

# COMMUNICET

RIVIER UNIVERSITY CAMPUS MINISTRY NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2023

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*“It is Christmas every time you let God love others through you.” – St. Teresa of Calcutta*

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## A Season of Light and Hope

The days following Thanksgiving often seem to catapult us, quite abruptly, into the “Christmas season”: we begin shopping for gifts and taking advantage of the many sales in stores and online; Christmas music and movies play nearly nonstop; and we make plans to get together with friends and family. These are all good things, no doubt, but they seem to overshadow two important aspects of this season: light and hope.

Many religions use light as a meaningful part of their traditions during this time of year. Christians light four candles as part of their Advent wreath which symbolize hope, love, joy, and peace. Jews light nine candles on a menorah, one for each of the eight days of Hannukah and one used to light the others. Those who celebrate Kwanzaa light seven candles on a kinara, which symbolize the principles of unity, self-determination, collective work and responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity, and faith. Even those who don’t consider themselves religious might still find themselves participating in a Christmas tree lighting ceremony. Beyond the tangible use of candles and lights in several holiday traditions, however, light can be an attitude that we embody. When we eventually extinguish the candles and take down the lights, let’s remember that we can be the light for others year round by being a source of joy and hope.

Speaking of hope, this season brings with it so many reasons for hope! Whether it be the hope associated with the coming of Jesus Christ, hope for peace around the world, hope for better days in the new year, etc. we have so much to look forward to in life (more than parties and gifts and good food). This sense of hope, regardless of where we draw it from, can and does *spur us to act*. If we hope for peace, what are we doing to create peace within ourselves, our neighborhoods, and our communities? If we draw hope from our religion, how might that impact the way we act outside of our place of worship?

*As we move through this holiday season, let’s be mindful of the many ways we can embody a spirit of light and hope, now and all year!*

## December Liturgy Schedule

### **Sunday 12/3**

Meet in the Dion Center lobby at 10:40 am to attend 11 am Mass at Immaculate Conception Church in Nashua. Transportation is provided, but please rsvp on CampusGroups so Emily can reserve the correct number of vans.

### **Sunday 12/10, 17**

Please attend Mass while home or carpool with friends!

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## Rivier’s Christmas Tree Lighting

### **Thursday 12/7 6:00pm Chapel Quad**

Join the Rivier community for our annual Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony! Get in the Christmas spirit with cookies, hot chocolate, and a visit from Santa Claus.

# DECEMBER RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS

## **ADVENT (CHRISTIANITY) Dec. 3-24, 2023**

Advent is a liturgical season in Christianity which is a time of preparation. Christians prepare for the coming of Jesus Christ in the past, the present and the future: the birth of Christ at the first Christmas, the way Christ is present to us every time we pray and gather to worship, and the hope that we will see Christ face to face at the end of our life. The Advent wreath is a symbol during this season that can be found in both churches and homes. It includes three purple candles that symbolize hope, love, and peace, one pink candle which symbolizes joy, and a white candle in the center which symbolizes Jesus.

## **HANUKKAH (JUDAISM) Dec. 7-15, 2023**

Hanukkah is an 8-day Jewish festival marking the miraculous victory of the Maccabees, Jewish freedom fighters, over the Seleucidian Greek occupiers in the year 139 BCE. After recapturing Jerusalem's Holy Temple, which had been converted into a place of idol worship, they searched for pure oil with which to light the Temple menorah. They found just enough to burn for one day, but miraculously it burned for eight days until more oil could be brought. It is celebrated by gathering at home to light a menorah (one candle each night) after reciting a blessing.

## **CHRISTMAS (CHRISTIANITY) Dec. 25, 2023**

Christmas is a Christian holiday which celebrates the birth of Jesus. This is one of the most important celebrations in Christianity, along with Easter. That being said, many people celebrate Christmas and the secular (nonreligious) elements of it are often emphasized more than its religious significance.

## **KWANZAA DEC. 26 - JAN. 1**

### **(CULTURAL: AFRICAN AMERICAN/PAN-AFRICAN)**

Although it is often thought of as a religious holiday, Kwanza in actually an African American and Pan-African cultural holiday which celebrates family, community, and culture. Each night of this week long celebration represents a different principle: unity, self-determination, collective work and responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity, and faith. A corresponding candle on the kinara is lit each night. Festivities include food, music, dancing, story telling, and reflection on the seven principles.

# UPCOMING EVENTS

## **Sundays 12/3: Sunday Mass @ Immaculate Conception Parish**

*Meet in the Dion Center Lobby at 10:40am to carpool to 11am Mass*

Need a ride to Mass? Come with Campus Ministry to Immaculate Conception Parish in Nashua for 11am Mass. We will leave promptly at 10:45am, so please meet in the Dion Center Lobby at 10:40am.

## **Thursday, 12/7: Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony Chapel Quad 6:00-7:00pm**

Join us on the Chapel Quad for our annual Christmas tree lighting ceremony! Get in the Christmas spirit with cookies, hot chocolate, and a visit from Santa Claus. You may also bring a donation for toy drive to this event!

## **Today through Friday 12/8: Toy Drive for Nashua PAL and Ascentria Care Alliance**

The Campus Ministry Club is collecting new, unwrapped toys for the children and teens served by Nashua PAL and Ascentria Care Alliance. There are multiple ways to donate:

- 1) Drop off toys in one of the collection boxes around campus. Boxes are located in the Dion Center, the Learning Commons, the Library, the Science and Innovation Center, and the Muldoon Fitness Center.
- 2) Sponsor a child from Ascentria Care Alliance. We have one more wish list for a from a specific child!
- 3) Donate online at [Rivier.edu/toydrive](http://Rivier.edu/toydrive). Your contribution will allow us to purchase more toys for the organizations.

## **Tuesday, 12/12 Praise and Worship Night Resurrection Chapel 7:30—8:00pm**

Take a break from studying and spend some time praying through contemporary Christian praise and worship music!

