

# DECEMBER 2016

First Churches of Northampton, UCC/ABC

## Important Dates

12/1 & 15 ~ Common Ground  
12/4 ~ 4pm Worship  
12/6 ~ Peace & Justice/Missions  
12/8 ~ Dorcas Society  
12/10 ~ Low Brow Art Faire  
12/18 ~ Christmas Pageant  
12/24 ~ Christmas Eve Service  
12/25 ~ Vespers & Carols

## Looking For...

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## Birthdays

🎂 12/11 Victoria Blunt  
🎂 12/16 Marcus O'Meally



## ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS AT FIRST CHURCHES

**November 27 @ 10 AM –**  
First Sunday of Advent

**December 1 @ 6 PM –**  
Common Ground  
Service and Dinner in Lyman Hall

**December 4 @ 4:00 PM –**  
Second Sunday of Advent  
(Hot Chocolate Run in the morning.)  
Hanging of the Greens Service  
Potluck and Caroling Singing

**December 11 @ 10:00 AM –**  
Third Sunday of Advent  
Welcoming the Refugee

**December 15 @ 6 PM –** Common Ground  
Service and Dinner in Lyman Hall

**December 18 @ 10:00 AM –**  
Fourth Sunday of Advent  
Children's Christmas Pageant

**December 24 @ 7:30 PM –**  
Lessons and Carols Candlelight Service

**December 25 @ 10:00 AM –**  
Morning Vespers and Carols

**January 1 @ 10:00 AM –**  
Joint Worship Service @ Edwards UCC  
Church

See more at [firstchurches.org](http://firstchurches.org)

## MISSIONS NOTES

Please choose a tag December 4 from the tree in Lyman Hall and buy a gift or gift certificate for a foster child at the Treehouse Community in Easthampton. Then add your name in the notebook by the tree, next to the number chosen. Bring this wrapped gift with the tag attached, to the Sanctuary **December 11** when it will be placed beneath the tree there. Your thoughtful gift will help to make one young person so grateful.

The Communion Offering on December 4 will be given to the Interfaith Help Fund.

Every year, we like to give back to retired church leaders through our denominational offerings: the Christmas Fund for the UCC and the Retired Ministers and Missionaries Offering for the ABC. These offerings are greatly appreciated by these friends on fixed incomes and will be taken on December 18.

~ Carol Murphy, on behalf of the Missions Committee

### **Food Drive Update!**

A huge "Thanks" to everyone who contributed to the First Churches Food Drive on November 20. And a special thank-you to Elaine Wert for collecting food at Michael's House that boosted our donation significantly. The Survival Center weighs donations and ours totaled 90lbs! The plan is to continue with weekly donations so collection baskets will be located at each entrance on Sunday mornings. Check the Church Messenger for regular updates!

## A SINCERE THANK YOU

To all of my church family friends,  
I wish to thank you for the many kind wishes for my 90th birthday. The fabric of my life has been woven into the life of the First Church of Christ in Northampton and now combined with the First Baptist Church. I hope to continue with my participation as long as possible.

Sincerely,  
Betty McKown



## COMMON GROUND



“The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them....They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain; for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.” Isaiah 11:6-9

**Advent is upon us  
a season of waiting,  
a time of promise,  
an occasion for hope.**

Come cultivate a peace at Common Ground this December as we work together to usher in the love and light of God's kingdom.

Join Us at 5:00pm to Cook  
Join us at 6:00pm to Worship

### **Listen to the Lambs**

On **December 1** we'll focus on Isaiah's radical vision of a peaceable kingdom. In a world where marginalized people are feeling more vulnerable than ever how can we possibly get from here to there? Before we wrestle with how to tame the wolves and lions, let's first talk about how to listen to the lambs.

### **Where the Light Breaks in**

Life doesn't always work out the way we hope, but God can find a way to work through us and around us no matter what. On **December 15th** we'll take a closer look at Jesus' genealogy in Matthew - one of the most curious and subversive texts in all of scripture - and share about the dark and broken places in our lives where we see God's light breaking through.

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## **CHILDREN AND YOUTH MINISTRY**

### **It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year!**

At least it is if you are a child, and here at First Churches we want to do all we can to ground the magic of this season in the stories of our faith. We hope you will join us throughout Advent as we prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus and explore how we can bring hope, peace, joy and love to all the earth.

Please note our **worship** service on Sunday **December 4**, is at **4:00pm** due to the Hot Chocolate Run. This special intergenerational service will feature the hanging of the greens, a short sermon by Pastor Sarah, and communion, to be followed by an all church pot-luck dinner. **The Confirmands** will make a short presentation about their retreat during the

May God bless you and your little ones with hearts open to all the gifts of this season,

Pastor Sarah

### **First Churches' Annual Christmas Fair**

A big thank you to all the kids who worked so hard to make ornaments for the church fair. We raised well over \$300 to help Heifer provide clean water for a community in need. Thank you to Janet, Sara, Anna, and Stacey for working with the children. Thank you to Janet, Lora, Phoebe, Alice, Kathy, and Chloe for working at the kid's table during the fair. And a huge thank you to Rachel Chapman who taught us all how to felt ornaments, make God's eyes, and wooly sheep.

### **Confirmation**

It was an absolute joy to accompany 6 of our confirmands to Silver Lake for a confirmation retreat. Our kids are amazing people and I was really proud of them all for their courage and open hearts. Over the weekend we explored the 6 core values of faith in the U.C.C. :

We listen for a still speaking God.  
We are one at baptism and the table.  
We belong to Christ.  
We are people of Covenant, united and uniting.  
We are people of God's extravagant welcome.  
We thank God by working for a just and loving world.

We'll reflect this Sunday on all we learned and make a presentation to the congregation at our vespers service on Sunday December 4, at 4:00pm.

*Be the Change* moment and help serve communion.

On Sunday, December 11<sup>th</sup> we'll spend some time during Sunday School choosing parts and costumes for our **Christmas Pageant on December 18<sup>th</sup>**. There is no rehearsal needed for our pageant and there will be a part for everyone. We'll need some kids to come as angels and animals - the more exotic the animal the better - so any costumes you can pull together at home for these parts would be great.

And parents and older teens, I'm looking for some strong intrepid souls to work the giant puppets. Please let me know if you're game.

## FROM THE CHOIR LOFT

The Advent and Christmas seasons are probably the richest musical time of the year. We all know carols that have special meaning for us, songs that help us recall childhood memories or take us back to a particular time or place. And there are so many beautiful melodies that it is almost impossible to pick one favorite!

On Christmas Eve the choir will be singing two carols that are especially meaningful to me: "Born in the Night, Mary's Child" and "Jesus, Jesus, Rest Your Head."

"Born in the Night" was introduced to this church by my friend and colleague, Janet Dahlberg. It was already beloved by both the choir and the congregation when we came here with the Baptist church in 1988. Janet had set the hymn for choir and a soloist--it was one of the anthems we sang at her memorial service in June.

The original setting was by Geoffrey Ainger, a minister in southeast London, and was written in 1964 to accompany a Christmas play presented by the youth of his church. He wrote both the text and the melody. The hymn is unusual because it includes references to both the crucifixion of Jesus and the second coming.

I decided to use the music again this Christmas but in a different setting. We will be singing an arrangement by Hal H. Hopson that he has performed with his church choir for many years, but has just recently published. Janet and I met Mr. Hopson several times when he came to give workshops in Southampton during the 1990's, so I'm sure she would be happy that we have found yet another way to enjoy a song that she loved.

"Jesus, Jesus, Rest Your Head" brings with it memories of Peggy Anderson since it was included in a well-used copy of songs by John Jacob Niles that she gave me several years ago.

### **YOUTH CALENDAR**

#### **December 4**

Sunday Worship will be at 4:00 pm  
Vespers and Hanging of the Greens  
followed by an all church potluck.  
Confirmants will help Pastor Sarah lead  
the service.

#### **December 18**

No Rehearsal Christmas Pageant  
Come by 9:45 to claim a costume

#### **December 24**

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service of  
Lessons and Carols  
7:00pm

#### **December 25**

All church breakfast and carol sing  
No Nursery Care or Sunday School.  
9:30-11:00

#### **January 1**

We will join Edwards Church at their  
building for a New Year's Day worship  
service.  
No Nursery Care or Sunday School.  
10:00

#### **January 13**

Teen Overnight at First Churches  
8pm-8am

#### **March 3-5**

Youth Lent Retreat in Craigville, MA

(Continued...)

John Jacob Niles (1892-1980) was an American composer and collector of folk music. It is generally believed that he discovered this melody during his travels through southern Appalachia in the early part of the 20th century and that he added his own touches to create the carol we know today. "Jesus, Jesus, rest your head; you have got a manger bed. All the gentlefolk on earth rest in feathers at their birth. Jesus, Jesus, rest your head; you have got a manger bed." The Bell Choir will also be playing an arrangement of this carol on Christmas Eve.

Finally, we invite anyone and everyone to join us for caroling on the front steps on December 17 at 3:00 pm. Come to sing, or just enjoy the merriment, we would love to have you.

We hope you will all carry a song in your heart this Christmas season!  
~ Dana Pasquale, Minister Of Music

## **HAITI**

Have you been thinking about going to Haiti and meeting our CONASPEH partners? If so, consider joining a group that will be traveling to Port-au-Prince February 12-17, 2016. Whatever your talent or interest, ways will be found to share it with the students (preK - 13, nursing & seminary) and staff at CONASPEH. There will be time to do some sightseeing and to be transformed by the mystery and wonder of Haiti. If you are like others who have gone before you, you will return a changed person, likely much wiser and more appreciative. Interested persons should contact David Entin, Judy Sherman, Heidi Rademacher or Pauline Bassett.

## **DECEMBER LECTIONARY**

12/4 ~ Isa 11:1-10 Ps 72:1-7, 18-19. Rom 12:4-13, Matt 3:1-12

12/11 ~ Isa 35:1-10 Ps 146:5-10 or Luke 1:47-55. James 5:7-10, Matt 11:2-11

12/18 ~ Isa 7:10-16 Ps 80:1-7, 17-19 Rom 1:1-7, Matt 1:18-25

12/25 ~ Isa 9:2-7 Ps 96, Titus 2:11-14, Luke 2:1-14 (15-20)

Join us any Monday at Noon for Bible Study. We gather in the Parlor to discuss the week's lectionary. Bring a lunch, Bibles provided. All are welcome.

## ONLINE PHOTO DIRECTORY

We are launching a new online member directory. It is safe, secure and accessible. Everyone will have the option of uploading a photo of your choosing, (no photo sessions), or we would be happy to help add a photo. "There is an app for that...", with clickable links to dial or text someone directly. Perhaps the greatest feature is that you are able to edit your own information. I have already added a photo of myself and my family. You can provide as much or little as you like, and you don't have to wait for the Administrator to update your information if it happens to change. The initial information has been added, and you will be send a letter from the company with member specific credentials. Please expect an email from them. If you would like any assistance with any piece of this directory, please feel free to call the church office for more detailed information.

If you would like to opt out, please feel free to call or email the church office to give notice to what information you would like included.

Thank you,

Vanessa Keillor, Church Administrator

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In the spirit if joy and thanksgiving we announce  
the ordination to ministry of

**Yohah Ralph**

by the  
Hampshire Association of the Massachusetts Conference  
of the  
United Church of Christ

**Sunday, December 18th, 2016 at 6:30 PM**

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at the

**Haydenville Congregational Church  
143 Main St. Haydenville, MA 01039**

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You're invited to bring bells, maracas, or a tambourine  
to join in the processional and recessional music,  
and any outbursts of joy!

A reception in the church hall will follow.  
All are welcome!

# December 2016

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|--|---|
| 12/1 ~ 6:00 Common Ground  | 12/17 ~ 3:00 First Churches Caroling<br>on front steps - All Welcome  |
| 12/2 ~ 7:00 Choir Practice   |   |
| <b>12/4 ~ NO 10AM Worship</b><br><b>4:00 Worship &amp; Potluck</b><br><b>5:00 Cathedral in the Night</b>               | <b>12/18 ~ 10:00 Worship &amp; Sunday<br/>School ~ Pageant Sunday</b><br><b>5:00 Cathedral in the Night</b> |
| 12/5 ~ 10:30 Align the Spine Yoga<br>12:00 Bible Study   | 12/19 ~ 10:30 Align the Spine<br>12:00 Bible Study  |
| 12/6 ~ 12:00 Peace Vigil, in Sanctuary<br>1:30 Peace & Justice/Missions<br>Meeting                                     | 12/20 ~ 12:00 Peace Vigil   |
| 12/7 ~ 5:00 Bell Choir   | 12/21 ~ 7:00 Council  |
| 12/8 ~ 12:30 Dorcas Luncheon   | <b>JANUARY MESSENGER ITEMS DUE</b>  |
| 12/9 ~ 7:00 Choir Practice   | 12/23 ~ 7:00 Choir Practice   |
| 12/10 ~ Low Brow Art Faire   | 12/24 ~ 7:30 Christmas Eve Service;<br>Lessons & Carols   |
| <b>12/11 ~ 10:00 Worship &amp; Sunday<br/>School</b><br><b>11:30 Youth Choir</b><br><b>5:00 Cathedral in the Night</b> | <b>12/25 ~ 10:00 Vespers and Carols</b><br><b>Merry Christmas</b><br><b>5:00 Cathedral in the Night</b>     |
| 12/12 ~ 10:30 Align the Spine<br>6:30 Vision Team<br>12:00 Bible Study   | 12/26 ~ 10:30 Align the Spine<br>12:00 Bible Study  |
| 12/13 ~ 12:00 Peace Vigil, in<br>Sanctuary   | 12/27 ~ 12:00 Peace Vigil, in<br>Sanctuary  |
| 12/14 ~ 6:30 Trustees  | 12/31 ~ FIRST NIGHT EVENTS  |
| 12/15 ~ 6:00 Common Ground   | 1/1 ~ 10:00 Worship @ Edwards<br>Church   |
| 12/16 ~ 7:00 Choir Practice  |   |

## 2016 CHRISTMAS POINSETTIA

Once again we will fill the Sanctuary with beautiful red and white poinsettias. If you would like to memorialize or honor a loved one with a flower, please call, email or drop this form off in the church office by December 10th. If you would like more than 1 flower, please indicate how many you would like by the color and if you want to keep/donate them. Flowers this year are \$13.00

**Red**   
  **White**   
  **Keep**   
  **Donate**

**In loving memory of** \_\_\_\_\_

**In honor of** \_\_\_\_\_

**Donated By,** \_\_\_\_\_