



THE TOWLINE



**December
2023**



**Normandy Park
United Church
of Christ**
19247 1st Ave S
Seattle, WA

(206) 824-1770

www.npucc.org

Pastor:

Rev. Amy Hitchens
amy@npucc.org

**Music Accompanist and
Choir Director:**

Cindy Dow
cindy@npucc.org

Office Manager:

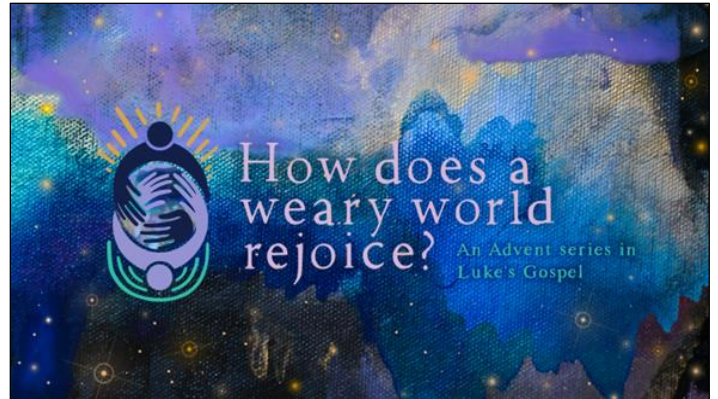
Vernadette Lapena
vernadette@npucc.org

Office Hours:

9:15 am – 2:00 pm
Tuesday – Friday
(subject to change)

Dear Siblings in Christ,

As we enter the Advent season, we will follow along in the Gospel of Luke, asking the question, “How does a weary world rejoice?” Just how do we celebrate, with hope and anticipation, the breaking of the Christ child in this world when so much has gone wrong? How do we claim joy anyway, even when there is so much violence, so much mean spiritedness, so much grief in our world today? I hope you will wrestle with these questions with me and with our community of faith this season.



On Sunday, after we have lit that first candle of hope, we will have some things for you to do and to take home with you (and if you are mostly on zoom these days, we can mail this out to you as well!): we have an Advent devotional and an Advent calendar, there are more votive Advent candles to pick up if you need to replenish your set from last year; and last but not least, we will have 20 gingerbread house kits to build in the Fellowship Hall as our Advent workshop activity. So, whether young or young at heart, come prepared to build a gingerbread house that dares to spark joy. One of the ways we can rejoice together is by having a little fun together with a lot of sugar icing and gum drops to carry us through.

Within the Advent devotional, which I hope you will refer to each week of Advent, you will have the opportunity to reflect on what brings you joy and where the weariness has lived. There is gorgeous artwork, gospel reflections, poetry to read, and some music to too!

The Second Sunday of Advent there is an opportunity to go caroling after worship (talk to Alice if you are interested); the Third Sunday of Advent we will have our annual pageant where everyone can participate, and the Fourth Sunday of Advent this year is also Christmas Eve—so you can come to one or two worship services that day—there will be something for everyone and lots of wonderful music and carols at both services.

This Advent, let us hold space for our weariness and our joy. May we be intentional about making time for God who knows what we are carrying—who knows where the joy and the pain resides in us. We can so easily be swept away with overwhelm this time of year...so let us carve out some space in our hearts and minds for the arrival of the Christ child.

In Hope and Joy,

Rev. Amy



December Calendar of Events

ONLINE: invitations/directions for accessing these events will be shared via email:

- Sunday Worship Services: 10:00 am
- Church Council meeting: Tuesday, December 12, 7:00 pm
- Bibles & Brews: Friday, December 8, 7:00 pm

IN-PERSON: we encourage wearing a mask and practicing reasonable physical distancing to keep vulnerable people safe:

- Sunday Worship Services: 10:00 am, Sanctuary
- Sunday School: youth are dismissed to attend class during Worship, except on Communion Sundays and special occasions
- Taproot Theatre's "Innkeeper's Christmas": Saturday, December 2, 5:00 pm, Sanctuary
- Youth shop for Mary's Place: Sunday, December 3, 8:30 am, Burien Fred Meyer
- Advent Workshop: Sunday, December 3, 11:30 am, Fellowship Hall
- Fall Book Study: Tuesday, December 5, 12:30 am, Fireside Room
- Lunch Bunch: Wednesday, December 6, 11:30 am, Anthony's at the Des Moines Marina
- Severe Weather Shelter Warm Clothing Drive: Sunday, December 10
- Christmas Caroling: Sunday, December 10, 11:30 am, meet at church to carpool
- Parish Care Committee meeting: Wednesday, December 13, 1:00 pm, Fireside Room
- Slot Car Racing: Friday, December 15, 6:00 pm, Fellowship Hall
- Christmas Pageant: Sunday, December 17, 10:00 am, Sanctuary
- Christmas Cookies and Wassail: Sunday, December 17, 11:15 am, Fireside Room
- Christmas Eve Services: Sunday, December 24, 10:00 am and 5:00 pm, Sanctuary
- New Year's Eve Service/Breakfast Church: Sunday, December 31, 10:00 am, Fellowship Hall (in-person only, no Zoom available)



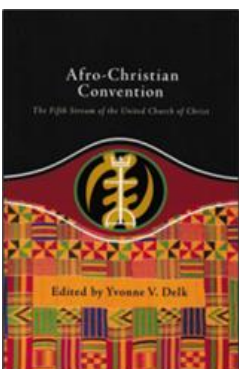
Innkeeper's Christmas

On Saturday, December 2, at 5:00 pm, NPUCC joins Southminster Presbyterian Church in presenting "Innkeeper's Christmas" by Taproot

Theatre in our Sanctuary. The event is **FREE**, but we ask attendees to either sign up on Eventbrite or the sign-up sheet in the church office so we know how many to expect. Following the play, enjoy cocoa, cookies, and activity sheets for the kids. ALL are welcome! Here is a synopsis of the story: In bustling Bethlehem, innkeepers bicker about squeezing in an unexpected expecting couple. Amidst their own dreams of parenthood, doubt and resentment cloud their hearts as the woman claims to carry the Messiah. Unbeknownst to them, the arrival of this couple and an orphan boy will delight their deepest desires, reshaping their lives in unimaginable ways."

Advent Workshop

Following Worship on Sunday, December 3rd, all are welcome to pick up Advent devotionals and Advent calendars as well as decorate gingerbread houses in Fellowship Hall. Cookies, coffee, and tea will also be served.



FALL BOOK DISCUSSION

We continue our book discussion of Afro-Christian Convention | The Fifth Stream of the United Church of Christ as our resource. In December we will meet for the last time in the Fireside Room on

Tuesday the 5th a half hour earlier at 12:30 pm. For those who have the book, we will read Chapter 7 through the end, and we will finish watching the video of the contributors of the book.



Our next meet-up will be Wednesday, December 6 at 11:30 am at Anthony's in Des

Moines. We are limited to twenty if we want to sit together. Also, mark your calendars for The Class Act again on January 10 at 11:30 am. Contact Malinda with any questions or ideas for where you'd like to meet up for lunch.



We're only having one **Zoom** only meet-up in December on Friday, December 8 at 7 pm to study/discuss from Exodus and Leviticus for Everyone by John Goldingay.

If you purchased a gift card for the families at Mary's Place, please give them to Lynn by Sunday, December 3rd so we can deliver them. Thank you for your generosity!

Nativity Angels

As you are going through your Christmas decorations, do you have any appropriate size-angels that you'd like to donate to our collection of people and animals for the creche that we assemble at our evening Christmas Eve service? If you do, please bring to the church office. Thanks in advance.



Thank you from The Christmas People!

Thank you to the many volunteers who helped assemble 302 Blessing (hygiene) Bags on November 25th! The bags, valued at \$14,000, were delivered to five shelters, including Mary's Place in Burien.



Clothing Drive



On Sunday, December 10th, we'll be collecting warm clothing for the Severe Weather Shelter at Highline United Methodist Church. Needed items include: adult size warm, waterproof coats, shoes/boots, gloves and hats. Financial contributions are also welcome. If you'd like to help inventory and organize their supply closet, please see Nancy K. for more information about volunteering.

Supporting Palestinian Christians



With the devastation in Gaza this fall, it is important for us to remember and learn from the Palestinian Christians who call Palestine home. Rev. Dr. Mitri Raheb is one of those people we should all know. Erin Grimm, NPUCC member, brought Mitri's work to Pastor Amy's attention and now Pastor Amy is inviting you to read Rev. Dr. Mitri Raheb's Christmas Eve sermon from last year:

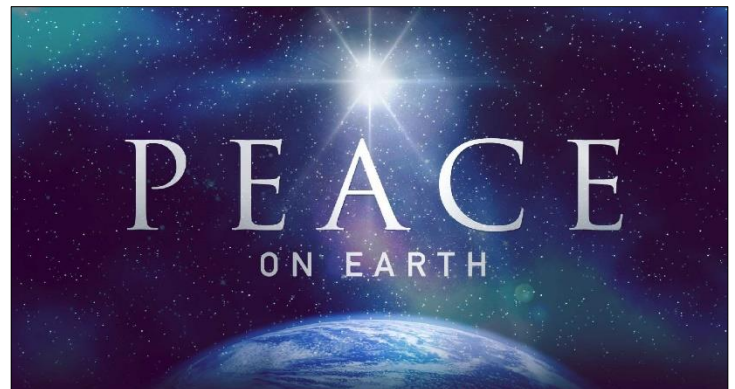
<https://www.mitiraheb.org/en/article/1484299023>

Erin and Todd are raising money to support Rev. Dr. Raheb's ministry. If you would like to know more, here is a link to the Palestinian university of which Rev. Dr. Raheb is the President:

<https://www.brightstarsbethlehem.com/>

Additionally, Erin was recently featured on a Slate podcast about mental health:

<https://slate.com/podcasts/hearmeout/2023/11/psychiatry-isnt-a-panacea>



Thank you to all who attended the Thanksgiving Eve Prayer Service at Southminster Presbyterian Church and donated to the Des Moines Area Food Bank. \$749 was collected along with canned and packaged food!



Calling all cookie bakers!

On Sunday, December 17, following Worship and the Christmas Pageant, cookies and wassail will be served in the Fireside Room. Additionally, Ruth and Fred are collecting home baked cookies to distribute to 8-10 local shelters. If you'd like to provide a batch or two of your favorite Christmas cookies for either event, they'll be sure to be enjoyed by many!



GIVING STATEMENTS

By now, you should have received your "near" end-of-year giving statement via email letting you know how you stand on your pledge. Let Lynn know if you need her to re-send it or if you have any questions regarding it. Remember all offerings must be received at church by December 31 for them to show up on your 2023 giving statement.



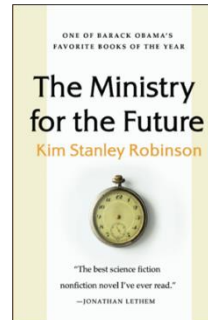
Sunday School continues with the WHO IS GOD? – Engaging The

Mystery" from the "Generation Why" curriculum. On the Sundays that Pastor Amy is off, we'll use the "Simple Sundays" curriculum because they can be used with little or no preparation. Please let Lynn know which Sundays you are available to teach or help.

Many Messiahs Concert

On December 16th, at UW's Meany Center for the Performing Arts, get ready to experience a holiday concert like no other, celebrating the power of activism and unity. This is not your grandmother's *Messiah*! Our diverse group of talented artists has reimagined Handel's masterpiece, *Messiah*,

transforming ancient stories into a modern-day urgent call to action. Tickets are available on a pay-what-you-wish basis, so pick a price that feels right for you (yes, that's \$0-100) and get ready to groove and sing along to songs of hope and liberation! Check out our website manymessiahs.com for details on upcoming community circle events for deeper conversation and an opportunity to join us onstage as part of the community choir.



BOOK RECOMMENDATION

The Ministry for the Future by Kim Stanley Robinson, Science Fiction, 2020. Recommended by Lynn.

"Established in 2025, the purpose of the new

organization was simple: To advocate for the world's future generations and to protect all living creatures, present and future. It soon became known as the Ministry for the Future, and this is its story. From legendary science fiction author Kim Stanley Robinson comes a vision of climate change unlike any ever imagined. Told entirely through fictional eyewitness accounts, this is a masterpiece of the imagination, the story of how climate change will affect us all over the decades to come. Its setting is not a desolate, post-apocalyptic world, but a future that is almost upon us, and in which we might just overcome the extraordinary challenges we face."

Do you have a social or environmental justice book that you've read and would like to recommend to others? Send its name to Lynn and she'll include it in the next Towline



A MESSAGE FROM REV. FRED HUTCHINSON

In March 2023 we purchased a new 2022 - Carry-On 5x8-3 model 5x8CGR trailer to carry a large electric wheelchair. I was not expected to walk again following neuro surgery for spinal injury. Two months of PT at home, I am now able to ambulate with a walker. Praise God.

Trailer traveled less than 5 miles from dealership to our backyard near convention center in Yakima, WA. Includes ramp, all locks, wheel lock, trailer dolly. Value: \$5000.

We would like to get some money for the trailer, but Ruth and I are willing to give outright to a 501 (c) (3) for use in homeless services, food bank, camping ministry, etc. Not for resale or personal profit.

Send us a note, tell us your story: pialley@jps.net or 206-719-4979.



Please see the complete list of needed items on the kiosk at church, but here are a few urgently needed items: new pajamas (all sizes), new underwear (M-XL), winter coats (XL+), umbrellas, Lysol wipes, creamer, coffee, and sugar. Thank you!



One Home One Future invites you to gather in-person with others from your congregation, community, or family and friends to watch a screening of "The Letter" on December 13 from 4:00 to 6:00 pm.

The film "The Letter" documents the journeys of five people who received letters inviting them to a meeting with Pope Francis to discuss climate change. It tells the story of these strangers who give voice to the young, poor, indigenous and wildlife. This is a multi-faith event.

Please let Lynn know if you would like to watch this at NPUCC and she will set it up.



BREAK FREE FROM PLASTICS

Join Jewish Earth Alliance, United Church of Christ, and many Blessed Tomorrow

partners in supporting the Break Free From Plastic Pollution Act (H.R.6053/S.3127) which includes strategies to reduce single-use plastic and packaging nationally, provides finances for recycling, composting and reusable infrastructure and prohibits the dumping of plastic pellets in our nation's waterways. It's essential to educate Members of Congress about the threat posed by increasing plastic production and pollution. Click [HERE](#) to learn more.

ENNEAGRAM

Enneagram will be taking a break during December and meet next on the last Wednesday of the month, January 31 at 1 pm in the Fireside Room. Your homework is to read Type 2 – The Path from Anger to Serenity (pages 11 – 35) from in The Enneagram Guide to Waking Up: Find Your Path, Face Your Shadow, Discover Your True Self.

Merry Christmas



December Birthdays

Jeni Watson	12/7
Kirsten Pangelinan	12/18
Michael McPherson	12/27
Jill Tiffany	12/29
Cathy Barton	12/30

December Anniversaries

Mark Buckley and Steve Kuntz	12/9
Barbara and Jim Gregg	12/21