
FISHERS ISLAND UNION CHAPEL

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

821 CRESCENT AVENUE, P.O. BOX 192

FISHERS ISLAND, NEW YORK 06390

fichapel1@gmail.com

www.fiunionchapel.org



"No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here."

CHAPEL HAPPENINGS HOLIDAY 2020

Dear Friends,

Do you hold a memory of a perfect Christmas? I remember many wonderful December 25ths, but as far as "perfect" goes, hmmm...I am not sure. Isn't there always something a little amiss? The food overcooked, the dog knocks over the tree, a gift doesn't arrive in time, a blizzard disrupts travel plans?

This year, the pandemic has just about guaranteed our Christmas to be far from "perfect." Vaccines are coming, thankfully, but we are not out of the woods yet. This year's holiday for many people comes with the pain of serious losses, and for others more fortunate, the less difficult but still unpleasant loss of traditions and and loving company we always look forward to. This year, it's about precautions.

Perhaps we can take some comfort that the very first Christmas 2,000 years ago in Palestine took place amid circumstances that were far from ideal.

The quaint nativity scenes on Christmas cards don't reveal the backstory as told in Luke and Matthew. Young Mary's pregnancy is scandalous. Joseph comes close to breaking off the relationship. They already bear the strain of living under Roman rule, and now there is an edict about a new tax. So off go the new couple to Bethlehem to register, and in that city, far from home, Mary delivers her baby in a crude barn. The crowds have taken all the rooms, and they have taken no note of this child's birth. They don't know that unto them was born that day in the City of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

But we know, and that is the joy of Christmas. Christ is born, and is born every time we allow our Savior to bring peace to us and peace to earth, even in times of crisis. The birth of Christ into the world means that when pain and suffering seem to overtake our human lives, God is ready to break through with justice and mercy. The scripture makes it plain: a sweet baby boy is born to a young, inexperienced mother amidst confusion and hardship. God's will is to send Jesus to where we really live.

Christmas 2020 like other Christmases won't be perfect. But Christians throughout the world have a chance this year to celebrate the true meaning of Christmas more than before. *Emmanuel* -- "God with us!" -- means the Lord shows up in unexpected circumstances, unprecedented times - even now.

As we await the holy-day with so much amiss in our world, let us remember that there is nothing amiss in Christ. "Do not be afraid," said the angel to the shepherds (Luke 2:10). "I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people."

Blessings to you from my heart for a safe and truly Merry Christmas!

In Christ's love,
Candy

UNION CHAPEL CONTACTS

Church office: (631) 788-7898

fichapel1@gmail.com

www.fiunionchapel.org

Minister: Rev. Candace Whitman

candy@fiunionchapel.org

Trustee Chairperson: Louisa Evans

Administrative Assistant: Diane

Dexter

Candy's cell: 203-293-5470

CHURCH BUSINESS HOURS

Monday, Thursday, Friday:

10 – 1 pm

Tuesday, 10-noon

Closed on Wednesday

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**THANK YOU
TO OUR VOLUNTEER ANGELS
FOR MAKING HOMEMADE
SOUPS THIS PAST FALL.
THEY ARE FROZEN AND CAN
BE FOUND IN THE UNION
CHAPEL FREEZER.**



LIGHT THE STEEPLE MINISTRY

A soft light has been installed inside our “steeple” to be lit from sunset to midnight. The Trustees invite you to “Light the Steeple” in honor of or in memory of a loved one by donating \$25 to Union Chapel. Just submit the form below, and we will light the steeple on the appropriate week and print this remembrance in our newsletter.

LIGHT THE STEEPLE FORM

In Honor of OR In Memory of
(circle one)

Given by

For the week of

Make check payable to and mail this form to: Fishers Island Union Chapel,
P.O. Box 192, Fishers Island, NY 06390

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“Don’t let anyone look down on you...but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity.”

- 1 Timothy 4:12

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ALL SAINTS' DAY November 1, 2020

On All Saints' Day we traditionally remember those from our church family who have passed during the past 12 months. This year we remembered the following with love:

**Douglas Harry Baldwin
Frank Burr
Miggie Bryan
Chris Porter
Kevin Rafferty
Rev. Kate Latimer
Rev. Daniel Martin
Gilbert Alan Parch
Joseph Robert Berkowitz**

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BEAUTIFUL CHURCH SEASONS AHEAD FOR WINTER!

Despite the pandemic we continue to be a community in worship – virtually, of course, but still experiencing the joy and peace of being together on Sunday morning in God's presence. Fortunately, we are beginning the church season of Advent, a season of expectation. In the new year, we will observe Epiphany, a season centered on the light of Christ.

Please consider joining us for our Wednesday *lectio divina* zoom meetings during Advent as a space to meditate upon the scriptures that tell of the coming of Christ.

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RECORD RAFFLE SALES FOR LAURA EDWARDS' QUILT



Thanks to the quilting expertise of Laura Edwards we were able to have a raffle of her quilt, "Blue Eyed Crabs" this fall. Hailey and James Myers were excellent ticket sellers at the Post

Office on Saturday mornings. The winner of the quilt was Nate Smith, Susie Brinckerhoff's grandson. Congratulations Nate and a special THANK YOU TO LAURA.

Combined with the sale of used golf balls (thank you, Mary Pankciewicz!), the raffle raised over \$1000 for the church budget.

**Don't let the dark
days of winter get
you down! Daylight
savings "spring
ahead" starts on
Sunday, March 14, 2021.**



Set your clocks forward one hour before you go to sleep on Saturday. Daylight Savings Time begins!

THANK YOU FROM ISLANDERS FOR ISLANDERS

On behalf of the four churches of Fishers Island, heartfelt thanks to those who generously contributed to the Islanders for Islanders fund this season. This program is focused on helping sustain our year-round community, and with needs potentially greater this winter due

to COVID-19, we are grateful to be prepared for situations that may arise. We are a safety net for food and utilities, as well as providing coverage for counseling as well as financial support for start-up businesses and credentialing. We recognize how much the support of the community helps us be a resource for our winter residents when needed. Thank you!

STILL LOOKING FOR GOOD USED GOLF BALLS?



A great Christmas gift for all golfers who tend to lose golf balls.

We will continue to sell gently used golf balls in the church office. Call (631-788-7898) or email Union Chapel at fichapel1@gmail.com to set up a time to look them over and pick them up in the church office. Have cash or a check made payable to **FI Union Chapel Thrift Shop**. Thank you!

2020 Union Chapel Appeal Update

Many thanks to all who have donated funds to date to keep our church in operation through the pandemic. Your financial donations allow Union Chapel to continue to be responsive to the needs of the Island Community and to keep the Chapel running. If you wish to continue to support our mission, please make checks payable to:

Fishers Island Union Chapel

P.O. Box 192

Fishers Island, NY 06390

Please also partner with us in prayer for the safety and health of our Island, our behind-the-scenes workers, and for God's love to be a real presence through our church and all the churches of Fishers Island at this unprecedented time in our nation.

1 Corinthians 13:13

And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

NIFTY NEWS FROM OUR THRIFTY SHOP:

GRAND RE-OPENING IN SPRING...HOPE SO!

Although the Union Chapel Thrift Shop has been closed due to the pandemic, they hope it will be safe enough to reopen next season. In the meantime, thank you to Louisa Evans and Susie Renna for sorting and shelving this summer as needed, and to all who made it possible to sell some items via Facebook this summer. Right now the Thrift Shop is accepting donations. Please only drop off clean, lightly used articles. What's the test? Would you buy it? If not, please recycle it elsewhere. The bin outside the door at the Thrift is checked regularly for donations. If you have larger items, give Louisa a call (631-788-7054) to make arrangements.

Nicely boxed golf balls are available at the Thrift, in the business office at Union Chapel, and in front of the post office if the weather is warm. Be sure to save your egg cartons for golf balls.

Community Unity: Operation Christmas Child 2020

Union Chapel and community members joined in the spirit of giving again this year through Operation Christmas Child, a program run by Samaritan's Purse. Purchasing toys, school supplies, toiletries, games, and other items, our "santas" filled 33 of these festive boxes that will soon be shipped to children in need around the world, accompanied by the message of Christ's saving love. We are thrilled to be able to support this ministry with these cheery reminders of our love and prayers! Thank you to all who participated!



QUOTES WITH A SMILE

(Thanks to Governor Cuomo's "Deep Breath Moments -10/23/20)

FOR THE COVID-19 DICTIONARY:

New York Tough – "coming together, being strong, putting differences aside, getting through this."

Blursday – "When all the days of the week start to blur together."

Rona – "For when you just don't have the energy to say the whole thing."

Quarantine Fifteen – "The pounds a few of us have put on while staying at home."

Six-Foot Shuffle – "When strangers walking down the street or waiting in line move to give each other six feet of distance."

Chin Guard – "A mask worn below the mouth and nose."

SEND US YOUR NEW CORONA-LINGO!



**A SAFE AND MERRY CHRISTMAS
AND BLESSED 2021
TO ALL OUR MEMBERS AND FRIENDS!**

Our Community Christmas Eve service will take place on Zoom.
The exact time on December 24 will be announced.



CHRISTMAS FLOWERS

It is that time of year again!

At this time of year our thoughts turn to beauty of the Christmas season. In December, the Union Chapel altar will be decorated with poinsettias to be enjoyed during our zoom services.



To contribute toward these flowers, please complete the form below (legibly please!) and send it in along with your donation. Checks may be made payable to Fishers Island Union Chapel. Our mailing address is F.I. Union Chapel, P.O. Box 192, Fishers Island, NY 06390.

GIVEN BY:

IN MEMORY IN HONOR OF IN CELEBRATION OF
(circle one)

AMOUNT OF CONTRIBUTION: _____

Thank you!

ZOOM – ZOOM – ZOOM

We are zooming along and staying strong!

What is our track record? Since the shut down in mid-March we have not missed a church service (except when Candy took a needed two-week vacation in October). We immediately jumped into the Zoom format thanks to our musicians, tech staff and especially to our Pastor, Rev. Candy Whitman. We have been trying to cope and correct any technical problems thanks to both John Klimczak and Tim Patterson.

Despite missing meeting in the sanctuary, there are some highlights to enjoy! For example, we have added seasonal banners in the background in the church during the Zoom service. Currently there is a very colorful Fall/Thanksgiving banner. A wonderful message and the bright orange and yellow leaves are brightening the altar area. Be sure to watch when we change to the beautiful Advent/Christmas banner.

Music for the service is being recorded in the church on Saturday afternoons. Doing this enables us to use the church organ, enjoy the church acoustics and observe social distancing while practicing and recording for the Zoom service on Sunday. We have had singers join us – many thanks especially to Peter Burr who never missed a recording session this summer while he was on the Island! Many thanks also to Krysia Burnham, Louise Packard, Hailey Myers, Tim Patterson and occasionally me. The trumpet is played by John Klimczak. We have added trumpet/organ duets, vocal/organ selections, and singers/trumpet/organ music for a variety. We are always looking for additional musical volunteers – voice or instrument. We aren't looking for perfection, just people who like to make a joyful noise to the Lord. We have added the words to the hymns during Zoom so you can sing at home (muted unfortunately, due to the transmission issues) but think positively - you can sing without a mask!

For the scripture reading, Candy often gives background information about the Biblical message. It is nice having both Candy and another reader deliver the scripture passages often individually or combined. We thank Laura Edwards for reading lovely poems and stories. These are a nice addition to the service.

Candy's reflections help us interpret and understand the scripture reading and how it relates to our daily lives. She often follows that with a chance to have input from our Zoom viewers and listeners.

"Nature Notes" are always inspiring – videos, surprise photos and information from Candy about the wonders of creation which is always interesting. She is always looking for additional topics. Just email the church with your suggestions (fichapell@gmail.com).

Prayer time is especially moving. It is a quiet period to center our thoughts, prayers and actions into our everyday life. It always ends with "The Lord's Prayer."

We enjoy seeing your faces and you joining in our lively discussions during the service. To join us, just send an email to the church requesting the zoom link for the Sunday gathering.

Diane D. Dexter

A Poem for Advent

To Listen, To Look

Is it all sewn up – my life?
Is it at this point so predictable,
 So orderly,
 So neat,
 So arranged,
 So right,
That I don't have time or space
 For listening for the rustle of angels' wings
 Or running to stables to see a baby?
Could this be what he meant when he said
 Listen, those who have ears to hear...
 Look, those who have eyes to see?
O God, give me the humbleness of those shepherds
 Who saw in the cold December darkness
 The Coming of Light
 The Advent of Love!



By Ann Weems as published in her collection *Kneeling in Bethlehem*

A Prayer for Christmas Day

We thank you, God,
For your gift of Jesus Christ to the entire world.
We thank you that Christ's coming
Makes hope, peace, love and joy possible
For every person in every nation.
Encourage us to do our part
To bring goodwill and peace to our families,
Our churches, our neighborhoods, and the world.
Now let your Spirit put us in touch with you,
The living God, as we seek to remain faithful in these strange times,
Grateful that you have come to be with us in all things, and you are still.
May we live this prayer to your glory. Amen.

- Adapted from a prayer in the United Church of Christ *Book of Worship*