

PAKACHOAG MESSENGER

A publication of Pakachoag Church, UCC
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WORSHIP SERVICE: Sunday at 10:00 AM
(Communion is the first Sunday of each month unless otherwise noted.)

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS: Mondays - Fridays, 10:30 AM-4:30 PM

CONTACT US: Church Office - (508) 755-8718 Church Fax - (508) 795-1603

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OUR WEBSITE: www.pakachoag.org

CHURCH STAFF:

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Rev. Deidre C. Scott.....education@pakachoag.org
Director of Education and Family Ministries

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A Message from our Minister Dennis Knight

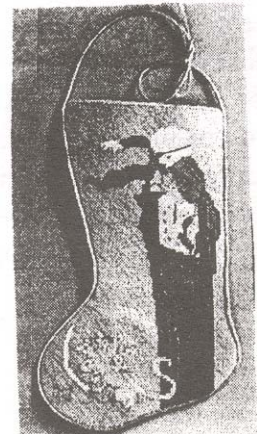
Dear Friends,

In the Christian calendar, Advent is the four week period before the great festival of Christmas. It is a time of anticipation and preparation for something that is to be revealed. The full dimension and character of what is to come is not known in advance. The message of the season, therefore, is to be on constant alert. Since we never know how and when something new and unexpected may come to us and we want to be at the ready to respond in an appropriate and fulfilling way.

More than ten years ago, long-time member Arline Rayner recounted for the Pakachoag community an unexpected event that occurred in her life at this time of the year. The following is a reprint of the article that she wrote for the December 1997 Messenger. It is really a tale of the Christmas story come alive in a completely unforeseen manner.

A ONE DAY DREAM

"It all began one day in early August with a telephone call from the president of the Embroiders Guild of America asking if I would design and stitch an eight to nine inch Christmas stocking for the Blue Room of The White House. Learning that the theme was to be the Nutcracker and not due at The White House until October 31, I said, "yes." Weeks passed as I pondered my design, reread several times the original story of the Nutcracker written in 1816 by E.T.A. Hoffman, redesigned and finally settled on depicting Godpapa Drosselmeir atop my grandfather's clock looking down at the Mouse King with seven heads and seven golden crowns. About three weeks of stitching and finishing had the ornament off to arrive by the deadline!



Soon after Thanksgiving came THE invitation for myself and three guests to visit The White House from two to four on Saturday, December 14. Thus began the one day dream. Dennis, his sister, Joy and Paula accompanied me.

Flying out of Green Airport to Baltimore made a limousine ride into Washington the easiest way to reach the loop area where the Capitol Building is at one end, the Washington Monument at the other and the

many buildings of the Smithsonian all around. A visit to the American Museum of Natural History was our choice before we headed to the famous Willard Hotel (where leaders met to try to prevent the Civil War) for lunch. Delicious!

A long-g-g line of invited artisans and guests greeted us as we approached the East Visitor gate of The White House. Finally we were in and received the brochure describing the décor in each room. Imagine our delight when we discovered that my ornament was chosen to be part of a montage of twenty-five in the shape of a tree on one of the middle pages! Chosen from several hundred! For the next year or two I understand this year's ornaments will be used in other rooms of The White House and then become part of the Smithsonian collection. This makes me feel very humble.

On this day not only was the elegance of Washington apparent, along with the history but also the poverty stricken areas we passed through as we traveled to and from Baltimore. There is much more to Washington, D.C. than the seasonal décor of The White House. I am stilled awed by this once in a lifetime opportunity that came my way.”



YOUR KINDNESS WAS TRULY APPRECIATED

Thank you to everyone to donated food for the Thanksgiving bags. Ten families were given the bags because of our efforts. The Auburn District Nursing Association distributed them.

“We want to thank you so very much for the gift bag of food and gift certificate for Thanksgiving. We really did appreciate it.”

“What a nice touch of wonderful! Want to thank all of you for the beautiful bag of groceries.”

Wishing Rev. Dee our best

After 7 years of dedicated service at Pakachoag Church, Rev. Dee will be leaving her role as Director of Christian Education and Family Ministries at the end of this year. In her time here, Dee has been a fixture through thick and through thin, educating our children, planning the Christmas Pageant, organizing family events, and helping with about every event the Church holds.

We ask you to join us on **Sunday, December 20**, for a special Sunday dedicated to expressing our gratitude to Rev. Dee. Dee will lead Sunday worship and immediately following service we will hold a farewell luncheon in Fellowship Hall. We are so appreciative of Rev. Dee's dedication and service at Pakachoag over the years. We hope that you will make every attempt to join us for this very special Sunday to show Dee how much she means to us.



CHRISTMAS IS A TIME FOR GIVING

Every year, during the Advent season, we share in a Giving Tree project. This year please take a star off the Christmas tree (located in the Great Hall). Gifts will be given to an Interfaith Hospitality Network family. Gifts (unwrapped and labeled) should be returned to the church by Sunday, December 13.



December Birthdays

Andi Esposito	1
Jenny LaBonte	4
Astrid LeBlanc	17
Michael Wilson	21
Lynn Blanchard	24
Rev. Dee Scott	25

HEIFER INTERNATIONAL'S CELEBRATION OF LIVING GIFTS

December 12 and 13 – 11:00 AM to 4:00 PM

Overlook Farm, 216 Wachusett Street, Rutland, MA

Telephone: 508-886-5002

What do you buy the person who has everything? How about a goat, a llama or a water buffalo? At **Heifer International's Celebration of Living Gifts**, learn how sponsoring animals like these can provide food and income for hungry families. You get a handsome card to give and a hungry family receives hope for a better future. Take pictures with the animals and purchase gifts from around the world in our fair-trade Shop@Heifer. Enjoy hot cocoa and cider, make gingerbread animal cookies and warm yourself by a bonfire. **Admission:** Canned goods which will be donated to a local food bank



LIVING NATIVITY

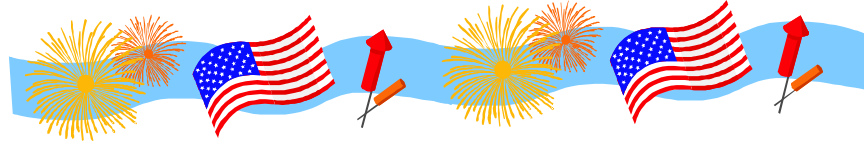
December 12 and 13 at 5:00 PM and 7:00 PM

Barn at Mesa Farm,

67 Muschopauge Road, Rutland, MA

There is no charge, but attendees are invited to bring a plate of cookies to share. Hot chocolate will be available and carol singing will be included in the evening activities. For more information on the Living Nativity event, please contact Dale Perkins at dale.mesafarm@gmail.com. Overlook Farm will be providing animals for this event.





Pakachoag Soldier of the month

Many of us have family and friends in the armed forces. We ask that you keep all our men and women in the armed services in your thoughts and prayers. Perhaps you could send a letter of support, donate to a package for this soldier (you can drop items off at the church), or even send a care package of your own. If you do know of someone serving away from home, or soon will be, please contact Lynn Blanchard.

This month, the Pakachoag Soldier of the Month is **Jared Day**. Spc Jared A. Day is Ellen Gaboury's nephew and Christine Taylor's cousin. His home is in Chattanooga, Tennessee. Ellen's brother Alan and his wife Carol have two other younger children, Rebecca and Matthew. Jared is 21 and he received an Associate's degree from the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga under the ROTC program. He has been a Reserve Member of the National Guard until recently activated and sent to Iraq.

**Spc Jared A. Day
252 MP Company
Camp Delta
APO: AE09317**

Thank you to all who serve, and the families who support them.



Why is Christmas Holy?

by Lynn Blanchard

It's that time of year again, where we get caught up in the hustle and bustle of the holidays. Rushing off to holiday parties, attending special services at church, buying gifts and making sure we put the finishing touches on our decorations and favorite dishes. If you watch television, listen to the radio, go on-line or read a paper, you are bombarded with the advertiser's meaning of Christmas...*buy as much as you can; it's the only way to make your loved ones truly happy*. Buy a car for your husband, diamonds for your wife, and the latest electronics for your children. But is that what really makes us happy? Does anyone remember the meaning of Christmas?

As Christians it's our job and a part of our faith to put the Christ back in Christmas. Let us take the time to remember the journey of Mary and Joseph, the virgin birth in a manger, the Magi following a star on nothing but faith, to find their way to their king. This, my friends, is what Christmas is. It's about the betterment of all human kind, peace on earth, and finding joy in the simplest things. Its spending time with children and hearing them laugh and play. It's joining with friends and loved ones in celebration of the season, and coming together as a church family to sing praises to our king. The King of Kings.

Some time ago I was asked the question, "Why is Christmas holy?" I asked friends and family the same question. I think it's something that should be asked of all Christians, if for no other reason than to make them come up with an answer for themselves. Being a Christian my whole life I thought I should be able to answer this question rather easily. But it wasn't quite as easy as I thought. It's like asking "Who is God? Or "Why is there love?" Maybe the question should be "Why is Christmas holy for you?"

We come together and celebrate Jesus' birthday at the beginning of the winter season. How appropriate. Before we endure the darkness and cold of winter, we are reminded of the hope that God offered us through Jesus. We decorate our homes and churches, in celebration. We gather with friends and family, in fellowship. We are a little kinder to strangers and neighbors, as we hurry through the season. We remember the year past and look forward to an unknown future. But we can rejoice in the knowledge that we are not alone.

Christmas is the day Christians from around the world celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. "*God with us*", "*the anointed one*". But is it just the birth of Jesus that makes this a "Holy Night"? Many say yes, but I think there is more to the reason why Christmas is a holy day. To me, it's more than a celebration of his birth. I think it has to do with Christmas being the day we gather together, in love and celebrate our faith in God. We celebrate our common belief in the greatest gift

ever given: God's unconditional love and the promise of everlasting life through Jesus Christ.

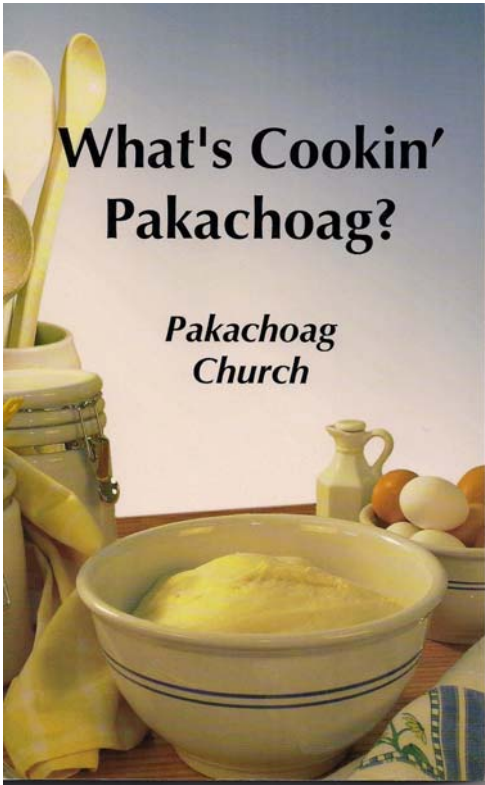
So this Christmas remember those who have gone before us. Remember the sick, shut in and lonely. Those we can only be close to us in our hearts, and those we have sitting across from us at the dinner table. Say hello to a stranger, and wish them a Merry Christmas. Give your gifts, remembering the Shepherds and the Magi, laying theirs before the Lord. And remember the greatest gift of all, love.

Merry
Christmas



CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE
Join us on **Thursday, December 24**
for our Family Christmas Eve Service.
Service will begin at 5:00 PM.

NEED A CHRISTMAS PRESENT??



A great **BIG thank you** to all who contributed to our church family cookbook. We finished with 294 recipes!!! Everything from soup to nuts (literally!).

The cookbook is now available for purchase.

To get your copy, stop by the church office (Mondays through Fridays, 11:00 AM to 3:00 PM) OR fill out the form below and mail it with your check payable to Pakachoag Church.

Thank you again for your support.

Please send me ___ copy(ies) of "What's Cookin' Pakachoag" for \$12.00 each or 2 for \$20.00, plus \$3.00 S&H per book ordered to:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Holiday Scripture Cake

The fun starts with looking up the ingredients, which can be found in the NRSV version of the Bible. You won't find a verse that says "five eggs, separated," so all of the ingredients are listed in the baking instructions.

$\frac{3}{4}$ cups of Psalm 55:21

1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups of Jeremiah 6:20

5 Isaiah 10:14

3 cups of 1 Kings 4:22

3 tsp. of 1 Corinthians 5:6

$\frac{3}{4}$ tsp. of Leviticus 2:13

1 tsp. each of 2 Chronicles 9:9

1 tsp. of Exodus 30:23

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup of Judges 4:19

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup of Numbers 17:8

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup of Nahum 3:12

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup of 1 Samuel 30:12

Cream butter with sugar. Beat in egg yolks one at a time. Sift flour, baking powder, salt, cloves, nutmeg, allspice and cinnamon. Blend into creamed mixture alternately with milk. Beat egg white until stiff; fold into batter. Fold in chopped almonds, figs, and raisins. Pour into greased and floured pan. Bake at 325 degrees for 70 minutes or until knife comes out clean.



Jesus Will Always be the “Reason for the Season”

by Cathy Blanchard

I don't know about you, but I don't need anyone to make me smile about Christmas. That's because I love everything there is about the Christmas holidays. To me part of the joy of Christmas is found in getting ready for Christmas. I love to give presents; I love finding out what my family wants, and then sometimes going out and fighting the traffic and the crowds to get the presents.

Even though I enjoy buying gifts, for some reason I always wait until Christmas Eve or the day before to wrap them all. In my household Lynn and I start preparing early. Our thoughts focus on images of family and laughter filling her Mom's house...the aroma of delicious foods drifting through her house making the perfect stuffing, brewing the most flavorful pot of coffee, and baking the BEST pies!

However I believe this year we will return not only to our usual family traditions, but the original meaning of Christmas. We will look on this time as a fantastic gift and all we have received from God- the gift of a Savior who is Jesus Christ, the gift of family, the gift of loved ones, and the gift of health and strength.

It can be disappointing when we don't feel the wonder or see the magic of the birth of Jesus. But, “Jesus is the reason for the season” and our society focuses on the wrong things, MP3 players, designer clothes, the largest HD television with surround sound. I hope you have been preparing, as I have, for this season through reflection, prayer and the preparation for the Christ child.

“**Jesus is the reason for the season**” for me because it is a way of giving Jesus a birthday party, celebrating the winter solstice, a celebration of the turn of the season, when the days begin getting longer. This gives us a much needed time to rest and celebrate during the shortest days of the year.

“**Jesus is the reason for the season**” because the bible quotes: “Do not be afraid, for I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior who is Christ the Lord.

“**Jesus is the reason for the season**” because Christ came into the world for you and me. This is Christmas, the celebration of the birth of hope and joy and promise in the Savior. He is coming and nothing will stop it.

Let this light shine in your heart all year long. No matter what kind of Christmas we have, we will always receive a gift guaranteed with no strings attached.

“Jesus is the reason for the season”



HR - Hex Room; FH - Fellowship Hall; GH - Great Hall
 Dates and times are subject to change.

December 1

10:00 AM Music School Class (FH)
 5:00-7:30 PM Chamber of Commerce Meeting (HR)
 5:30 PM Music School Performance Class (GH)

December 2

9:30 & 10:30 AM Music School Classes (FH)

December 3

9:00 AM-3:00 PM Mass Care Meeting (HR)
 10:30 AM Music School Class (FH)
 1:30 PM Music School Class (FH)
 4:00 PM Music School Drama/Music Rehearsal (FH)
7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal (GH)

December 4

9:30 & 10:30 AM Music School Classes (FH)

December 5

9:30 & 10:30 AM Music School Classes (FH)
 10:00 AM-2:00 PM InterValley Project Meeting (HR)
 4:00 PM Music School Drama/Music Show (GH)

December 6 – Second Sunday of Advent

10:00 AM Worship Service
11:00 AM Coffee Hour (HR)
 3:00 PM Holiday Concert & Sing Along featuring
 Mauri Tetreault and Randy Bloom. Program to benefit
 RE/MAX Executive Realty Charitable Foundation.

December 7

5:30 PM Music School Performance Class (GH)

December 8

10:00 AM Music School Class (FH)

December 9

5:30-7:30 PM Chamber of Commerce Christmas Party (GH)

December 10

10:30 AM Music School Class (FH)

1:30 PM Music School Class (FH)

7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal (GH)

December 11

9:30 & 10:30 AM Music School Classes (FH)

10:00 AM-2:00 PM InterValley Project Meeting (HR)

6:00-9:30 PM Worcester Numismatic Meeting (GH)

December 12

1:00 PM Music School Student Recital (GH); reception following in the Hex Room

December 13 – Third Sunday of Advent

10:00 AM Worship Service with Children's Pageant

11:00 AM Informal Congregational Meeting/Coffee Hour (HR)

1:00 PM Music School Student Recital (GH); reception following in the Hex Room

December 16

9:00 AM-3:00 PM Mass Care Meeting (HR)

4:00 PM Guitar Recital (FH)

December 17

7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal (GH)

December 18

9:00 AM-2:00 PM Mass Care Meeting (HR)

December 20 – Fourth Sunday of Advent

10:00 AM

Worship Service

11:00 AM

Farewell Luncheon for Rev. Dee (FH)

December 24 – Christmas Eve Service

5:00 PM

Christmas Eve Service (GH)

December 27

10:00 AM

Worship Service

11:00 AM

Coffee Hour (HR)



Have something for the Messenger?

Please send it to

PakMessenger@charter.net

**no later than the 15th of the month
prior to publishing.**