



God is still speaking,
**UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**

***No matter who you are or where you are
on life's journey,
you are welcome here!***

Rev. Lise Sparrow, Pastor
Peter Amidon and Andy Davis, Choir Directors

Pastor's Phone: (802) 257-2776

Pastor's e-mail: lisemsparrow@gmail.com

Administrator's/Kitchen Phone: (802) 257-0994

Administrator's e-mail: guilfordchurch@gmail.com

website: www.guilfordchurch.org

Or Like us on Facebook at Guilford Community Church,
United Church of Christ



Administrative Office Hours: Closed Mon

Tues-Fri 9am-3pm

Pastor's Office Hours: By Appointment

Bulletin Notices: Please notify the office by Thursday at noon if you would like something added to the bulletin.

Hospital Visits: If you or a loved one are in the hospital and would like a visit from Pastor Lise Sparrow or one of the Deacons, please leave a message at 257-2776 with the name and room number of the person. Hospital confidentiality regulations prevent visits without this information.

Prayer Chain: Should a health emergency arise during the week for which you would like prayers, or if you would be willing to pray for others and would like to join the prayer chain, please call Lucy Spahr-Blazej at 380-3695. If you are leaving a message for Lucy requesting a prayer, please spell the name(s) or email Lucy at lucysb1@gmail.com.

ORDER OF WORSHIP

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

“God Bless Us Every One!”

PRELUDE

WELCOME

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Birthday Song:

*Happy Birthday, happy birthday, we love you
Happy Birthday and may all your dreams come true
When you blow out the candles one light stays aglow
It's the love light in your eyes, where'er you go.*

SILENT MEDITATION and THE LIGHTING OF CANDLES
CANDLE-LIGHTING and PRAYER FOR THE SEARCH
COMMITTEE

Dear God,

As a committee, we continue to seek your guidance for offering a pastorate for this, your church. We are grateful to be able to base our choice on the affirmations and suggestions expressed in the several focus groups. We know that you speak to us in whatever way we will listen. Let us heed your message. Amen.

INTROIT: “This Is the Truth” (Tony Barrand)

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLES

(Betty and Merrill Spiller, Genevieve and Cheryl Redmond)

Reader 1: We light the second candle of Advent.
(With the first candle burning, a family member lights the second candle.)

Reader 2: We look to John, the one you sent, to point us to your light. The light will come into our world and enlighten everyone.

Reader 1: God sent John the Baptist to prepare the people for the coming of Jesus Christ, the true Light of the World. John called for people to repent of their sins and to live faithfully. He baptized with a cleansing water and proclaimed the new life that Christ, the one who would follow him, would bring. This Advent, we ask for God's mercy and a joyful new beginning.

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DECEMBER OFFERINGS...

**Our next Meal Preparation
for the Overflow Shelter is January 5.
Please let Rob Harnish know if you can help**

**For our homeless brothers and sisters
at the Groundworks Drop-In Center:**

BOOTS, GLOVES, HATS FOR ADULTS...



**COFFEE, COFFEE MUGS, LAUNDRY DETERGENT
TOWELS AND TOILETRIES**

BOOKS FOR ZAMBIA: Books For Children Ages 0-6

PROJECT FEED THE THOUSANDS/GUILFORD CARES

(basket is downstairs)

Cereal (non-sugar coated)	Pasta (Assorted)
Tuna Fish	Brown Rice (one pound)
Spaghetti Sauce	Canned Chicken
Canned Vegetables	Fruit in Natural Juices
Peanut Butter	Jelly
Soup (Assorted Low/No Salt)	Mayonnaise
Cheese	Pancake Mix
Sugar Free Apple Sauce	Crackers
Dried Fruit (no sugar added)	Whole Grain Crackers
Baby Formula	Baby Food

THE OFFERTORY

CALL TO OFFERING

*DOXOLOGY

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

PASSING OF THE PEACE

*THE CLOSING HYMN: #128 "Wake Awake the Night is Flying"

BENEDICTION

*THREEFOLD AMEN: Hymn #291

**invites the congregation to stand*

Today we especially thank the volunteers who make this worship service & the reception after possible.

Service Coordinator: Patrice Murray
Greeters: Ken Kornfield & Kathie Lovell
Coffee Hour: Chris & Patty Meyer

*We wish you a warm welcome this morning
and hope you will feel very much
at home and among friends.
Please join us after worship
for a time of refreshment and fellowship*

**Everyone is invited to join us for the shared reading
of an adapted version of A CHRISTMAS CAROL
next week at 4pm.
We will gather for hot cider and chocolate
and ginger cookies in the Houghton Room
Come Listen
Come Read
Come for Hot Cider
What could make an Advent Brighter?**

**People: Merciful God, we give thanks that you send
messengers like John to call us to greater faith. We ask
that in these days we prepare for you in prayer and acts**

**of holy compassion. Forgive us and lead us to your light.
Amen.**

Liturgy for Lighting Advent Candles
1st four Sundays of Advent

music - French carol, 17th cent.
Harm. Ralph Vaughan Williams, 1906

Shine on us, O God of just-ice; Guide our path through
gloom of night; Bear with-in us Wis-dom's
glo-ry; Come to us, O Christ the Light.

OPENING HYMN: "On Jordan's Banks" (see insert)

PREPARATION FOR CONFESSION

Leader: We gather to worship with expectations:
God revealed in new and astonishing ways.

**People: God comes to us in real time.
God comes to us in dreams.**

Leader: Sometimes God's presence is hard to take in
and difficult to believe.

**People: Oh God, we long to believe.
Help our unbelief!**

SILENT CONFESSION

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Leader: God is present here.
God is working in our midst.

**People: Then our mouths are filled with laughter,
Our tongues shout out with joy!**

ANTHEM: "Break Forth Oh Beauteous Heavenly Light" (Bach)

CHILDREN'S CRECHE STORY

CHILDREN'S HYMN: #116 "People Look East"

*All children are invited downstairs to rehearse for the pageant
and prepare for Christmas.*

CONTEMPORARY READING (from A Christmas Carol by
Charles Dickens)

"It was a strange figure—like a child; yet not so like a child as
like an old man, viewed through some supernatural medium,

which gave him the appearance of having receded from view, and being diminished to a child's proportions. Its hair, which hung about its neck and down its back, was white, as if with age; and yet the face had not a wrinkle in it, and the tenderest bloom was on the skin. The arms were very long and muscular; the hands the same, as if its hold were of uncommon strength. Its legs and feet, most delicately formed, were, like those upper members, bare.. It wore a tunic of the purest white; and round its waist was bound a lustrous belt, the sheen of which was beautiful. It held a branch of fresh green holly in tis hand; and, in singular contradiction of that wintry emblem, had its dress trimmed with summer flowers. But the strangest thing about it was, that from the crown of its head there sprang a bright clear jet of light, by which all this was visible; and which was doubtless the occasion of its using; in its duller moments, a great extinguisher for a cap, which it now held under its arm.

Even this, though, when Scrooge looked at it with increasing steadiness, was NOT its strangest quality. For as its belt sparkled and glittered, now in one part and now in another, and what was light one instant at another time was dark, so the figure itself fluctuated in its distinctness; being now a thing with one arm, now with one leg, now with twenty legs, now a pair of legs without a head, now a head without a body: of which dissolving parts no outline would be visible in the dense gloom wherein they melted away. And in the very wonder of this, it would be itself again; distinct and clear as ever.

"Are you the Spirit, sir, whose coming was foretold to me?" asked Scrooge.

"I am"

The voice was soft and gentle... "Who and what are you?" Scrooge demanded.

"I am the Ghost of Christmas Past!"

"Long past?" Inquired Scrooge...

"No. Your past."

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SCRIPTURE READING (Tom Yahner)

Matthew 3:1-12

In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near." This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said,

"The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.'"

Now John wore clothing of camel's hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then the people of Jerusalem and all Judea were going out to him, and all the region along the Jordan, and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

But when he saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruit worthy of repentance. Do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our ancestor'; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even now the axe is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

"I baptize you with water for repentance, but one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing-fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing-floor and will gather his wheat into the granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE Hymn: #617

"Write These Words in Our Hearts ..."

SERMON: "The Ghost of Christmas Past"

ANTHEM: "Candlelight Carol" (Rutter)

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

THE LORD'S PRAYER

(It is our custom to join hands for the Lord's Prayer.)

CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE:

Hymn #278 "Hear our Prayer, Oh Lord..."

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**Thanks So Much To Everyone
Who Made the Bazaar Such A Success!**
*There is still time to catch a few sweets and bargains
after church today.*

CHURCH CALENDAR

Today, December 8
Second Sunday In Advent
Holiday Bazaar items
downstairs after church



Sunday, December 15
Dessert Potluck and Caroling
after church
4PM ...CHRISTMAS CAROL READ-ALOUD

Saturday, December 21
PAGEANT REHEARSAL
10-am-12noon

Sunday, December 22
CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

Tuesday, December 25
CHRISTMAS EVE
4pm and 11pm
Candlelight Services

PRAYERS AT GUILFORD COMMUNITY CHURCH

Our faith teaches us that prayer is a unique and powerful force for healing. Within our community, we believe it is also important to respect confidentiality. We trust the people listed below have been consulted and are glad to be included.

If you would like a loved one added to these prayers, please leave a prayer request in the prayer triangle at the back of the Sanctuary, or call the Pastor's phone line (257-2776). They will be included for three weeks unless other requests are made.

GCC Search Committee
Family and Friends of Anthony Bombicino
Family and Friends of Ruth Eileen Collins

Lisa Vose	Joan Seymour	Doris Spahr
Anne Janeway	Elaine Petrie	Carol Jaenson
Theodore Koehler	Julie Peterson	Herb Meyer
Trudy McNulty	Grace Wahlberg	Jay Falk
Anthony Bombicino	Diana MacInnes	Angela Daprato
Lois & Chaz Freeman	Mary Grove	Elizabeth Israel
Ruth Ayers	Lori Shriner	Michael Vose
Victoria Conroy	Jacob	Mary Ellen Koehler
Ina Schaffer	Justin	Nan
Richard Sumner	Tamara Simmiolkjier	Ray Bradshaw
William Murray	Wendy Collins	Joy Hayes

THE PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY meets Mondays at 3pm.

Everyone is welcome. The knitters provide beautiful hand knit or crocheted shawls for those in need of the comfort the shawls offer. There is a good supply of yarn and patterns for those who wish to fashion a shawl. If you would like a shawl blessed to give to someone please speak to Lise, Pat Haine or Ellen Crockett. If you would like yarn to make one please contact Pat (257-0626). And, if you donate a shawl, please put your name on it so we will know who made this gift!

CHURCH AND COMMUNITY

Need a ride to church? Please call Patty Meyer at 257-0994 by Friday noon.

Want to receive our weekly e-news and quarterly newsletters? Please fill out one of the cards in the pews and place it on the offering plate.

BCTV: Many of our services have been filmed and can be found on BCTV, Channel 8 Wednesday morning at 7am and Sunday mornings at 8am or anytime online at www.brattleborotv.org

Audio-recordings of services are available through Patty in the office.

AA MEETINGS take place on Tuesdays and Fridays in the Houghton Room. Tuesdays at 6:00 pm is an OPEN AA MEETING for men and women. Friday's meeting is at 5:30 pm and is a closed AA meeting, for women only.

SECOND SUNDAY STEP STUDY – An Al- Anon Family Step Work Group. This group meets the 2nd Sunday of the month, 2- 4pm in the Houghton Room. The next meeting is Sunday, November 10th.

LIVING STRONG Classes for strength and balance meet at the church Mon/Wed at 5:15–6:15pm, Tuesday - Friday 10-11am. Speak to Lise (257-2776) or Lucy (380-3695) for more information or check out the Facebook page: Guilford Living Strong.

TAI CHI FOR MATURE BODIES – Mondays from 10-11am Intermediate & Mondays 11-12 for Beginners. For more information contact Patty at 257-0994.

Opening Hymn: “On Jordan’s Bank

1 On Jor - dan's bank the Bap - tist's cry an -
2 Then cleansed be ev - ery life from sin; make
3 We hail you as our Sav - ior, Lord, our
4 Stretch forth your hand; our health re - store, and

nounc - es that the Lord is nigh; a - wake and hear - en,
straight the way for God with - in, and let us all our
ref - uge and our great re - ward; with - out your grace we
make us rise to fall no more. O let your face up -

for he brings glad ti - dings of the King of kings!
hearts pre - pare for Christ to come and en - ter there.
waste a - way like flowers that with - er and de - cay.
on us shine and fill the world with love di - vine.