

# THE VISITOR

## TOWNSEND CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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



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This year, our Lenten journey begins on Wednesday, February 14



### Annual Business Meeting

Thank you to all who were able to stay for our business meeting on the 28th. Besides passing the budgets for TCC and VCCC, we received important news about VCCC as well as the current state of our church finances. We got a brief report on the pastor search status, and an important announcement from Pastor Greg. Once the minutes are approved, they will be posted to the members portion of our web page – take a look.

*Cathy Hill,  
TCC Clerk*

### February Calendar

- 12 Council Meeting
- 15 Free Community Dinner
- 24 Turkey Supper
- 25 March Newsletter Deadline

Handbell Practice every Wednesday at 6:30 pm starting 2/21

Choir Practice every Wednesday at 7:30 pm

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





## February 2024

Volume 47 No. 2

**Pastor:** Rev. Gregory Schmidt  
**Pastor's Line at TCC:**  
978-597-0157

**TCC Administrative Asst.:**  
Judy Karkane  
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**Village Common Children's Center Line:** 978-597-0834

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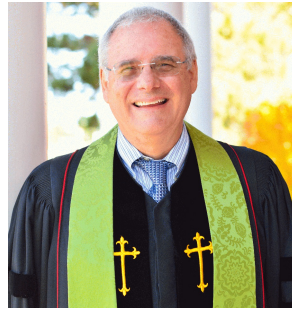
**Village Common Children's Center:** vccc@tccucc.org

**CHURCH OFFICE HOURS:**  
Monday-Friday: 8 am - 1 pm

**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:  
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 25**



## Pastor's Letter

It is crazy of me, I know, but I just can't help it. I see the headline pop up in the browser and despite knowing it is what is known as "click bait" (something to entice you to click on it despite not being real), I click on it and read it.

So in the last few weeks I have read about the seven reasons no one likes me; the nine things I do that make me unlikable; the seven body language signs I display that signal a lack of confidence; the six ways my wife and I are incompatible; the five signs that I have low or no self-esteem; the ten behaviors I exhibit that prevent me from being "a truly classy person" and the zillion reasons why I will never be rich. Wow, the internet is a treasure trove of information about how we just don't measure up. If you believe any of it, that is.

Somehow these ridiculous articles, which show up on my phone, pull me in like a Hallmark Christmas Movie. They are purely entertainment, but as I read them, and then share them aloud with the family at dinner, I admit they make me think about how I, and we, live our lives. There are plenty of people for whom these lists are spot on. There are plenty of self-absorbed people in our lives that maybe we should start staying away from.

There are plenty of couples who should not be together in the first place.

But beneath all of these lists is the bottom line that we are all made in God's image. What does that say about God? Well it says we can't put God into any tiny box. But maybe it also suggests that God gives us form and features, but allows us to shape our personalities and who we choose to be in ways that might make us very different from God, and who God wants us to be.

God sent Jesus into our world to show us how to live in God's way - with mercy, selflessness, kindness, faith and humility. When we become people other than that, we are not keeping true to God's image.

As we move through this new year, I hope we will all pay attention to how we live, how we present ourselves to the world, and how we treat one another. There is plenty of pain in the world. Let's not add to it. Instead, let's try to make this world a better place.

Be a Blessing!

Greg



*The LORD your God...*  
will rejoice over you with gladness;  
he will quiet you by his love.

ZEPHANIAH 3:17, ESV





## Calling All Handbell Friends

The Agape Handbell Choir will begin rehearsing for spring on Wednesday, February 21st at 6:30 in the sanctuary. Anyone from eighth grade to 101 with some ability to read music is welcome! Call Wanda Wilson 978-597-6803 with any questions you may have.



## Community Dinner

The February Free Community Dinner will be held on Thursday, February 15 from 5 to 6 pm. The menu will include American Chop Suey, Salad, Green Beans, Garlic Bread and dessert. Some tables will be provided for eat in. Water will be provided for a beverage. Any one wishing to donate food or their time to this dinner may sign up after church on Sundays or by calling Wanda Wilson at 978-597-6803.

Thank you for your time!

Wanda Wilson and June Cloutier,  
Co Chairs

## Turkey Supper on February 24

Our next fund-raiser supper will be held on February 24, 5-6:30 pm; it is being organized by Lee and Kathy Duckett and will feature the ever-popular roast turkey and all the usual favorites, including squash and peas, along with homemade desserts, for \$13 a meal. Diners may eat-in or do take-out.

The sign up sheet for the dinner is available after church to give everyone an opportunity to donate food and their time to this fun event! If you will not be at church, but would like to donate to or work at the dinner, please call or send an email to the church office.

*Thank you for your time!*

## A RECIPE FOR VOLUNTEERS

Take one cup of *time*  
Add two cups of *charity*  
Mix well with a pound of *dedication*  
Pour in a cup of *milk of human kindness*  
Add a tablespoon of *thoughtfulness*  
Sift in 1/2 cup of *patience*  
Beat well, cutting in a teaspoon of *pride*  
Pour into *heart-shaped molds*  
Sprinkle with a tablespoon of *smiles*  
Bake in a warm *oven*  
Serve throughout the year with *satisfaction and joy!*

Author Unknown

**Louise & Bill Coalter wish to thank everyone who worked, cooked, baked, or helped in any way to make the first turkey dinner of 2024 a success. (We raised over \$1,500!)**



## 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!



10-David Ryder, 11-Paul Martineau, 19-Heather Nixon, 20-Alice Struthers, 25-Charlie Hersey, Linda Ireland and Cindy Miller



## Just for fun

Answers to the "Women of the Bible" puzzle from the January newsletter:

1. (across) Elizabeth; 1. (down) Eve; 2. Bathsheba; 3. Zipporah; 4. Sapphira; 5. Esther; 6. Deborah; 7. Rebekah; 8. Rachel; 9. Martha; 10. Dorcas; 11. Gomer; 12. Mary; 13. Miriam.





**OUR BLESSINGS:**

Chris Clish has prayers of joy that her granddaughter is home and recovering well.

**OUR CONCERNS:**

Prayers of healing for Nancy Clough who had a bad fall in December and is now at **Life Care Center of Leominster**, 370 West St. Leominster MA 01453, 978-537-0771. She would love to hear from you!

Prayers for Terri and Kenny Mattson; Kenny's father, Kenneth Mattson, passed away on Christmas Eve.

Prayers for Judy Russell and family; Judy's mother, Barbara Peterson, passed away on December 27 at the age of 102.

Prayers for the Oakley family on Linda's passing in January.

We keep Carol Ciccolini and her family in our prayers as they mourn the passing of Carol's husband, John, on January 13.

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.



To the TCC Family :

Words cannot fully express our thanks and gratitude for all your kindness, thoughts and prayers, love and support. It meant so much at the time of the loss of Judy's mother, Barbara M Peterson. Your kind words and the many things you did were greatly appreciated.

Yours in Christ,

Bob, Judy and DJ Russell



**LECTIONARY, FEBRUARY 2024**

**February 4, 2024 -**

*Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany*

First reading: Isaiah 40:21-31

Psalm: Psalm 147:1-11, 20c

Second reading: 1 Corinthians 9:16-23

Gospel: Mark 1:29-39

**February 11, 2024 -**

*Transfiguration Sunday*

First reading: 2 Kings 2:1-12

Psalm: Psalm 50:1-6

Second reading: 2 Corinthians 4:3-6

Gospel: Mark 9:2-9

**February 18, 2024 -**

*First Sunday in Lent*

First reading: Genesis 9:8-17

Psalm: Psalm 25:1-10

Second reading: 1 Peter 3:18-22

Gospel: Mark 1:9-15

**February 25, 2024 -**

*Second Sunday in Lent*

First reading: Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16

Psalm: Psalm 22:23-31

Second reading: Romans 4:13-25

Gospel: Mark 8:31-38 or Mark 9:2-9



**COMMUNITY NEWS**

**Vietnam Outreach**

As many of you know I went to Vietnam early in the year, and there is a need for old Barbie and Ken dolls that still have all their arms and legs. They don't have to have clothes or if they are losing their hair, it is okay, because the tour guide (Mia) has a group of woman who fix the hair, and make clothing for the dolls. The women make a little money which helps them out.

Mia gives the dolls away to the children in the orphanages and the local villages all over Vietnam. The villages are very rich in culture, but are cash poor and the children do not get many luxury things.

I will have a box in the office, for the dolls. After I have accumulated enough I will send them on. Please no new ones, because of the shipping issue. She indicated new dolls will not make it to her.

I really appreciate any help you can give.

Thank You!

Judy Karkane

(Church Secretary)





**Plan ahead: Mini Golf at the Townsend Public Library on Friday, March 1 (5-9 pm) and Saturday, March 2 (10 am to 4 pm)!**



**UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST NEWS**

Every month, the SNEUCC has learning events, both in person and online. To view these events, go to: [www.sneucc.org/events](http://www.sneucc.org/events)



**UCC Webinar: Rebirth and Renewal - reimagine ministry and engage new people**

Feb. 28, 7:30 PM • Online

Join Rev. Ray Jordan for a conversation about the ways his congregation went from nearly closing to reimagine the ministry and engage new people in worship, service, and advocacy.

Please go to:

<https://www.sneucc.org/eventdetail/18142584?month=2&year=2024&day=1&display=m>

for more details and to register



**Super Saturday 2024: Foundations**

Saturday, March 9, 2024 at 9 am to 4 pm.

*“You are fellow citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, 20 built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone; in him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God.”*

~ Ephesians 2:19-22

Super Saturday 2024: Foundations is focused on building or strengthening the foundational skills, strategies, possibilities and best practices that allow us to Be The Church - faithful, resilient, nimble, connected to our neighbors and built on the cornerstone that is Jesus Christ.

Registration is opening soon.

Here are some highlights of the event.

- ❖ SNEUCC Executive Conference Minister Rev. Darrell Goodwin will offer his wisdom about partnerships and building connections during opening devotions and an hour-long workshop in the afternoon.
- ❖ Super Saturday will be held onsite and online.
- ❖ Onsite will be held at the Wellsworth Hotel (formerly named the Southbridge Hotel & Conference Center) and there are a limited number of seats, so register early!

- ❖ Event doors open at 8 AM. Check-in begins on the day of the event at 8 AM for registered participants.
- ❖ Because there are limited seats available, walk-ins will not be accepted!
- ❖ To accommodate our large group, there will be 2 lunch seatings. Noontime workshop selection will determine which lunch seating each participant attends.
- ❖ A Swap Shop is a new feature of Super Saturday. It will be an opportunity for pastors and churches to share resources and materials.
- ❖ The Marketplace has been moved to become an ongoing aspect of Annual Meeting.
- ❖ There are fewer workshop options in order to create a focused roster of learning opportunities and more robust workshop groups. Participants will be able to choose 3 options.
- ❖ A Youth Track and a Children’s Program will once again be offered. New this year is a childcare option for children under 4 yrs. All three programs will require advanced registration.

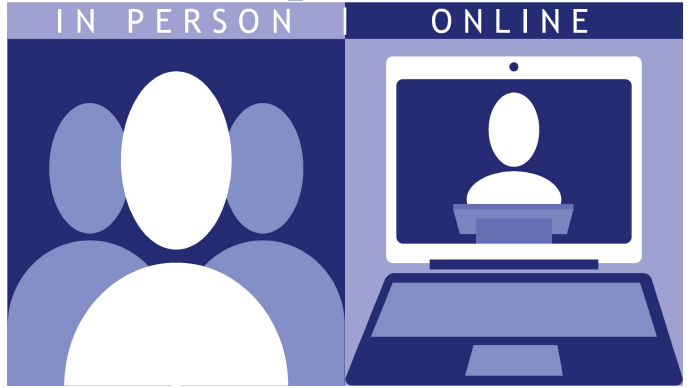
This event will be held at the Wellsworth Hotel, 14 Mechanic Street, Southbridge MA 01550. For more information, please contact Roslynn Hooks at [hooksr@sneucc.org](mailto:hooksr@sneucc.org).

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Townsend Congregational Church  
United Church of Christ  
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Townsend MA 01469-0487

*Worship/Sunday School at 10 am*

# Worship With Us



## 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)*

