



The Foreside Community Church United Church of Christ

December 2024

Connecting to God ~ Nurturing Community ~ Discovering how our Lives Make a Difference

**Don't miss the FORESIDE FAIRS
Catch the Christmas Spirit!!
Saturday, December 7**

9AM - 1PM Saint Mary's Church

8:30AM - 1PM Foreside Community Church

Saint Mary's Church
43 Foreside Road

Foreside Community Church
340 Foreside Road

Holiday Décor & Gifts,
Jewelry & other Treasures,
Soup, Lobster Stew, Cookie Walk,
Bake Sale, and so much MORE!
Come Sparkle with us!

Buy a gift or festive food,
wreaths with bows to set the mood.
Santa Claus and one of the elves
will run the kids' store from 10 to 12!
Vintage décor, greens galore
Silent auction and much more.
O come! O come!

Enter special drawing at Skillin's by passing in special cards from both fairs.

THE FORESIDE COMMUNITY CHURCH, UCC
340 Foreside Road
Falmouth, Maine 04105-1428

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Pastoral Notes

Advent: Look Closer

Dear Foreside Friends,

Our theme for this Advent is *Look Closer: Discovering God*. In a world in which challenges and chaos are scrawled across screens, newspapers and more, I think we find ourselves in the position our ancestors found as they waited for signs of God's coming, and of God's promised realm of peace. We can find ourselves seeking God working in the largest possible scale: a force greater than the world, a great and powerful global leader, a great quaking arrival with roiling seas and blaring horns of victory. (Those may come later... I don't ever want to speak ill of horns in our church!)

But the promise of this season is that the work of God's redemption begins in the breath of a tiny and vulnerable infant... in the glow of a distant star... in the murmur of flocks moving in the night. The sign of God's in-breaking is most especially known in things that are very small in the global scale. So, we must hone our ability to look for God in small things, like letting our eyes adjust to the dim light of this season. Only then can we begin to experience the fullness of a Christ who came to know us in our own flesh and blood, and not some distant heavenly throne above it all.

This Advent, then, I would invite you to *Look Closer...* make a practice of seeking signs of God being born anew in us, and in the world at the very every day and small-scale level.

In fact, I'd like to invite you to share those visions of Christ's birth and the promise of God-with-us. **Each week, if you encounter some small sign which offers you a sign of hope (week 1), of peace (week 2), of joy (week 3), or of love (week 4)... capture that when you get a chance, will you please? If you take a picture, or simply want to write a brief description, please send those sightings of God's coming to advent@foresidechurch.org. Do not be surprised if those submissions make their way into worship in some way in the weeks to come!**

On behalf of our staff and leadership, and all our permutations of family, I want to send you and yours prayers for blessings of hope, peace, joy, and love to be revealed in ways great and small in all the days to come... and for a very Merry Christmas to come!

Advent peace,



Advent and Christmas Schedule ~ 2024 ~



Join us in celebrating the coming season of **Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love...**
and telling again of the wonder of **God-with-Us in Christmas!**

Sunday, December 1: 9:30 a.m., First Sunday of Advent Worship with Communion

Saturday, December 7: 8:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m., Annual Christmas Fair!

Sunday, December 8: 9:30 a.m., Second Sunday of Advent Worship, Kids Sing! All ages are invited to come and raid the costume closet as we sing and bring the nativity scene to life!

Sunday, December 15: 9:30 a.m., Third Sunday of Advent Worship

Sunday, December 15: 1:00 p.m., Community Caroling with Falmouth Congregational Church for the residents of the Legacy and Falmouth Houses @ OceanView

Sunday, December 22: 9:30 a.m., Fourth Sunday of Advent Worship and Special Music

Christmas Eve ~ Tuesday, December 24:

4:00 p.m., Family Christmas Eve with Bells

7:00 p.m., Lessons and Carols

11:00 p.m., Candlelight Service with Communion

Sunday, December 29: 1st Sunday of Christmas Worship



November 25, 2024

Dear Foreside Friends,

I wanted to share with you a note of gratitude and wonder for the ministry that God works in and through this beloved community. On a recent beautiful November day, I was blessed to travel with a small team to the Lewis family's home and share in the joy as we delivered a fully accessible van to them. Six months after our church undertook the task of raising \$80,000 necessary to offer this sign of support after Michelle Lewis's tragic medical crisis in which she lost her extremities, we arrived in a converted Toyota Sienna to allow Michelle and her family to travel together: a gift, free and clear—no strings attached but the bonds of community and care.

As their children jumped in and explored the wonder of ramps and cup holders and picked our "their" seats, I asked Michelle where she wanted to travel first. She instantly replied, "I'm excited to go to the grocery store." We both laughed, but then thought more of it, realizing here was a deep truth: it is the ordinary patterns of life and family that we miss the most when we have been visited by tragedy or crisis. What was being delivered was not just a ride, it was a chance to reclaim a sense of agency and stability in a time of upheaval and disorientation. What a blessing, to be able to offer that simple and profound gift to another in the name of God's love. But there are so many thanks to share for this blessing:

- To the wonderful steering committee who guided and led this work: Jill Fox, Cynthia Beggs, Dorothy Eckhardt, Catherine Hannon, and to Christina Sklarz, who tracked every detail.
- To Dotty Blanchette and the Falmouth Food Pantry for helping us to coordinate additional fundraising, care, and support for the Lewises.
- To faithful and fun auctioneers, Carol Ward and Lisa Nash, who helped encourage joyful giving by their leadership in the festive "One Pound Auction" on June 30th.
- And a special thanks to our own Kurt Eckhardt and the people of Corporate Fleet Leasing for their expertise, thoughtfulness, and thoroughness in locating, purchasing, and preparing the van for the family.

Finally, many thanks to each of you who participated in this effort through your generosity, your encouragement, your commitment to join in service with our congregation, and your faithful witness: providing a sign of God's care to a neighbor in need. You are a blessing to our community and to others.

I mentioned to Michelle how proud I am—how awestruck I am—at the generosity and joy Foreside Community Church can gather and send into the world. She said simply, "You have people with incredible gifts in your congregation who can do incredible things...and quickly!" I agree, and I rejoice in the power of the Holy Spirit here among you and in the invitation to serve God and our neighbors in the Way of Christ with you each new day.

Blessings to you in the holy days of Advent to come!

The Rev. Geoff Parker - Pastor

"This has been a sign for us that we are not alone in such a tough time, and we have neighbors and community who show up for us and care for us." – Michelle Lewis



Above, from L-R: Wes, Kurt Eckhardt, Nathan and Michelle Lewis, Juniper, Dotty Blanchette, Jill Fox, Cynthia Beggs, and Dorothy Eckhardt on delivery day!

*It's Fair week!
Here's the schedule.....*



Thursday Nov. 28 ~ Blessed Thanksgiving Day to You and Yours!

Friday Nov. 29 ~ Wreath decorating and order filling, hopefully, as long as the wreaths have arrived!!

Monday Dec 2 ~ Robin and her boxwood ladies build beautiful trees

Monday ~ Tuesday Dec 2-3 – put up lattices and ceiling branches and lights

Tuesday Dec 3 ~ Men's AA meets in fellowship hall in the evening

Wednesday Dec 4, 9 AM ~ Muscles needed to put up tables, pull down boxes. Won't take long – Don't make your little old lady friends do this! Full steam ahead!

Thursday-Friday Dec 5-6 ~ Beehive of activity arranging, fluffing, watering and prettifying everywhere. Baked goods are delivered.

Friday Dec 6, 5 PM ~ Break out the champagne and sparkling cider for a little church party and early purchases while the selection is at its best!

**Saturday Dec 7 ~ FAIR!
8:30 doors open to a deluge of shoppers!**

1 PM ~ Cleanup begins ~ unsold stage items boxed to go to Goodwill, jewelry boxed up for next year, Timeless Treasures become suddenly less timeless!

Sunday Dec 8 ~ More Fair! – Church goes buy at least another \$1000 of goodies!

**Silent Auction continues through Dec 15th!
Bids encouraged!**

Sunday Dec 15 ~ Silent auction online bids close at 10 AM, and final bids end in person promptly at noon!



UPDATES, REPORT OUTS, AND UPCOMING EVENTS

Travelogue Hosts Needed



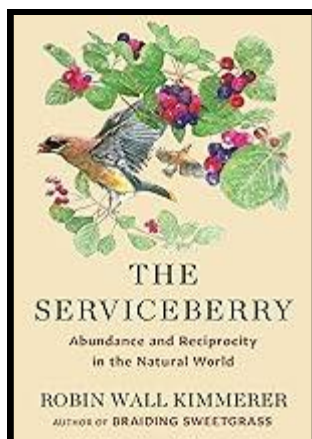
Have you traveled anywhere where you have taken pictures and would be willing to share your adventure with the rest of our community? Travelogues are the way to do this. They are immensely popular during the winter months. We hope to offer a travelogue in the months of January, February, March, and April. However, to do this we need you. They are not difficult to do, just put a file together of your favorite photos from a trip and then share them with the group. Each travelogue runs about 1 hour with time for questions and discussion included. We love to explore places close to home as well as those far away.

Please contact Liz Ventre if you are willing to share an adventure. Her email is eventre1@maine.rr.com. Can't wait to see where we get to explore this year!

Book Group Starting in January

Beginning on Tuesday January 7th at 9 a.m., please join us while we read *The Serviceberry: Abundance and Reciprocity in the Natural World* by Robin Wall Kimmerer, the author of *Braiding Sweetgrass*. Amazon says this new book is “a bold and inspiring vision for how to orient our lives around gratitude, reciprocity and community, based on the lessons of the natural world.” She focuses on serviceberries and how its relationship with the world is one of “reciprocity, interconnectedness, and gratitude.” She suggests that this might be the better model than what we practice today. Her quote is “All flourishing is Mutual.”

We will read *The Serviceberry* slowly over several weeks and have a discussion around what we have read. As we get closer to the date, we will let everyone know exactly how much to read for January 7th. I suspect the discussion will be lively based upon the discussions we had around *Braiding Sweetgrass*. Please join us. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to Liz Ventre at eventre1@maine.rr.com.



A True Potluck, A Great Success!!

You asked for more potlucks, so we tried it. Pete loves potluck but I worried if we would all be eating just cornbread for dinner last night or just baked beans. However, I should not have worried. We had only one cornbread and two baked beans and lots of other variety. We had chilis, an African bean dish, a three-sister salad, pumpkin bread, squash, turkey, squash macaroni and cheese ball (who knew such a thing existed and were so yummy) and desserts. I am sure I have forgotten some things, but I am also sure they were tasty. The meal was well rounded and delicious. No one left hungry.

More importantly we had wonderful community conversations and a night out without spending an arm and a leg. Best yet, everyone pitched in. Thank you, John Bischof, for the wonderful starting blessing and thanks to Micheal for reminding us of the how the Three Sisters work together in community to help each other grow. Much like we work in community to make these events happen. Thank you to all who helped set up and make the tables look great with just what I could round up from my house (an hour before I realized I should probably have centerpieces – good thing squash were on sale this week as I had an abundance, and they graced many a table). Thank you to all of you who helped put all the tables and chairs away and cleared the dishes and those who washed them, dried them, and put them away. Many hands made light work. For that Pete and I are truly grateful.

Given this success, we will do another potluck type event soon. Likely not monthly as some requested in the fall but more than we have done in the past. If anyone has any ideas for a theme, please share them with me as I am always looking for fun ideas.

UPDATES, REPORT OUTS, AND UPCOMING EVENTS (cont.)



Santa’s Workshop has been abuzz with activity from the Green Team! This season we were asked to create ornaments for the Christmas Fair tree that will be adorned with ornaments for sale. We brainstormed “green” options before deciding upon three types of ornaments and went to work. We chose materials that were biodegradable or from natural sources. If you stop by the tree when you’re at the fair you’ll see gorgeous paper craft items and those created from oyster shells. Check it out and, better yet, purchase a Green Team ornament that will add years of beauty and enjoyment for you as you gaze at your own tree!

The “Van Project” Concludes

The “Shovel & Rake” Team spent almost two hours at Nathan & Michelle Lewis’s Blackstrap home on November 9 hauling and raking gravel to the side of the new driveway at the Lewis home. It was important that the edge of the asphalt paving be secured with gravel. We were aided by the Lewis’s helpful neighbor Terry who did the final finish with his packing machine! This infrastructure reshaping was necessary for the new van to come home. For more details on this successful endeavor, please be sure to check out page 4 in this newsletter!



Green Team member Susan Gilpin applies the final touches to one of the oyster shell decorations the committee created for **the Christmas Fair to be held December 7.**



A big thanks to all who took time to bring in 2025 calendars to be redistributed in the food boxes provided to families by the Falmouth Food Pantry. Over 200 were collected, so, **no more calendars please, until next year’s collection!**
Thank you again.

Please help us acknowledge the following December Birthdays!

Eric Lacombe ~ 1

Laurie Mooney ~ 1

Pricilla Simm ~ 4

William Rodas ~ 5

Colleen Hutchinson ~ 7

Stan Reed ~ 14

John Bischof ~ 17

John Goodrich ~ 17

Robin Jay Wulff ~ 22

Mary Ryder ~ 27

Carol Ward ~ 29

Marian Albee ~ 30

Mark Munson ~ 30

Your church family would love to help you celebrate your special day! If you haven't seen your birthday listed in the monthly newsletter, that means the office does not have it. How about special anniversaries? We will gladly print those as well.

Please consider sharing your days

and months by emailing

info@foresidechurch.com.

Who knows,

maybe you might even be "gifted!?"

You can also call 781-5880.

The January edition of *Steeplenotes* material submittal deadline is Friday, December 20, 2024

Submitted articles should be final and print ready, pictures complete with captions in jpeg format can be included. Thank you.

Let's do (a continental) Breakfast Ladies!

Women of the church, members and friends are invited to breakfast on

Wednesday, December 18 @ 8:30 a.m.

in the FCC coffee area,

we'll provide the food,

you bring your appetite.

~ good food, good conversation ~

it's a great way to start your day!

Please RSVP to Deb Gray

by December 16

(deborah.gray48@gmail.com / 952-4041)

so we can plan accordingly.

See you there!

The Men's Breakfast...

will be held

Saturday, December 14, 2024 @ 8:30 a.m.

at the church

An enjoyable repast and

lively discussions are always on the menu!

FMI John Bischof

jegbischof@gmail.com or 781-2391

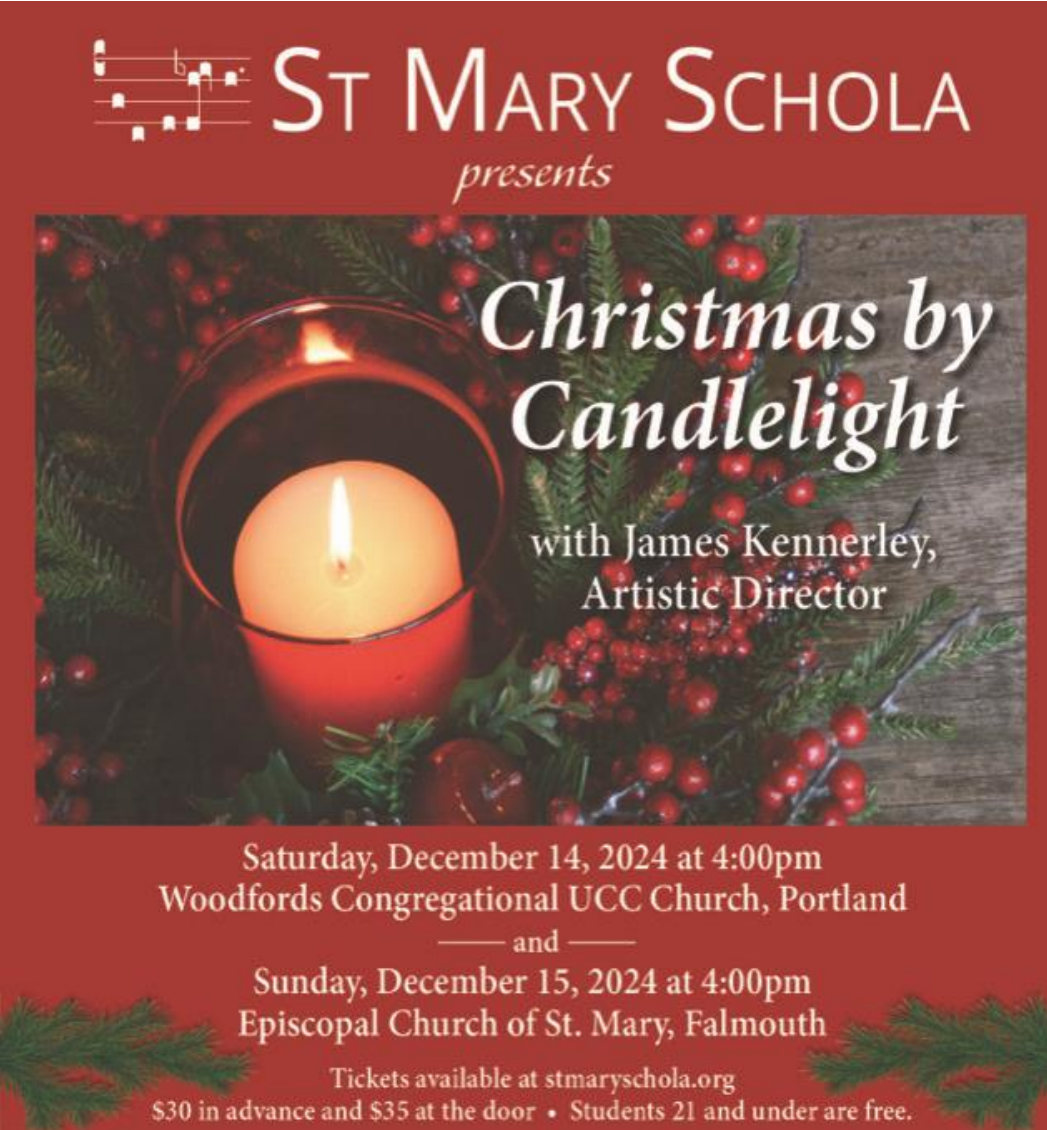
Just in time for holiday invitations and Christmas card mailing, an updated **Members & Friends Directory** is now available from the church office. You may request an email or printed copy, or both. Please contact the office at 781-5880 or info@foresidechurch.org. In order to receive a copy you must also be listed in the directory. This church directory is provided to foster the fellowship and ministry of The Foreside Community Church, UCC. Contact information in the directory may not be used for commercial or political purposes.


COMMUNITY EVENTS**Hearings Slated for Dec. 9, Jan. 13
On Proposed Pesticide Ban in Falmouth**

The seven-member Falmouth Conservation Commission members are scheduled to re-introduce the proposed ban on certain pesticides and fertilizers to the Town Council on Monday, December 9, with public hearing now scheduled for Monday, January 9.

In other news, the commission held a plastics reduction initiative forum in September, now available for viewing on the town's website <https://play.champds.com/falmouthme/event/3077>

For more information about these and other initiatives designed to protect and improve the town's ecological integrity, visit <https://www.falmouthme.org/conservation-commission>



 **ST MARY SCHOLA**
presents

**Christmas by
Candlelight**
with James Kennerley,
Artistic Director

Saturday, December 14, 2024 at 4:00pm
Woodfords Congregational UCC Church, Portland
— and —
Sunday, December 15, 2024 at 4:00pm
Episcopal Church of St. Mary, Falmouth

Tickets available at stmaryschola.org
\$30 in advance and \$35 at the door • Students 21 and under are free.

COMMUNITY EVENTS (cont.)



a documentary film on homelessness by
Richard Kane and Melody Lewis-Kane

BUILDING HOPE



BUILDING HOPE

**Can there be an end to the
suffering of homelessness?**

**Yes! We all can
make a difference.**

**Come to a free screening at
the Portland Museum of Art
on Saturday,**

December 14 at 3 pm



followed by a

Q & A time with

Rachel Talbot Ross

December 2024

Be sure to check the calendar at The Foreside Community Church's website
www.foresidechurch.org for any updates or changes.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
1 9:30am hybrid service & Communion	2 9 am Boxwoods in the Kitchen Gathering	3 12pm Knitters 6:15pm Choir Rehearsal 6:45pm AA 7:15pm Bell Rehearsal	4 10am Centering Prayer 6pm Evening Prayers 6:30pm Green Team classroom 7 pm Finance Mtg.	5 7 to 9pm, Post Election Discussion-Chancel 6pm AA-Classroom	6 5:00 p.m. <i>Christmas Fair Preview Event</i>	7 8:30a.m. to 1:00p.m.  Annual Christmas Fair!	
8 9:30am hybrid service & <i>Kid's Advent Sing</i>	9	10 12pm Knitters 6:15pm Choir Rehearsal 6:45pm AA 7:15pm Bell Rehearsal	11 10am Centering Prayer 6pm Evening Prayers 6:30pm Green Team classroom 7 pm Finance Mtg.	12 6pm AA-Classroom	13	14 Men's Monthly Breakfast see pg. 8 for details	
15 9:30am hybrid service 1:00 p.m. Caroling @ OceanView	16 7 pm Governing Board Mnthly Mtg (Google)	17 12pm Knitters 6:15pm Choir Rehearsal 6:45pm AA 7:15pm Bell Rehearsal	18 8:30 am Women's Breakfast see pg. 8 10am Centering Prayer 4pm Book Club 6pm Evening Prayers	19 6pm AA-Fellowship	20 Deadline for January <i>Steeplenotes</i> Material Submission.	21	
22 9:30am hybrid service	23	24 <i>See page 3 for Christmas Eve Service schedule.</i>		The church office will be closed on December 26th and 27th.			28
29 9:30am hybrid service	30	31					

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Daily Lectionary Readings for December 2024

Sun., Dec. 1

Jeremiah 33:14-16
 Psalm 25:1-10
 1 Thessalonians 3:9-13
 Luke 21:25-36

Mon., Dec. 2

Psalm 90
 Numbers 17:1-11
 2 Peter 3:1-18

Tues., Dec. 3

Psalm 90
 2 Samuel 7:18-29
 Revelation 22:12-16

Wed., Dec. 4

Psalm 90
 Isaiah 1:24-31
 Luke 11:29-32

Thurs., Dec. 5

Luke 1:68-79
 Malachi 3:5-12
 Philippians 1:12-18a

Fri., Dec. 6

Luke 1:68-79
 Malachi 3:13-18
 Philippians 1:18b-26

Sat., Dec. 7

Luke 1:68-79
 Malachi 4:1-6
 Luke 9:1-6

Sun., Dec. 8

Baruch 5:1-9 or
 Malachi 3:1-4
 Luke 1:68-79
 Philippians 1:3-11
 Luke 3:1-6

Mon., Dec. 9

Psalm 126
 Isaiah 40:1-11
 Romans 8:22-25

Tues., Dec. 10

Psalm 126 I
 Isaiah 19:18-25
 2 Peter 1:2-15

Wed., Dec. 11

Psalm 126
 Isaiah 35:3-7
 Luke 7:18-30

Thurs., Dec. 12

Isaiah 12:2-6
 Amos 6:1-8
 2 Corinthians 8:1-15

Fri., Dec. 13

Isaiah 12:2-6
 Amos 8:4-12
 2 Corinthians 9:1-15

Sat., Dec. 14

Isaiah 12:2-6
 Amos 9:8-15
 Luke 1:57-66

Sun., Dec. 15

Zephaniah 3:14-20
 Isaiah 12:2-6
 Philippians 4:4-7
 Luke 3:7-18

Mon., Dec. 16

Isaiah 11:1-9
 Numbers 16:1-19
 Hebrews 13:7-17

Tues., Dec. 17

Isaiah 11:1-9
 Numbers 16:20-35
 Acts 28:23-31

Wed., Dec. 18

Isaiah 11:1-9
 Micah 4:8-13
 Luke 7:31-35

Thurs., Dec. 19

Psalm 80:1-7
 Jeremiah 31:31-34
 Hebrews 10:10-18

Fri., Dec. 20

Psalm 80:1-7
 Isaiah 42:10-18
 Hebrews 10:32-39

Sat., Dec. 21

Psalm 80:1-7
 Isaiah 66:7-11
 Luke 13:31-35

Sun., Dec. 22

Micah 5:2-5a
 Luke 1:46b-55 or
 Psalm 80:1-7
 Hebrews 10:5-10
 Luke 1:39-45 [46-55]

Mon., Dec. 23

Psalm 113
 Genesis 25:19-28
 Colossians 1:15-20

Tues., Dec. 24

Isaiah 62:6-12
 Psalm 97
 Titus 3:4-7
 Luke 2:[1-7] 8-20
 Wed.,

Dec. 25

Isaiah 9:2-7
 Psalm 96
 Titus 2:11-14
 Luke 2:1-14 [15-20]

Thurs., Dec. 26

Psalm 148
 2 Chronicles 24:17-24
 Acts 6:1-7; 7:51-60

Fri., Dec. 27

Psalm 148
 Proverbs 8:32-36
 John 21:19b-24

Sat., Dec. 28

Psalm 148
 Isaiah 54:1-13
 Revelation 21:1-7

Sun., Dec. 29

1 Samuel 2:18-20, 26
 Psalm 148
 Colossians 3:12-17
 Luke 2:41-52

Mon., Dec. 30

Psalm 147:12-20
 2 Chronicles 1:7-13
 Mark 13:32-37

Tues., Dec. 31

Ecclesiastes 3:1-13
 Psalm 8
 Revelation 21:1-6a
 Matthew 25:31-46



STEEPLENOTES

A Newsletter of

The Foreside Community Church, UCC

General Office Hours:
Monday through Friday
9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

or unless otherwise posted

Office: 207-781-5880

E-mail: info@foresidechurch.org Web: www.foresidechurch.org

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