

The Good News

January 2022

God With Us



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Happy New Year!

by Pastor Jacob Eun

What kind of a year has 2021 been for you? Where would you place it on a scale of 1-10? Maybe you would give 2021 a 9 out of 10. In other words, it was a really good year. It was a good year because you had success in your business, a good year at work or at school, good family relationships, or new friendships. Or maybe you would give 2021 a 5. It was just another year, pretty much the same as any other year. Nothing very exciting happened. Maybe-most of us can relate to this score-2021 deserves only 1 or 2 out of 10. It was a really dreadful year including tragedy, loss of our beloved ones, and so forth. Being in the third year of the COVID-19 pandemic and with the rise of the Omicron variant cases, we are still struggling.

I'm reminded of the parable of the barren fig tree in Luke 13:6-9. It goes: "A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. 7 And he said to the vinedresser, 'Look, for three years now I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and I find none. Cut it down. Why should it use up the ground?' 8 And he answered him, 'Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and put on manure. 9 Then if it should bear fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.'"

I don't mean to say that the fourth year will bring everything back to normal and fine, but I want us to bring our attention to the patience and grace of the gardener. God has not given up and is still working for us. The pandemic has revealed to us what is important in life-a small conversation among the family, companionship of a friend, beautiful scenery of God's creation, and so forth-but the weight of life still feels heavy. We still have to wear masks, keep 6ft distance, sanitize our hands. But today's message is that as long as we are grounded and rooted in God's love, the best is yet to come.

Remember Chinese bamboo trees. You plant a Chinese bamboo tree, and you will see nothing much happens. In its first year, we see no visible signs of activity. In the second year, again, no growth above the soil. The third, the fourth, still nothing. Our patience is tested and we begin to wonder if our efforts will ever be rewarded. And finally in the fifth year – behold, a miracle! We experience growth. And what growth it is! The Chinese Bamboo Tree grows 80 feet in just six weeks! During the first 4-5 years, all the growth is underground. The outward growth occurs if the tree has been faithful watering and nourishing.

If you want to bring about personal growth or change, it won't be easy. It will be a slow progress. It can be frustrating and unrewarding at times. But if we can be patient, persistent, and faithful in God, we will experience and witness

growth.

In the past few years, we may have not produced or seen any fruit. Maybe, you are at a place where life gets you discouraged and left you with no strength. But I encourage you to place your hope and trust in the patience and grace of our gardener, Jesus Christ, whose blood watered the ground and who is looking out for us. Like the bamboo trees, we are taking all the growth in the underground and waiting for the right moment to spring up on the ground.

I pray for many growths and harvests in your life. If not, that is okay. Your church family is always here to journey with you no matter what. We will be here when you need us. I pray for God's loving and abiding presence to go with you throughout this new year. At the beginning of this new journey of 2022, may we give thanks to God for God's presence and another year of faith.



New Worship Series: All In

When we face important decisions and opportunities in our lives, we often weigh the pros and cons. We often find reasons to avoid making changes and to keep doing things the same old way. But there comes a time when we must decide... are we going to play it safe or go all in?

John 3:16 tells us that God loved us so much that he gave his only Son for us, "so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life." God's love for us is "all in"! In turn, when we put all our trust in God, our lives can be freed for unimaginable wonder. This series will explore what it means to be "all in" for God with all we have and all we are.

January 16

The Risk and Common Good

Scripture: John 3:16 and 1 Corinthians 12:4-13

When we say yes to following Jesus, it means we say yes to the risks. God activates gifts in everyone for the common good. What are some of the gifts your congregation has that can be used to serve others? Go deeper in those gifts. What would it look like for us to go "all in" with their gifts and to encourage one another in those gifts?

January 23

No Strings Attached

Scripture: Acts 2:43-47

The gifts given by the Spirit are not to be used only in the local church community, but also to bless the wider community. When have you been a blessing to the wider community? Let us envision what could happen in our church and how we could be a blessing to the community if, together, you went all in.

January 30

Commit

Scripture: Ephesians 4:22-24, John 3:16

We can be a more powerful witness to the Kin(g)dom of God when we are "all in" together, when we do this as a community and not just alone as individuals. What would it look like for your congregation to grow in the likeness of God in true rightness and holiness within your community?

Mini Orchestra

We are thinking of ways to enrich our worship experience and came up with an idea of mini-orchestra (maybe a duo, trio, or quartet). We have a Yale Master's student who is willing to lead this beautiful small orchestra. We need to help find its members. If you know of any high school students who need community service hours and can play an instrument, we would love to be blessed by their gifts and graces. Let Pastor Jacob know for more information or questions.



Student Volunteers Needed for Our Mini Orchestra (duo, trio, or quartet)

When First Sunday of every month (9:30—11:00am)
Worship starts at 10:00am (about five hymns)

Where First United Methodist Church of Wallingford
941 Old Rock Hill Road, Wallingford, CT 06492

If you need community service hours, feel free to contact us at
fumc.wallingford@gmail.com or 203-269-9100.



Stewardship Campaign

When you hear the term “all in,” what comes to mind? Maybe you think of taking a risk, or not holding anything back, making a bold decision, or dedicating everything to one cause or purpose. God showed us what being “all in” looks like when God gave his son Jesus to the world so that you and I could have new life. God didn’t hold anything back when God went all in for humankind. As disciples of Jesus and as a church community, we, too, are called to go all in for God – to live boldly into that new life we have been given and to share this treasure with the world.

As the new year has arrived, we invite you to take some time in prayer for this year’s financial commitment. Many of you have been faithful and generous givers in the past in supporting the mission of this church. We ask for your continuous commitment. If the Spirit of God is nudging you and convicting you, we ask that you seek guidance in increasing in your pledge.

We will give out the pledge card on the second Sunday of January. We ask that you prayerfully commit and complete the form and bring them back on the last Sunday of January.



Going Back to the New Normal

We have made a tremendous progress in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. As more people are getting vaccinated including our children, it is our plan to return to our normal monthly and/or yearly events of the church.

But at the same time, due to the rise of the Omicron variants, we want you to be safe and healthy. Please know that it is absolutely fine to stay at home and join us via online. Feel free to join our in-person worship and keep your masks on. And feel free to not wear masks if you have received the full vaccinations and booster shots but please continue practicing other safety measures: sanitizing hands, social distancing, follow the signages, etc.

How to Join Our Online Worship on Facebook:

1. Log into your Facebook account on your phone or computer
2. Search First United Methodist Church of Wallingford or click [here](#)
3. Click the Live post (it will show around 9:50am, 10 minutes before the service)



Snippets of Our Church





Mark Your Calendar

- 1.8 (Sat) Pastor's College
- 1.26 (Wed) Transition Dinner
- 1.27 (Thu) Parish Council

Other upcoming events are to be announced

Happy Birthday (January)

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|
| 2 Jorge Torres | 4 Wendy Perzanowski | 5 Harold Reed |
| 6 Scott Gingras | 11 Nancy Pogmore | 14 Joan Dion & Jill Harris |
| 15 Susan Hanson | 20 Danny Walters | 24 Jane Wargo |
| 26 Christopher Garland | 28 Kristen DeFilippo | 30 Betty Lynch |
| 31 Eric Gingras, & Jennifer Williams | | |



The First United Methodist Church of Wallingford

Mailing Address:

P.O. Box 6089

Wallingford, CT 06492

Building address:

941 Old Rock Hill Road

Wallingford, CT 06492

For any questions, comments, or changes,
please contact us at 203.269.9100
or fumc.wallingford@gmail.com

Announcements

Welcome

1. To schedule a time with Pastor Jacob, you can call 203-615-3214 or email at pastor.fumc@gmail.com.
2. Connect with us online. Search First United Methodist Church of Wallingford on Facebook and like our page! Or go on our website www.fumc-wallingford.org

Announcements

1. We have a new mailing address (P.O. Box 6089, Wallingford, CT 06492)
2. We are looking for one to three volunteers for our mini orchestra who will play during our worship service. Please let Pastor Jacob know if you know someone who is interested.
3. We begun our 2022 Pledge Campaign. We ask you to reflect on God's providence, look within your heart, and thoughtfully respond with a meaningful financial commitment for 2022. A pledge letter and card will be sent out soon. Thank you in advance for your continuous generosity.

Support Our Ministries

1. You can support our church by shopping with scrip cards (ask Diane) and shopping at smile.amazon.com (with scrip cards you purchase) by selecting Wallingford United Methodist Church as your charitable organization.
2. We are grateful for your generous gifts contributed through our online website or mail that enabled us to serve faithfully our church family and our wider community. Here are three ways you can give:
 - Online: www.fumc-wallingford.org/give
 - Mail your gift to P.O. Box 6089, Wallingford, CT 06492
 - Or drop at church (941 Old Rock Hill Road, Wallingford, CT 06492)

Resources

The School of Life: "The Meaning of Life" and "When Home is Not Home"

Ministry Pass: Thank Full