u>Prayer Group</u> <u>In-Person</u> 11:00 am <u>Chapel</u>	15 <u>Small Group 2</u> 10:00 am GP Room <u>Crafts for a Cause</u> 11:00 am	16 <u>Men's Group</u> 8:00 am <u>Pageant Rehearsal</u> 3:00 -5:00 pm <u>Live Nativity</u> 6:00 pm
<p>17 (3rd Sunday of Advent) (Purple) Praise & worship, Sanctuary 10:30 am <u>Worship, Sanctuary</u> <u>On-line Live Worship:</u> www.umcso.com <u>Christmas pageant: During Worship</u></p>	18 <u>Women's Group</u> 7:00 pm	19 <u>Bible Studies</u> 10:00 am GP Room 7:00 pm (ZOOM)	20 <u>Small Group 1</u> No meeting this week (ZOOM)	21 <u>Prayer Group</u> <u>11:00 am</u> Chapel	22 <u>Small Group 2</u> 10:00 am GP Room <u>Crafts for a Cause</u> 11:00 am	23 <u>Men's Group</u> 8:00 am
<p>24 (4th Sunday of Advent) (White) (White) Christmas Eve Praise & worship, Sanctuary 10:30 am <u>Worship, Sanctuary</u> <u>On-line Live Worship:</u> www.umcso.com Candlelight Service 7:00 pm</p>	25  Christmas Day <u>Woman's Group</u> 7:00 pm	26 <u>Bible Studies</u> 10:00 am GP Room 7:00 pm (ZOOM)	27 <u>Small Group 1</u> 1:00 pm (ZOOM)	28 <u>Prayer Group</u> 11:00 Chapel	29 <u>Small group 2</u> 10:00 am GP Room	30 <u>Men's group</u> 8:00 am
31 (First Sunday after Christmas Day) (White)						