

Douglas Congregational United Church of Christ -- Pastor's Report

December 21, 2021

The Light is On Its Way!: The Winter Solstice today reminds us that even during times of great darkness, the Light is always with us. As we approach Christmas morning, let us celebrate that the Light of the World is present here with us and within us. May we shine that Light for all the world to see!

Holiday Giving Tree: Thank you to all who purchased holiday gifts for neighbors-in-need during Christian Neighbors Holiday Giving Tree Drive this month. Our collection box was overflowing with gifts! And, thank you to our facilitator, Joyce Wright, for delivering the gifts to Christian Neighbors.

Advent/Christmas Decorations: We are grateful to Jim Bailey, Floyd Fleming, and Greg Harvath from our church's Art Guild for decorating our altar so beautifully for Advent and Christmas. And, thank you to David Geen for the lovely holiday trees in the planters near the church doors.

Christmas Eve Service: Our longstanding Christmas Eve tradition of the candlelight service of the "Lessons & Carols" will be held in the church on December 24 at 6 PM. It will also be broadcast live on our church's YouTube channel.

Afghan Task Force: We received word that the Afghan family we'll be sponsoring will be arriving mid-January. They will be moving temporarily into the Spring Street house behind the church until more permanent housing is secured for them in Holland. We are so grateful to Bob Kenny and our Afghan Task Force for all of their hard work in preparation for the family's arrival.

True North Group: On December 1, I was so honored to be invited to speak at the True North Group's meeting in the Friendship Hall. The discussion topic was "gender identity." More than 30 church members took part.

"All Creation Waits": On December 7, we were so delighted to welcome esteemed author Gayle Boss, who gave an engaging and inspiring presentation on her Advent devotional, *All Creation Waits*. More than 20 people took part via Zoom.

Congregational Meeting: All church members are highly encouraged to attend our Congregational Meeting on January 9 at 11:30 AM in the Friendship Hall (and via Zoom).

In Addition: In addition to my regular pastoral duties, I officiated a baptism on December 11 for Finn Miller, son of church member, Bethany Miller...I also appeared on the "Morning Grind" radio show on December 4 to talk about our Afghan Task Force...and on December 16, I was the keynote speaker (via Zoom) for the New Light Temple interfaith gathering in New York City.

Thank You: We are so very grateful to have received a \$10,000 gift from the estate of Walt Lawrence, our beloved church member who passed away in September. And, thank you to Anne and Doug Petersen for their generous donation of \$3,000 in support of our Afghan family.

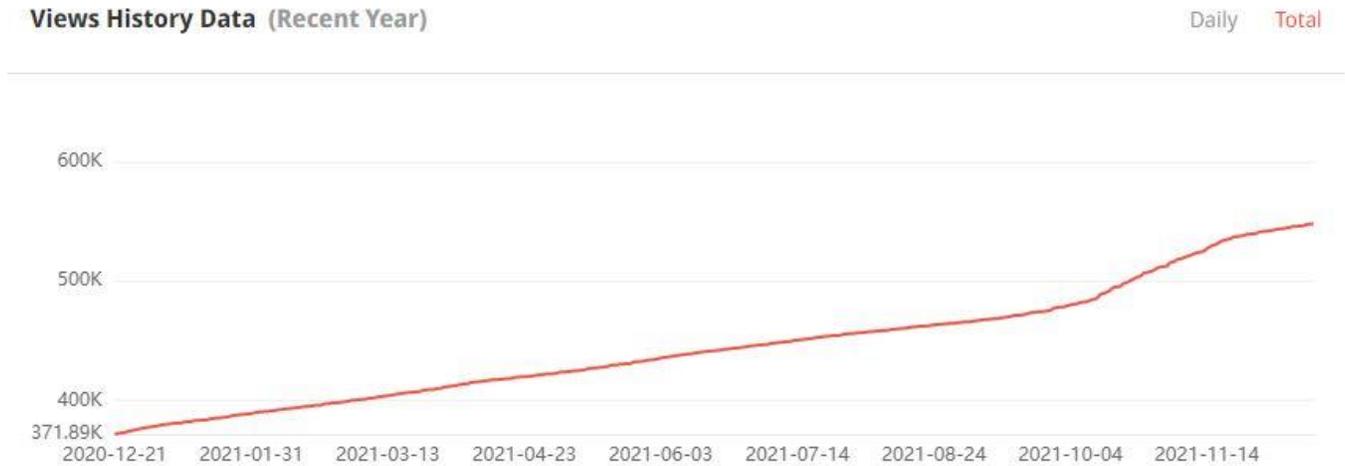
YouTube Analytics: Please see the attached page for our end-of-year YouTube analytics. In 2021, our YouTube videos had more than 179,000 views! We are so grateful to all our viewers around the world, and to Chris Clark, Mike White, and all our A/V volunteers.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rev. Salvatore Sapienza, Pastor

YouTube Analytics for 2021:

We had more than 179,000 views in 2021. Our YouTube videos have now exceeded more than half-a-million views!



We also gained another 1.1K subscribers to our channel in 2021 for a total of 3.57K subscribers:

