

Please WATCH FOR AN EMAIL FOR the Home Worship Service – also on the website

<https://wesleyunitedchurchstandrewsbytheseanb.ca/>

Advent 3

I sit at my kitchen table by the tiny poinsettia and dancing Santa, with Christmas cookies lined up for the oven and Christmas music playing. The chickadees and nuthatches are darting in and out of the bird feeder. Lance invited our spaniel, Henry, away from the crackling hearth to go for a walk in the woods, and our son and his wife are with an uncle and aunt, learning to paint and sew (respectively). It is all like a series of Christmas card vignettes.

But, as Jane mentioned in Sunday's sermon, I still sometimes feel like I'm pushing a boulder uphill. (Just call me "Sisyfraphus.") Outside of my happy household bubble, so many are ill (for a variety of reasons), so many have died over the last year, so many are in stress over lost jobs, and food insecurity. Some are sad as they grieve for loved ones. Some are overwhelmed by loneliness. Meanwhile, climate change is shaking the foundations of the planet's health. And politics doesn't encourage much hope about humanity. Are my angels and stars, tinsel and garlands like whistling in the dark? Is the Christmas celebration just lipstick on the pig of 2020?



Those very real cynical, dark moments call me to dig deeper. Every year, we sing "O come, O come Emmanuel" during Advent. And "Emmanuel" translated is "God is with us". Christmas is about seeing and celebrating God among us. That is the miracle of Christmas! We proclaim that God is not suspended in some celestial otherworld: the Holy is radically embodied on earth. The amazing news is that there is Divine presence in a helpless infant, in the muck of a stable, in a poor and isolated couple, in labouring shepherds, in the starlit sky of an oppressed, occupied country. God is in and works through it all. God brings light into the darkness and hope to those in despair. The Divine opens possibilities and doors with the winds of hope, comforts the people, and reveals the sacredness of creation.

And, by extension, the Holy One is now in quiet houses and frantic hospital wards, in food banks, gay Yuletide parties and quiet wilderness. The Spirit hovers over children at play, solitary seniors, store clerks and families aching for each other's presence. It is in our caring and love for each other and creation. A few more cards, some telephone calls, increased donations, and staying home to stop Covid ... there are so many ways we can bring some light into the darkness. God is in the greetings and support, the work, the tears, the prayers and the positive energy that flows through us. You may feel down or lonely, and out of sync with "the Christmas spirit". But that is the commercial version of "Xmas"! Given the real story, even in sadness, loneliness or stress, you belong in this season of awaiting and looking for Emmanuel.

So today I give the boulder a friendly pat and keep pushing, just like everyone else. We shall get there. I nod to my fellow travellers who are pushing their own boulders. I think some of them have wings! Keep it up good people!

Francie Howard

A Message from Church Treasurer

What an extraordinary year it has been and our Christmas gatherings promise to be unusual in so many ways! It has been an uncertain year and as church treasurer a learning year, as many treasurers and bookkeepers learned ways to manage the financial impact of the pandemic. Covid –19 impacted everyone. And we were not alone, I discovered during many webinars with the United Church of Canada. I sincerely tell you how thankful I was to receive support and advice from the larger United Church as everyone weaved the ups and downs of 2020. While we are limited in our worship services and other church activities, we quickly learned to adapt and appreciate what we do have within our Communities of Faith. We celebrated with gratitude the smallest of gifts.

As this year comes to a close I want to say “**thanks**” and give a “**virtual hug**” to all for your continuing support and response. It is inspiring to witness the love that you have for this Community of Faith – Wesley United, the Open Door program, the UCC Mission & Service and others. During 2020, there were limited ways to volunteer with Wesley United and other organizations, however so many stepped up to contribute in other ways, sharing the gifts God has given.

If you would like to share a Christmas offering with us, Mission and Service or others these are the ways you may donate: <https://wesleyunitedchurchstandrewsbytheseanb.ca/ways-to-donate/>

e-transfer to wesleyunitedstandrews@gmail.com (No password required)
mail a cheque to Wesley United, 77 William St, St Andrews, NB E5B 2M9
give through Canada Helps <https://www.canadahelps.org/en/dn/35552>

Merry Christmas and thank you
Barb
Church Treasurer

Attention: Committee Chairs Annual Reports will be due January 10, 2021.
Please email them to wesleyunitedstandrews@gmail.com Thank you!

Events:

Please visit our website for the bulletins for our ZOOM services and our At Home Worship along with any other virtual or in person gatherings <https://wesleyunitedchurchstandrewsbytheseanb.ca/>

Friday 11th December 10 – 11 am Zoom Coffee Break with Jane

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3067392185>

Sunday, 13th December 10 am Worship service via Zoom with Jane Doull

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3067392185>

ID: 306 739 2185

Feel free to share the Zoom link with anyone else who wants to come

Sunday, 13th December Home Worship

A Home Worship service provided as an alternative to In Person Worship [provided by email](mailto:providedbyemail@wesleyunitedchurchstandrewsbytheseanb.ca) or please see our website for at Home Worship and other virtual gatherings <https://wesleyunitedchurchstandrewsbytheseanb.ca/>

Tuesday, 15th December 12 – 3 pm 5th Annual Sweet & Warm see poster below

Wednesday, 16th December 3 – 5 pm St Andrews Open Door

Friday 18th December 10 – 11 am Zoom Coffee Break with Jane

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3067392185>

Sunday, 20th December 10 am Sunday Worship at Wesley Details TBC

Sunday, 20th December Home Worship

A Home Worship service provided as an alternative to In Person Worship [provided by email](mailto:providedbyemail@wesleyunitedchurchstandrewsbytheseanb.ca) or please see our website for at Home Worship and other virtual gatherings <https://wesleyunitedchurchstandrewsbytheseanb.ca/>

Sunday, 20th December 1 – 2 pm St James Christmas Event Details TBC

Please check our Advent & Christmas Service details at;
<https://wesleyunitedchurchstandrewsbytheseanb.ca/advent-christmas-services>



Dedications are most welcome remembering, honouring, celebrating a special person, event or season! Please email wesleyunitedstandrews@gmail.com with your request. Thanks!
Photos or any other requests to go with dedications – favourite flower or season etc.....

For pastoral care and conversation please, contact Rev. Jane Doull
at 529-3474 or email me or text at 467-1494

Any other matters please contact Barb Sheen, Chair of the Worship Committee on 469-4631.

Please send all announcements to: WesleyUnitedStAndrews@gmail.com State if you wish them to go on the Bulletin, the COOP , Facebook page, Website, or all four! (photos can be placed on all but the bulletin) Thank you!

PRAYER REQUESTS: may be given to our Prayer Circle by

- 1. contacting Barb King davebarbking@gmail.com**
- 2. contacting Sharon Hannan retired@xplornet.ca or phone 466-1435**
- 3. by asking any of us from Wesley/St James community to pass on a request**

Sent to you by

**Wesley United Church, 77 William St, St Andrews NB E5B1W8 and
St James Pastoral Charge, 731 Route 745, Oak Hill, NB E5A3C7**

In case of pastoral emergency, contact Rev. Jane Doull
[call 529-3474](tel:529-3474) [text 467-1494](tel:467-1494) [email \[jvdoull@gmail.com\]\(mailto:jvdoull@gmail.com\)](mailto:jvdoull@gmail.com)

Any other matters please contact Barb Sheen, Chair of the Worship Committee on 469-4631.

Office email: WesleyUnitedStAndrews@gmail.com Website: <https://wesleyunitedchurchstandrewsbytheseanb.ca>

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