THE VISITOR

TOWNSEND CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

At the Heart of the Community - With the Community in Our Hearts

DECEMBER 2022

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A Stewardship Special Announcement

The stewardship committee wanted to give back something to each person who pledged, so we are going to give you a gift voucher worth $5. No matter what your pledges is, be it $5, $50 or $500, you will get a gift voucher.

This voucher can be used for any church sponsored event, such as the holiday fair,(excluding the Crafters) the church suppers, the band concert and/or the auction.

It expires in December 2023 (a whole year) and it is transferrable to anyone you like.

But wait, there's more !!!

For each $1000 pledged, you will receive an additional voucher.

For a $2000 pledge, yet another one, and so on.

So keep this in mind when you fill out your pledge cards.

We know it's a small gift, but we want to give it as a big thank you for your generosity.

Merry Christmas!

December Calendar

18 Caroling at 1:30 pm

24 Candlelight service at 7 pm

25 Worship service at 10 am

27 January newsletter deadline

Handbell Practice every Wednesday at 6:30 pm until Christmas

Choir Practice every Wednesday at 7:30 pm until Christmas

No Council Meeting (next meeting scheduled for January 9)

December 2022

Volume 45 No. 11

Pastor: Rev. Gregory Schmidt
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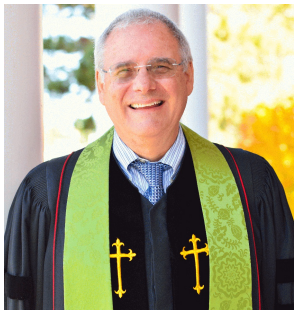
CHURCH OFFICE HOURS: Mon. & Tues.: 3:30 - 5pm
Wed.-Fri.: 9 am - 1pm

PASTOR'S OFFICE HOURS:
Mon-Wed 9-1, or by appointment.

Visit our web page at www.tccucc.org and visit us on Facebook

NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE: TUESDAY, DECEMBER 27



Pastor's Letter

Dear Friends,

Since everyone has a lot to do leading up to Christmas, and might not have time to read all the words in this newsletter, I'll try to be brief.

Our worship schedule for Christmas week is as follows:

- Sunday, Dec. 18 we will have our regular 10 am worship with the choir.
- Saturday, Dec. 24 (Christmas Eve) we will worship at 7 pm. This will be a traditional service of lessons and carols.
- Sunday, Dec. 25 (Christmas Day) we will have a short worship service at 10 am (no choir).
- Sunday, Jan. 1 (New Years Day) we will worship at 10 am with Communion (no choir).

Throughout the Season of Advent we will light the advent wreath and I am in need of people to light the candles. If you would like to volunteer to read a sentence or two and then light one of the candles please let me know.

We have been trying to find an outreach project to which we can contribute each month. In November it was diapers. For the month of January we are going to collect for World Central Kitchen. You can look them up on line at wck.org. We believe this is a tremendous organization. You can donate to them through the church or via their website. (If you donate through the church we have a better idea of how much outreach we, as a church, are doing.)

Yes, I know the economy is troubled at the moment. There is much talk about prices for heating (gas, oil, wood) going up and we know that the prices for our groceries have risen considerably. It is in time like these that those who are struggling need our help the most. We have a small deacon's fund which can be used to help people in need. If you are in need of assistance please reach out to me. If you don't need assistance and are able to donate to this fund we would welcome your donation. The more we have the more we can do to help.

I wish you all a merry Christmas and a happy new year. Join us for worship as we celebrate Jesus' birth!

Peace,

Greg

CHRISTMAS SEASON

A Summary of Advent & Christmas Dates

November 27 – The first Sunday of Advent

December 18 – Christmas Caroling (if it's happening, meet at front of Church at 2 pm, or in Fellowship Hall at 1:30 for singing warm-ups).

December 24 – One Christmas Eve service at 7 pm for the candlelight service.

December 25 – A brief worship service to celebrate the birth of our Savior!

CAROLING! SUNDAY, DECEMBER 18 AT 1:30 PM!

We are hoping to resume our caroling ministry this year, but this depends on two things: the COVID virus staying in abeyance, and there being enough volunteers to make a joyful noise to raise spirits and lighten hearts. Before the pandemic, we had a great group of adults and the youth group to make this work, but most of those participants have not been around this past year. If you would like to participate in this ministry, please let Lee McTighe (978-790-5699) or Cathy Hill (chill01469@gmail.com) know as soon as possible; Lee needs time to contact all those we could visit and determine our route.

If we are doing this, we will meet in Fellowship hall on Sunday, December 18 at 1:30 pm to sing some carols to warm up our voices, then head out at 2 pm. Song books, filled with many of your favorite carols, are provided.

Everyone is welcome!

Save Your Canceled Stamps

For 40 years, Townsend Congregational Church has been saving canceled stamps to send to the Perkins School for the Blind in Watertown. The stamps are sold to collectors overseas and the proceeds fund a summer camp in Maine for the Perkins School's Boy Scout troop. This outreach service was first introduced at TCC in 1982 by Addie Kytta, a beloved church member. Lee McTighe became friends with Addie and took over this stamp program after Addie passed away. The collection box is at the back of the sanctuary. Stamps should be trimmed, leaving a quarter-inch border on all sides. Any and all donations of your canceled stamps are gratefully accepted and appreciated, as TCC continues with this ongoing tradition.

TURKEY RUN!

'Tis the season for cheap turkeys! Now is a wonderful time to buy your turkey for our future turkey dinners in the new year! If you do not plan on offering up a turkey, but are willing to provide freezer space to store a turkey or two, that would also be very helpful. Let us know.

Many thanks to all those who have volunteered to chair the 2023 dinners; we have them all covered; now we just need to you to help make them all successes!

Thanks for Another Amazing Holiday Fair!

We would like to thank our entire church for all your steadfast help and joy you put into our holiday fair on Saturday, November 19, 2022. All of a sudden by 10:15, the hall and vestry were teeming with people and it was exciting to see and hear. The community and crafters mention so often how wonderful our fair is.

It takes a lot of time and energy to prepare for an event like this and the behind-the-scenes time spent

planning and working goes on for months before. Thank you to all our department chairs who bring your years of knowledge and creativity to make the fair beautiful and to run smoothly in so many ways. You are invaluable. Thank you to all our workers who were so generous with time and donations.

This year, one of the sweetest surprises of the fair was seeing so many of our far- flung members. They arrived to visit and shop; they walked in with soups, baked goods, raffle baskets and also came to make greens arrangements and be together in happy fellowship. As one of our former TCC Confirmands, who no longer lives in town, said while making greens baskets, "Of course I wanted to come to work tonight. I knew you'd be here."

It's a testament to the bond that forms in a church like ours which lasts a lifetime. To me, and perhaps to you, one of the most heartfelt and time- honored things someone could say when returning to our church is, "I knew you'd be here."

Thank you so much!

June Cloutier and Cathy Hill

Many, many thanks to all of our fabulous church bakers! So many breads, cookies, muffins, candies, fudge, coffee cakes! Judy Russell and I were thrilled to see our church fair bake table so overflowing with all your delicious offerings. We had a very successful day. There were many happy fair goers leaving with your yummy goodies. Thank you all for your generous contributions!

Karen Baer

THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

I would like to gratefully thank everyone who helped to make the Greens Table for the fair successful this year! Those who donated baskets and decorations, cut greens, helped to move everything to the vestry, and came forward to create the baskets, then covered the table the day of the fair played an important part! It takes a village to have the Greens Table happen, and you all did it well!

Thank you!

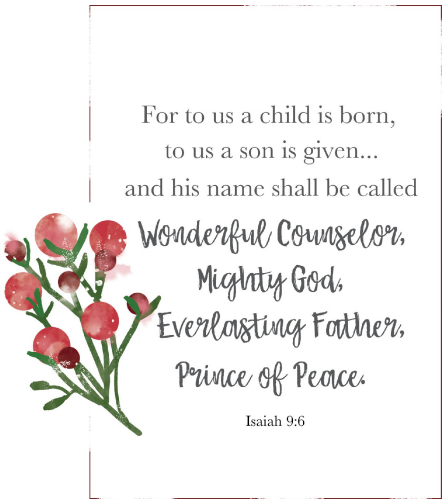
Wanda

2021 GIFT BASKET RAFFLE WINNERS

Thank you to all who contributed and donated items for the basket raffle. This year there were 41 great baskets filled with a variety of items that were of interest to everyone. Chris is so thankful that everyone has been willing to share their talents by contributing to this part of the fair; she appreciates your generosity so much. Because of all who contributed, the raffle baskets were a huge success, once again.

Here is a list of all the people who won baskets:

Santa & Wreath - Renée Fossey; Treat Your Pup - Claire Jancaitis; Unique Deck of Cards Kate - Roussin; Sunflower Seeds & Feeder - Sue Woolfrey; Puzzle Box - Karen Clement; Bakeshop Bowl & Utensils - Nancy Rogers; Women's Scarves - Tricia Asuncion; Homemade Cards # 1 - Cheryl Cutler; Homemade Cards # 2 - Gloria Roddy; Baby Girl - Beverly Napior; Maple Syrup - Trish Benoit; Light up Your Life - Carol Murdock; Angel Bear & Friends - Marie Firicano; Wine Basket # 1 - Sarah Goyette; Bartender's Choice - Terry Greenan; Antique Doll & Bear - Beverly Napior; Candy Cane Surprise - Lisa Stroffoleno; Treat Your Cat - Amanda Modugno; Winter Bears - Marie Firicano; Coffee Break # 1 - June Beauschesne; Tea Basket - Lisa Stroffoleno; Pamper Yourself - Rebecca Burnham; Tea & Treats - Marie Firicano; Breakfast Basket - Eileen Barnacoat; Wine Basket # 2 - Jeanne Lecuyer; Beverage & Art - Beth Klein; Infant Essentials - Dawne Marshall; Game Night - Lisa Lamoureaux; Season of Light - Lisa Stroffoleno; Snow Day - Ed Cutler; Dogs Rule - Dakota Marshall; Puzzles for Fun - Angela Shepherd; Single Santa (Green Coat) - Georgine Brouilette; Stack of Puzzles - Heidi Shattuck; Needlepoint Pictures - Gloria Upham; Just for Us - Laura Patt; Child's Fun Basket - Lee Ann Saunders; Wood Cutouts - Barbara Black; Basket of Coffee - Lee Mc Tighe; Quilt Basket - Dawne Marshall; Santa (Red Coat) - June Beauchesne.



A Stewardship Moment

by Jody Burnham

Inspired by "How do love Thee?" by Elizabeth Barrett Browning

Why do I pledge to thee? Let me count the ways.

I pledge to thee to the depth and breadth and height

My soul can reach, when feeling the need for spiritual guidance

This church brings me ideal grace.

I pledge to thee to the level of every day's

Most quiet need, to the deep friendships and loving community, of this, my church.

I pledge to thee freely, as men (and women and children) work together at community dinners, suppers or Holiday Fairs.

I pledge to thee purely, fortunate to be able to give each year.

I love thee with a passion, each Sunday transfixed by the hymns, anthems and musical responses.

I pledge to thee with a love, finding my place in such a loving community of faith.

I pledge to thee with the breath,

Smiles, tears, of all my life; and if God chooses,

I shall but love thee better after death. (which, hopefully, is not too soon!)

DECEMBER OUTREACH CORNER

Diaper Drive

Thanks to all who contributed to the November Diaper Drive to support the diaper pantry run by *Care Central VNA & Hospice*. The photo above is the back of Beth's car as she prepares to take our collected diapers to the pantry. Thanks, Beth!

UCC Hurricane Ian Relief Fund

$200 was contributed toward this UCC fund-raiser, which was matched with funds from TCC's Outreach account, so $400 was sent to the UCC to help the victims of Hurricane Ian.

Remember to check the members-only portion of the TCC website for updated reports.

The Birthday Fund

This is a fun way to contribute above and beyond your regular giving to the church to something above and beyond our normal operating budget. We appreciate those who have participated so far. Simply make a donation on (or around) your birthday in the amount of your age (Memo: Birthday Fund)! Participate and watch our gifts grow!

3-Niles Busler; 5-Julianne Capone; 6-Michelle Enright; 7-Lorena Carlson and Steve Cloutier; 11-Joseph Cloutier; 12-Justin Gay and Kyra Genoter; 14-Cathy Parsons; 15-Melissa Gruber and Elsa Sedgewick; 17-Donna Howard; 18-Jock Snaith; 19-Nancy Clough; 20-Pam Snaith; 21-Carol Swenor; 23-Jillian Hersey; 25-David Butz

OUR BLESSINGS:

David and Wanda Wilson are overjoyed with the birth of their new granddaughter, Tessa Rose Cormier.

Cathy Hill gives thanks that a four-year-long dispute between her husband's siblings has finally been settled.

Sharlene Rourke thanks you for continued prayers concerning her surgery. One surgery went well, and she is awaiting the decision on another one. She remains hopeful.

We are thankful that our Pastor Greg is recovering well from his surgery.

Wedding Anniversaries:
Peter and Cathy Hill, 38 years on Dec. 25

OUR CONCERNS:

Moe Tremblay is asking for prayers for his friend Sue, who is caring for her mom after surgery.

Also, Moe is asking prayers for a dear friend who is struggling with a substance addiction.

Prayers are needed for the Hatch family as they grieve for their granddaughter's boyfriend Caelan's death.

Lee McTighe is asking for prayers for her sister, Daphne, who is consulting with doctors at Mass Eye and Ear.

Lee is also asking for prayers as she grieves for a friend of 53 years who recently passed away.

Prayers are needed for the Matt and Pam Peeler as they grieve the loss of their wife and mother, Nancy.

Healing prayers for Lorraine M, Chris Clish, Dominic Caprigno and Tracy Winslow.

Sandy LaPointe is asking for prayers for her friend Marg Clark from Millis, MA, whose husband Bill passed away.

Karen Baer is asking for prayers for 16 year old, Nathan, who is facing new treatments following some unfavorable test results.

OUR CANCER FIGHTERS:

We offer prayers of healing and hope for all those in our immediate and extended families who are in the midst of battling cancer, and for all those who care for and support them. Lorraine M, cutaneous T cell lymphoma; Cathy Hill's sister, Morag Graham, and Barbara Goodwin's step son, Tyler who both have Non-Hodgkins lymphoma.

LECTIONARY, DECEMBER 2022

November 27, 2022 -
First Sunday of Advent
First reading: Isaiah 2:1-5
Psalm: Psalm 122
Second reading: Romans 13:11-14
Gospel: Matthew 24:36-44

December 4, 2022 -
Second Sunday of Advent
First reading: Isaiah 11:1-10
Psalm: Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19
Second reading: Romans 15:4-13
Gospel: Matthew 3:1-12

December 11, 2022 -
Third Sunday of Advent
First reading: Isaiah 35:1-10
Psalm: Psalm 146:5-10 or Luke 1:46b-55
Second reading: James 5:7-10
Gospel: Matthew 11:2-11

December 18, 2022 -
Fourth Sunday of Advent
First reading: Isaiah 7:10-16
Psalm: Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19
Second reading: Romans 1:1-7
Gospel: Matthew 1:18-25

December 25, 2022 -
Christmas Day
First reading: Isaiah 9:2-7
Psalm: Psalm 96
Second reading: Titus 2:11-14
Gospel: Luke 2:1-14, (15-20)

COMMUNITY NEWS

Townsend Gift Card Donation Drive

The town of Townsend now has a Community Services Coordinator, Emily McCaffrey. She is currently running a gift card donation drive which involves collecting gift cards to all major grocery/ clothing stores, as well as gas cards. As residents come to her with expressed financial concerns, and needs, this drive will enable her to provide these gift cards to them, while also connecting them with other available services. If you need more information, please contact Emily at 978-877-3848 or emccaffrey@townsendma.gov.

For more information about Emily and this new town position, read the copied new article below.

"Emily is fulfilling her new role as the Community Services Coordinator for the town of Townsend. She started her position with Townsend in April of this year and has hit the ground running assisting wherever she is needed. Within her position she manages the Townsend Emergency funds, the ARPA Wellness funding for Police/Fire & EMS, the Recreation Department, the Council on Aging and the NM- Cares Drop-in Center located on 241 Main Street! Emily works directly with individuals, families, and residents among the community with an array of needs such as: finding a mental health care professional, obtaining fuel assistance, obtaining food assistance, promoting educational and wellbeing programs across the community and more! She received her M. Ed in Community Engagement at Merrimack College as a first-generation college student. She has a passion and energy for helping residents in any way that she can. In her spare time, she enjoys listening to the Dave Matthews Band, walking her dog Barley, spending time with her new fiancé and listening to true crime and supernatural podcasts. Her office is located directly in the Senior Center across from the welcome desk. Join us in welcoming Emily to Townsend."

Festival of Trees at the Townsend Public Library

Don't forget the Townsend Library's annual Festival of Trees; this season, the trees are only going to be on display until the first or second week in January, so make time to come and visit soon!

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST NEWS

Thank You for Your Continued Support!!

10/17/2022 - by: David Cleaver-Bartholomew

Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! Your financial support thus far this year is truly appreciated, is never ever taken for granted, and does not go unnoticed! Please share this [message] with your congregation so that they, too, can know how much we appreciate their support and how, working together, we are changing lives, transforming communities, and living into and fulfilling our SNEUCC mission.

Together, we will continue to respond to God's call to mission and ministry. Together, we are the body of Christ known as the Southern New England Conference of the United Church of Christ. May God continue to bless you and our congregation in your various ministries even as you are a blessing to others!

David

Rev. Dr. David Cleaver-Bartholomew is the Director of Stewardship and Donor Relations for the SNEUCC.

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I was caught by Kenneth's concept of "a light that refuses to go out" in his daily devotional from 12/7/21. It arrived too late for last year's December newsletter, but thought it would be appropriate to share it with you now. –Cathy

Relentless Light

by Kenneth Samuel

I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. - Psalm 27:13 (KJV)

When I was in fifth grade, I asked my science teacher, "Where do the stars go during the daytime?" He responded, "They don't go anywhere; you just can't see them because of the dominant light from the star of the sun. The stars around us shine during the day, just as they do at night."

These days, the bleakness of our circumstances can make it difficult for us to see any glimmers of light from the stars of faith around us.

Yet, despite the disruptions that could have caused us to faint, those stars have never stopped shining. They continued to emanate light even when we could not see them.

Faith is like a star that refuses to stop shining, even when it's not noticed. Faith is a star that refuses to stop shining, even when other things around it get all the attention. Faith is a star that refuses to stop shining even when its brightness seems lost in the competition from other sources of brightness.

Faith is relentless. So relentless that even after being ignored all day long, it continues to give light through the darkness of the night. It's illumination when it can be seen in no way lessens the consistency of its illumination when it can't be seen.

Advent is all about a light that refuses to go out. It's about an expectancy of new life that refuses to surrender to the scorching rays of distress. It's about a star of hope that will not surrender its light to any searing season of turmoil.

Prayer

Lord, as the sun sets on this year, may the unrelenting light of faith reveal the consistency of your goodness and mercy. Amen.

Kenneth L. Samuel is Pastor of Victory for the World Church, Stone Mountain, Georgia.

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Our Holiday Fair 2022

Townsend Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
3 Brookline St., PO Box 487
Townsend MA 01469-0487

Worship/Sunday School at 10 am

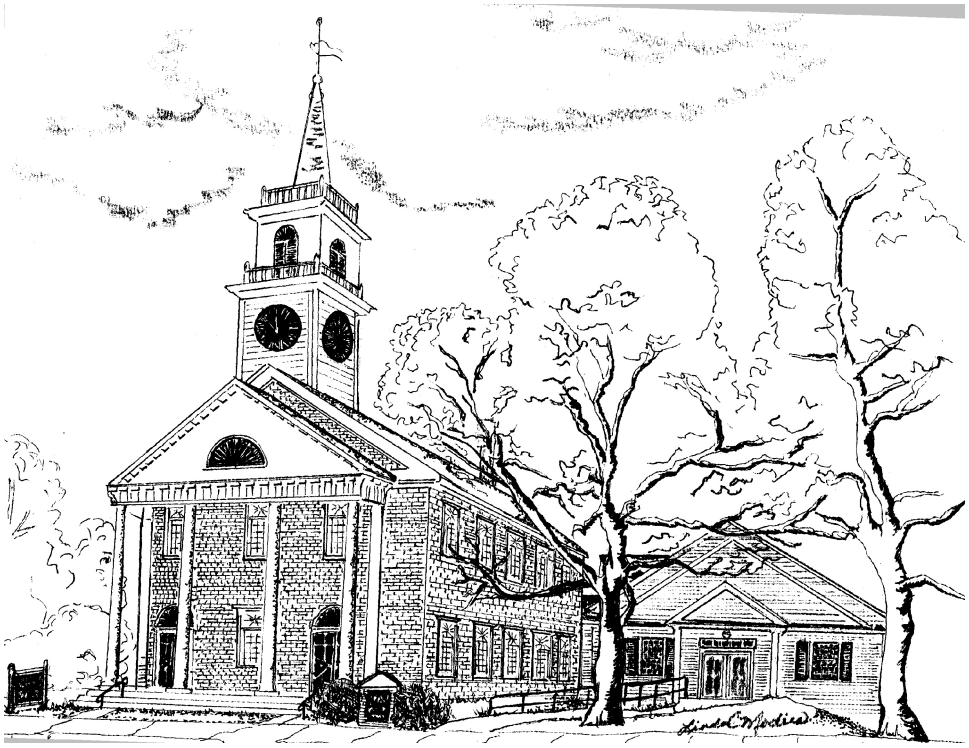
SHARING OUR SPACE WITH THE COMMUNITY AND FRIENDS

Weddings, Child Dedications, Holiday Parties, Baby and Wedding Showers, Family Reunions, Organization Meetings

We are blessed with a beautiful sanctuary and great space within our building for use that we are able to share with others. If you or someone you know is looking for a location for an event, contact our church secretary at 978-597-8925. This use of our building helps support the maintenance of our facility.

OUR COMMON PURPOSE STATEMENT

Being in an intimate relationship with God in the present, we are an ever-learning, action-oriented, justice-seeking, community-caring church. Our purpose is to use our gifts to make God's love real and alive for everyone.

We are committed to ministering through the use of our gifts, learning to live the Christian way of life, and being together in Christ by seeking to fulfill these three commandments of Christ:

- *To love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength (Mark 12:30)*
- *To love our neighbor as ourselves (Mark 12:31)*
- *To love one another as Christ has loved us (John 13:34)*