

Dear Friends,

Our virtual worship service for Sunday, January 10 will be found here on our YouTube channel. <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCX1ppt9kU5rWj6DPaLGv9Ig/videos> The focus of the sermon is the power of words, and it includes the beautiful reflections people sent me about their star word for 2020 that they received last January.

One of Kasha's musical selections is the hymn titled "The First Day of Creation" with stirring words written by Thomas Troeger, a retired Yale Divinity School professor. Nancy Johnson is reading the Old Testament lectionary reading Genesis 1:1-5 along with John 1:1-5, 14. The passage from Genesis opens with the familiar words: "In the beginning" and it includes the equally well-known words: "Let there be light." Certainly, we could all use some light to illumine our way following these past dark days of violence in Washington, D.C.

The passage from John's gospel also includes the words, "In the beginning," with references to light. When we are susceptible to dark forces that would draw us into despair, we are reminded of John 1:5 "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it." A quotation by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. seems particularly apt for our country and for our lives: "Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that."

Ann Labby's church school link for January 10 can be found here. <https://youtu.be/pLjpDzwstqA> We thank Ann for bringing light and love as she continues to keep the children of our church connected while learning about the Bible and God's abiding love through Jesus Christ.

Connection and community seem so crucial these days. You are invited to our informal conversation at our virtual coffee hour on Sunday, January 10 at 11:00 a.m. The Zoom invitation is found at the end of this letter.

Middlesex Association prayer request: As this is the "Baptism of Christ" Sunday, the Congregational Church of East Hampton reminds us that even Jesus Christ needed spiritual sustenance from others. May our prayer be that to meet the challenges of life we see our need for and accept spiritual sustenance from others.

Please pray for the faculty and staff of Newington High School as they mourn the passing of Stephanie Kapper, the fourth staff member who has died this academic year. Please hold in prayer: Jane Aronson, Annette Bowman, Diane Burgess, Carol Carnemolla, Robert Daniels, Gail Grzegorowicz, Catherine Hunt, Katie Kou and family, Bill Larson, Ann Lavoy, Tim Lavoy, Nicholas Lee, Scott MacDonald, the Maynard family, Martin Moon, Colleen Olsen, Audrey Johnson Roberts, Eleanor Rodrigue, Max Stone, Kelly Utter, Mark Vetrano, Rachel Wache, Steven Winakor, and the families and friends of Stephanie Kapper, Sam Karavolis, Dixie Losey, Jake Salafia, and Nicole Whitfeldt (Mike and Connie Wache's niece).

Let there be light in your lives,
Jane

First Church Portland is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Coffee Hour

Time: Jan 10, 2021 11:00 AM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82683683833?pwd=QWxiS2JuQUlIb203Y24rRXgzNWZPZz09>

Meeting ID: 826 8368 3833

Passcode: 863540

One tap mobile

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+13017158592,,82683683833#,,,,*863540# US (Washington D.C)

Meeting ID: 826 8368 3833

Passcode: 863540

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