

# 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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We welcome our New Beginnings friends who will be worshipping with us on December 7, and will return on December 28 to worship with us every Sunday through the end of March.



### TEO Tree Lighting Event

From their website,  
<https://www.teo-ma.org/>

"It is that time of year.

Townsend's time-honored Tree Lighting tradition will be December 7, 2025, 4:30 pm on the Common, followed by refreshments and fellowship at St. John's.

Please plan on attending, and consider helping with set up, soup/stew making, baking a dessert, and being part of the clean-up and set-up crew!" (There is a sign-up link on their site.)

### December Calendar

- Nov. 30 First Sunday of Advent
- 10 Last date to return TEO gifts
- 14 Community caroling
- 21 Last day of Heifer collection
- 22 Sunday School Nativity
- 24 Christmas Eve services at 5 pm (NB) and 10 pm (TCC)
- 28 January newsletter deadline

Handbell practice every Wednesday at 6:30 pm and senior choir practice every Wednesday at 7:30 pm until Christmas

No Council Meeting (next meeting scheduled for January 9)



At our All-Member meeting on November 2, we unanimously agreed to proceed with officially researching a federation with New Beginnings Methodist Church, and committees are being formed to look in various essential aspects of this union. If you are interested in serving on one of these committees, please talk to Pastor Greg.



## December 2025

Volume 48 No. 11

**Pastor:** Rev. Gregory Schmidt

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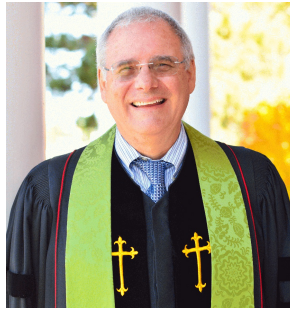
**Village Common Children's  
Center:** vccc@tccucc.org

**CHURCH OFFICE HOURS:**  
Monday-Friday: 9 am - 1 pm

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

**Visit our web page at  
[www.tccucc.org](http://www.tccucc.org) and visit  
us on Facebook**

**NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE:  
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 28**



## Pastor's Letter

Dear Friends,

The more I watch Hallmark movies (I hate myself for watching so many of them), I am convinced that the people at the Hallmark channel have no idea what Christmas is really about. The other day I watched a(nother) charming one in which one of the main supporting characters was a handsome, young (of course) man who was an ordained minister. Believe it or not the main characters in the story planned on getting married on Christmas Eve at 5 pm, and they needed him to help them.

Thankfully the minister had nothing to do all day, save for helping the couple break into a store to get the bride a dress, do some pre-marriage counseling, help set up the reception, and then officiate the wedding. What the HECK??? Didn't he have a congregation and worship services to worry about? Why wasn't he busy making sure the bulletins were correct, the little candles were out, the flowers all arranged and the sanctuary cleaned up and ready for the services? He obviously, and understandably, was unemployed. Anyway, as usual with Hallmark Christmas movies, the birth of Jesus - the entire reason for Christmas - had nothing to do with the story.

This year we are, once again, going to celebrate the birth of Jesus in our church. We will NOT be having a pajama ball on Christmas Eve. We will not worship the trees, the lights, the hot chocolate, Santa, or the cookies like in the movies. We will simply celebrate the coming of our Savior into the world.

Once again we will welcome our brothers and sisters in Christ from New Beginnings United Methodist Church to worship with us. They will be joining us in our sanctuary for a joint worship service on December 7th.

Throughout the Season of Advent we will light the advent wreath and, as always, I am in need of people to lead the candle lighting ceremony on December 21st and on Christmas Eve at 10 pm.

On Christmas Eve there will be two opportunities to celebrate the coming of Jesus' birth. Steve Pierce will lead a worship service in the sanctuary at New Beginnings at 5 pm. We will host a traditional service of lessons and carols in our sanctuary at 10 pm.

Our outreach collection for the month of December is the United Church of Christ Christmas Fund which used to be known as "Veterans of the Cross." The money collected will go to a fund to help retired pastors whose income is not enough to live on. As you may guess, there are plenty of them out there as a pastor's salary is not enough to live on in the best of times. I hope you will give generously as maybe there are a few of your former pastors who are drawing from this fund.

Finally, as I try to do each year at this time, I remind you that we have

a small deacon's fund which can be used to help people in need. If you are in need of assistance (food, oil, power, etc), please reach out to me.

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

Peace,

Greg



### ***A Summary of Advent & Christmas Dates***

**November 30** – The first Sunday of Advent

**December 10** – Last day to drop off gifts for TEO's Santa Project; may be dropped off at TEO or the Townsend Public Library

**December 14** – Christmas Caroling (meet at front of Church at 2 pm, or in Fellowship Hall at 1:30 for singing warm-ups).

**December 22** – Sunday School Nativity after worship in Fellowship Hall.

**December 24** – Christmas Eve services: Gather at 5 pm at New Beginnings, and/or at 10 pm for the TCC candlelight service.



### **CAROLING! SUNDAY, DECEMBER 14 AT 1:30 PM!**

We are gathering once more to go out and bring some Holiday Cheer to our Townsend neighbors – and plan on having a good time while we're at it!! This year, we are combining this ministry with our friends from New Beginnings. Come gather together in front of the church at 2 pm and be prepared to bring joy to the hearts of several people. Song books, filled with many of your favorite carols, are provided. This is a great family activity! In past years, we have culminated this ministry with a gathering together for casual refreshments and fellowship, if you would like to offer this, please reach out to Lee McTighe or Cathy Hill.

**Warm-Up!** – come a half hour early for a warming-up sing-a-long of your favorite carols. Lee McTighe will play the piano for us and it will be just the thing to get us started.

If you have any questions, please contact Lee McTighe, or leave a message with the church secretary).

***Everyone is welcome!***



### **Save Your Canceled Stamps**

For 43 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 (you can leave a message with the church secretary).

## Children's Corner

### 2025 Events

**December 13:**  
Lighting the Peace  
candle

**December 21:**  
Music - singing  
*Silent Night* with  
Snr Choir



**December 21 (during coffee  
hour):** Live Nativity

**December 28:** No Sunday school

Throughout the month of December children will be collecting change for the Heifer Project and we will be selecting our animals depending on the amount of money they collect. Please donate generously.

It's been a pleasure working with the children this year, they've all grown so much in their faith. Please remember to ask your children what they've learned and how much fun they had during Sunday school. Any question or comments, I can be reached at  
Amanda.d.Caprigno@usps.gov

*Peace and tidings, Amanda, Ben,  
and Liz*



## Thanks for Another Amazing Holiday Fair!

There are only two reasons that I have the heart to volunteer to co-chair the holiday fair at our May meeting each year: 1) June Cloutier and 2) our church community. This

is because I know that it would not happen without those two key elements. I have two jobs: contacting and organizing the crafters, and creating and posting all the signage inside the church - that's it. June takes charge of organizing all the church tables and generally ends up putting together the bistro, as well as getting a news article to our local paper - that's a lot of balls in the air! - *Thanks, June.*

We are both so fortunate to have the support of our church community to make this come together so well each year - and this year was no exception. While we are always so grateful to head home after everything is tidied up and put away on the day of the fair, I hope you also feel a sense of accomplishment because this is a fun event that is anticipated by our local community each year.

So, once again, a HUGE thank you from June and myself.

*Cathy Hill*



## 2025 GIFT BASKET RAFFLE WINNERS

I would like to thank everyone who made and donated baskets for our raffle. And a special thank you to those who help me out every year: Beth Klein, Cathy Hill, and Lorraine Misner.

Sincerely, *Christine Clish*

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

1. Sarah Corey, \$50 Settle Shop gift card;
2. Laurel Smith, Three Old Bears;
3. Jane Misner, 25 Assorted handmade cards;
4. Kelci Delaney, 25 Assorted handmade cards;
5. Gloria Upham, 25 Assorted handmade cards;
6. Nancy French, Socks Galore;
7. Sarah Corey, Friendly Library;
8. Eliza Roberts, Just for Me;
9. Louise Coalter, Bible Fun;
10. Janice Mann, Christmas Joy;
11. Russ Phillips, Warm It Up;
12. Betsy Cziria, Christmas Comfort;
13. Amy Harrington, Kids Activity;
14. Nancy French, Pizza;
15. Jody Burnham, Buckets & Shovels + \$25 for Ice Cream;
16. Jane Misner, Snowman;
17. Jen Toning, Happy Christmas;
18. Laurel Smith, P.J. Basket;
19. Heidi Koppelkan, Driftwood Wreath;
20. Kelci Delaney, Puzzle Fun;
21. Judy Morico, Holiday Bonanza;
22. Carole Gustafson, Italian Dinner;
23. Sarah Goyette, Cancer ducks;
24. Lauren Koduch, More puzzle fun;
25. Heidi Shattuck, Chocolate Happiness;
26. Cindy Miller, 20 lbs Sunflower Seeds;
27. Rebecca Burnham, Child's reading nook;
28. Gary Johnson, Dog Haven;
29. Kara Giamta, Breakfast Basket;
30. Kate Roussin, Star Table Runner;
31. Jody Burnham, Snuggle & Get Cozy;
32. Carol Murdock, Legos basket.

*Special Note:* Chris will have moved to her new home ☺ by the time we hold our fair next year, and we will be looking for someone to run this fun table. Please pray about it and let us know if you would like to take this on. Thanks.



## 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*



## From the Bake Table:

Thank you, thank you, thank you to all of our talented and generous bakers, and fudge and candy makers. Once again, the Bake Table had an impressive variety of goodies that were happily snatched up by sweet-loving fair-goers. You come through every year and we appreciate your help making the TCC Bake Table the yummiest in town!

*Karen Baer and Judy Russell*



## 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!



Niles Busler;  
Julianne  
Capone;  
Michelle  
Enright;

Lorena Carlson; Steve Cloutier;  
Joseph Cloutier; Justin Gay; Kyra  
Genoter; Cathy Parsons; Melissa  
Gruber; Elsa Sedgewick; Donna  
Howard; Jock Snaith; Nancy  
Clough; Pam Snaith; Carol Swenor;  
Jillian Hersey; David Butz.



## The Village Common Children's Center

## Hello TCC Friends!! Happy December from VCCC!!

Well, our school year has been rolling right along, full steam ahead! Very hard to believe we're moving into month four already!

Guess that old saying, "time flies when you're having fun" is definitely true as we have been having FUN!! So, throughout the month of November our classes found us focusing on the themes of "Life on the Farm", "The Harvest", "Colonial Days", "Colors and Shapes", and of course, "Thanksgiving!" Both the Toddler and the Preschool/Pre-K classrooms had fun exploring all aspects of the farm, especially painting with mud by driving toy tractors through a paint tray of mud and driving them all over paper to make cool designs! Cooking projects in both classrooms again allowed the children to work on math and science skills as they made homemade cornbread and banana bread, YUM!!! While learning about how people lived in the early colonial days, the Preschool/PreK children tried writing with feathers! A special home/school connection was made when each child took home a big paper "turkey feather" to decorate with their families. When completed, they brought the feather back to school and it was attached to a big turkey on the classroom bulletin board!

The big highlight for November was our "Thanksgiving Feast" where we invited parents to join their children for a luncheon upstairs in the church hall. (We thank TCC for their generosity in allowing us to use the hall so that we could accommodate all our families.) All the families donated some part of the luncheon, and it was definitely enjoyed by all, it was a great start to the holiday weekend!!

The month of December will find the children participating in lots of activities that highlight how people

all around the world celebrate their holidays. They will read stories, play different games, create beautiful art projects, and, of course, continue with the cooking projects that the children always enjoy! The last week of school before our holiday break will have all the classes participating in “Holiday Spirit Week” with each day’s activities focusing on a different fun theme which includes the much loved “Polar Express Day”!! The big highlight of that week will definitely be our “Breakfast with Santa” event that includes yummy pancakes, fruit, muffins and juice and of course a visit with the big man in the red suit!!

From all the Staff, the VCCC Board of Directors and myself, we wish our TCC family a healthy and happy month of December, and may the joy, wonder and magic of the Christmas season touch you all!!

Carol Ciccolini,  VCCC Director



**OUR BLESSINGS:**

We are thankful for God’s love and mercy, especially in times of trouble.

**Wedding Anniversaries:**  
Peter and Cathy Hill, 41 years on Dec. 25

**OUR CONCERNS:**

We ask for extra blessings for Elaine D as she adjusts to her new living arrangements at RiverCourt, and pray that she meets many new friends there.

We pray for Lou Dubreuil who is in rehab after a hospital stay.

Karen B is asking for prayers for the family of her aunt, Chesterline, who passed away.

We pray for Natalya’s family who are grieving after the unexpected loss of her grandfather on November 18.

We pray for all our friends who are either anticipating surgery or are recovering from surgery.

We pray for the people who live in places where freedom and peace are distant ideals.

We pray for all those who are in the midst of cleaning up after a natural disaster.

We pray for all those who lost loved ones in the terrible UPS plane crash.

We pray for those who are sick in mind, body, or spirit.

We pray for our government leaders, that they might lead with wisdom and compassion.

We pray for all those who are unemployed or underemployed.

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.



**LECTIONARY, DECEMBER 2025**

**December 7, 2025 -**

*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 14, 2025 -**

*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 21, 2025 -**

*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 28, 2025 -**

*1st Sunday after Christmas Day*  
First reading: Isaiah 63:7-9  
Psalm: Psalm 148  
Second reading: Hebrews 2:10-18  
Gospel: Matthew 2:13-23



We received a lovely thank-you letter from PACH Outreach; here is an excerpt:

“Pepperell Aid from Community to Home, PACH Outreach, would like to thank you for your recent donation of \$670...on 10/16/25. Your generous gift will be used to supplement the donations we receive from the community. Thank you for making this possible. We are blessed that you are part of a community that is so generous toward the needs of our neighbors. Thank you for being part of that community.”

As a note: in addition to the fiscal donation, we did also gift them with a cart load of personal care products. Thanks to all who contributed in any way. – Cathy



**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)

Following is the devotional from the day after Thanksgiving this year. After the busy-ness of the Holiday Fair and Thanksgiving, and contemplating the month ahead, this message spoke to me. I hope it resonates with you, as well.

Cathy



**What Remains**

Phiwa Langeni

*And Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. - Luke 2:19 (NRSVUE)*

The guests have gone home. Yesterday’s feast reduced to leftovers and crumbs. Joy lingers in the quiet—until the quiet deepens. The celebration is over, and here you are.

Your hands are still. Your body aches from all the running around. Your mind replays what was said, what was felt, what slipped quietly past you. You wanted to capture the wonder-filled moments, to stretch them longer, to stay tucked inside their warmth.

But those moments have moved on. Their sparkle lingers in the corners. And still, you are here. Beloved, this, too, is holy. The after. The hush. The room no longer full, but not quite empty. A quiet that hums with what once was.

Mary, worn from labor and awe, made space to ponder. Her spirit—and her arms—were full. There was plenty for her to figure out and explain and document and plan and, and, and... But she

pondered. She cradled the mystery as gently as the child in her arms, letting the unknown rest beside her like a dear companion.

Like Mary, you don’t have to rush to the next thing and plan for the next thing after that and process past things and get stuck on things older than that and, and, and... Treasure what remains.

Let what was be enough for now. Let wonder linger. Let stillness speak. Let memory rest. Let tomorrow arrive. Let breath return. Let your spirit mend. Let yourself be.

Prayer

*God of quiet fullness, thank you for the sacred pause after the sacred celebration. Teach me to tend what is left behind with care. Help me treasure moments I can’t fully explain. Let my spirit find its rhythm again in the silence. Amen.*



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Phiwa Langeni creatively

invites others into transformational liminal spaces between what has been and what is yet to be. They currently serve as the Associate Conference Minister for Equipping Leaders in the Southern California Nevada Conference UCC.

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Townsend Congregational Church  
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*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)*

