

First Congregational Church of Georgetown
PO Box 200
7 Andover Street
Georgetown, MA 01833

www.georgetowncongregational.org
(978) 352-8443



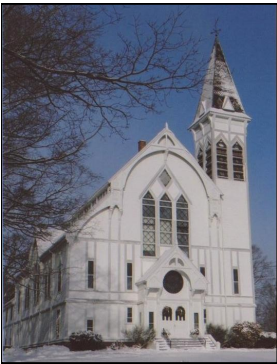
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Our Church Mission Statement:
“To nurture those in our own faith community
and to act on our faith by reaching out to others.”

We are an Open and Affirming church of the United Church of Christ.

FROM the HILL



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of Georgetown

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December 2018

I can testify that the message of Advent still holds: with hope, with grace, with love, God takes flesh and meets us when we have become most hopeless, most broken, most lost.

—Jan Richardson



I can’t believe it’s Advent already. I love Advent. To me there is something so profoundly rich about this season. It’s a pregnancy that holds the fullness of the world in its womb of darkness. I think of Advent as a time to reclaim darkness as created by God, a gift from God. We tend to think of darkness as bad, associated with evil, but in Genesis God created dark and light and called both “good.” In darkness, our senses are heightened, we become aware of

things around us and within us that can be obscured in the light. We can find new wisdom and insights. Darkness is a time to rest, to recharge. It’s a time for growth and renewal, whether it’s the synapses in our brains making new connections or our bodies re-setting and growing while we sleep, or the earth, doing the underground work of regenerating for spring blossoms. Darkness can also make us turn to each other, cling to each other, embrace community in new ways.

(Continued on page 2)

Advent is a period of anxious, eager preparation. Preparation for the birth of a baby, Jesus, who would bring healing into the world by way of Love. Fierce, courageous Love. But this healing signaled by Christmas doesn't arrive until after this season of Advent, until after we have embraced the gifts, the power, the beauty of darkness. What new insights will you gain in this season? How will you renew and grow? How will you turn to others to offer and receive comfort, support, and hope?

I pray this is a rich season of preparing to welcome Love born in our midst.

Advent blessings,
Julie

“Invitation, Advent”
Sleigh bells ring...are you listening?
Yes, it is all right to listen
to all the cultural sounds of joy
preparing for the Christmas holiday.
Christian people who get too sour-hearted,
too Grinch-stingy,
have a hard time inviting people to the Christ.
But we do here also invite you to listen
to *more* than sleigh bells.
All around you...
loneliness murmurs the missing of someone,
financial expectations tap dance a headache,
suppressed mental whimpers identify people with...
...too much, too much, too much to do.
Pause in the quiet that always precedes holiness—
listen in the spirit to one another
and let us worship God.
--Maren Tirabassi



Christmas Plants: In Memory Of or In Honor Of

The front of our sanctuary will be filled with beautiful flowers on Christmas Sunday morning. The Diaconate welcomes your contributions in memory of or in honor of beloved friends and family members. Donations may be made payable to:

The First Congregational Church of Georgetown and may be placed in the offering plate or mailed to the church :
PO Box 200, Georgetown, MA 01833.

The deadline for your contribution will be Sunday, December 16, 2018. A listing of those who have contributed will be printed in the Christmas Sunday bulletin. Flowers will be delivered to members who are homebound and to those who have recently lost a family member.

Yes, I would like to make a donation (in any amount) \$_____

IN MEMORY OF or IN HONOR OF (please print)



Each month we have a group of people who meet to talk about books selected by members. Meetings are held in different houses or at the church. If you are interested in attending a meeting, contact the Church Office or any of the people listed below to get directions to that month's meeting.

All are welcome and you do not have to RSVP to attend. Below is a list of the books they will be discussing in the coming months in case you want to get the book ahead of time or you might just be looking for a good read.

| Date | Title | Author | Hostess/Location/Phone No. |
|---------------|---|---|--|
| Dec. 5, 2018 | <i>I Don't Know How She Does It</i> | Allison Pearson ©2002 337 pp. | Karen Young 11 Monroe Street Karen: 978-352-2697 |
| 2019 | | | |
| Jan. 30, 2019 | <i>The Day the World Came to Town: 9/11 in Gander, Newfoundland</i> Non-fiction | Jim DeFede ©2003 256 pp. | JoEllen Fielding & Peggy Smith Church JoEllen: 978-352-6904 |
| Feb. 27, 2019 | <i>Monticello: a Daughter and Her Father, a novel</i> | Sally Cabot Gunning ©2016 384 pp. | Alecia Balduf & Mary Ann Nelson 3 Bayberry Lane Alecia: 978-835-9094 |
| Mar. 27, 2019 | <i>Evening Class</i> | Maeve Binchy ©1997 432 pp. | Nancy Aberman 199 W. Main St. Nancy: 978-352-2793 |

Greetings From The Diaconate

Isaiah 9:6 “For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”

November brought us the beautiful baptism of the Cliffe’s new baby girl, Sadie, seeing the bright and beautiful eyes of the baby reminds me of hope, new life, and that at any age God has a plan and purpose for each of us. The passage in Isaiah 9:6 is a reminder that Jesus, even as an infant, brings the hope of peace, love, and joy.

As Sam Orender pointed out in his stewardship moment, the gathering together on Sundays brings hope, hope when facing the loss of loved ones, and hope, through faith, for a fulfilling future.

As the stores and holiday ads pressure us to shop for the perfect gift, we can pause, take a deep breath, and remind ourselves of God’s gift of love, already given through Jesus.

We cherish the moments of remembering God’s gift through the lighting of advent candles, listening to the beautiful sounds of Christmas, carols being sung, our very own bell choir and the sweet voices of our choir sharing their talent and love of our church.

Marie, Emily, Rachel, Kristen, and Alecia wish each of you to experience all the gifts of the season, love, peace, joy, and hope. We hope that you have many special moments, it could be the simple aroma of freshly baked sugar cookies, the smell of a pine bough laden with “Oh..remember this one ornaments...” and making new memories with old friends. We appreciate the meaningful messages from Reverend Dr. Julie, and (cont. pg. 7)





Stewardship Update

We thank all who have contributed to the 2019 pledge drive. If you have not already done so, please take a few moments to fill out your pledge card and place it in the offering plate or mail it to the church. A reminder that pledge cards are located in the narthex or they can be mailed to you if needed. Thank you for your generous spirit!

Friday Luncheon Thank You!

When a great team is behind you it makes the job so much easier. Karen Young, Jo Anne Kelly, Carol Lutes, Reverend Julie, Tracy and Dwight Southwick got the lobster and chicken ready on Thursday. Friday morning, bright and early, Lee Ames, Ann Kelloway, Shirley Powell, Elisabeth Thomas and Susan Stead prepared sandwiches. Our serving team included Ruth Stewart, Ruth Soper, Pam Patrie, and Sylvia Johnston. Thank you to Michelle Bridges for helping with publicity.

A special "Thank You" to Susan Stead for organizing sandwich preparation.

Thank you to this incredible team!

We hope you enjoyed lunch!!

Janice Murphy



Women's Guild

Guild Members will meet at Noon on **Tuesday, December 4th**, for their Annual Christmas Luncheon. Featured on the entrée will be Nason's Stone House *turkey pies*, followed by a *Cherries Jubilee* dessert. Your **reservation** and check/cash in the amount of \$8.00 must be in by **Sunday, December 2nd**. (Please make check payable to Joan Chatterton).

Following the luncheon, Kim Knapp, Mary Ann Nelson and Allan Barlow will provide wonderful Christmas music to kick off the Advent Season.

Newcomers are welcome! As in the past, we ask that everyone bring gifts for Ruth's House - men's, women's and children's socks. Ruth's House is an amazing mission located in Haverhill, and one that the Guild has supported for many years.

Entertainment Chair: Mary Ann Nelson

Christmas Blessing: Judy Robillard

Decorations Chair: Elisabeth Thomas

Luncheon Chair: Joan Chatterton

Note: January, February & March meetings have been eliminated; March has been included as stormy weather led to the cancelation of meetings in 2017 & 2018.

Tuesday, April 2, a Guest Social has been planned featuring guest speaker, Dr. Mile Cross, from Northern Essex Community College. For more information about the Guild contact Marion Harding (978-352-8785) or Joan Chatterton (978-352-8033).

GEORGETOWN BOY SCOUTS CHRISTMAS TREE SALES

At the Knights of Columbus, Rt 133, East Main St Georgetown (next to
Georgetown Building Supply and Liquor)

Starting Friday Nov. 23, 2018

Balsam Fir Trees

4-5 Ft \$30

6-8 Ft \$45

8-9 Ft \$65

9-10 Ft \$75

Fraser Fir Trees

6-7 Ft \$55

7-8 Ft \$65

8-9 Ft \$75

WHEN THE STANDS ARE STAFFED BY THE SCOUTS:

Friday 5pm-8pm, **Saturdays** 9am-7pm **Sundays** 9am-7pm

Special Hours: Friday Nov. 23 only NOON-7pm

OFF HOURS: Trees can be purchased by selecting the tree of your choice and **bringing the colored tag** off the tree with your payment to the Liquor Store next door (next to Gtown Building Supply).

Limited Quantity of 12" Decorated Wreaths and Kissing Balls available.

Only accepting cash or checks made payable to: TROOP 50.

MERRY CHRISTMAS

OUTREACH NEWS

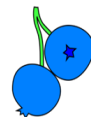
Again, we celebrate the generosity of our congregation! Thanks to the many contributors to ***Our Neighbors' Table Thanksgiving project*** that included providing all the trimmings to make up Thanksgiving dinners for families facing difficult situations. In cooperation with the Boston Food Bank, Our Neighbors' Table offers help to families in Georgetown and eleven other area towns. The Food Bank provide the turkeys, neighboring farms include some fresh vegetables and we provided the rest. We estimated that our donations came to approximately **\$500 worth of food and gift cards**, and there was much appreciation expressed when the goods were delivered to this well-organized and efficient food pantry in Amesbury.

THE MISSION OF H.O.M.E.

H.O.M.E. is once again in our hearts and minds as we plan our annual Christmas gift-giving, and wish-providing for the children in Orland, Maine. For an in-depth history of our long association with this ministry, please look for the flyers next to the Christmas Tree in the Narthex. For the purposes of sticking with the basics for this Newsletter, however, this is the story: H.O.M.E. was organized in the 1970's to help small home industries, serving one of the most impoverished areas of America (similar to the level of poverty in the Appalachians).

From this simple beginning, the ministry has grown to include a mill that provides lumber for low-income housing, daycare for working parents, GED classes, food pantry, soup kitchen, homeless shelter, and children's services. Our Christmas Tree is covered with the wishes of these children.

We are asking that you take a tag or two that list gender, age, and size (if applicable to the wish). Shop for the wish, wrap it in colorful paper and bring it back to the Tree on Sunday, December 2 or Sunday, December 9.



THANK YOU

Thank you to all who helped make the Food Table at our Church Fair so successful. We appreciate all who donated their time, talents and treasures!

Pam Sheehan & Emily Knapp

GOLF OUTING PS

Following the publication deadline for the last newsletter, we received another donation/sponsorship for the September 23rd Golf Outing from Shirley Powell. This brings the total profit for the golf event to \$1063!

Thank you, Shirley.



FROM THE MEMBER-AT-LARGE

The Church Council is very interested in your ideas as to how we can grow spiritually as a church. How can we expand what we do well so that it reaches beyond our own walls? Please share your thoughts with me or with any of the Council members. Other thoughts and concerns may be given to me as well at any time.



Contest



PRESENTED BY THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH YOUTH PROGRAM

*Get out your aprons & chef hats!
Our 4th Annual Gingerbread House Contest!*

On Sunday, December 9th following Worship Fellowship Hall is turning into Santa's tiny village. We are having our Annual Gingerbread House Decorating Contest. Entry fee is \$5.00.

Here is what you will need

A constructed Gingerbread House of your choosing on a cookie sheet/tray. Kits are available at CVS, Walmart and craft stores (Wilton's has a good kit), or if you are really energetic you may make your own!

****You will need to assemble the house the night before.****

All your candies, frostings, cereals and any edible delights you would like to add to your house (the kits come with the basics).

**** You will decorate your gingerbread house at the church on December 9th.****

We will have a table in the center of the room with all sorts of extra goodies you can use for decorating your house and welcome the donation of anything you do not need to the table so there is more to share! (Who needs a whole bag of M&M's or Gum Drops to decorate their house?!) More fun to share!!

We will wrap them up in cellophane and hold them on display for the next Sunday when we will vote for your favorite.

Join us after Worship on December 9th

*See you all there to participate or just watch
and enjoy the fun!!*



*Join us as we celebrate the
birth of Jesus!*



*Christmas Pageant
Sunday
December 23rd at
10:30am*

*Christmas Eve Service of
Carols and Candlelight
Sunday December 24 at 7:00 pm
Bell Choir will bring us holiday music.*



Another favor; **please take note of the coded number on the upper right hand corner of the tag, and put your name next to that number on the chart displayed near the tree.** This makes our job a lot easier in case we need to track down a gift that hasn't been returned.

As always, we know we can count on your dedication to this happiness project!

***SINCERE THANKS!
The Outreach Team***

FROM THE DIACONATE

we are so very thankful that she is with us, dedicating her time and including us on her faith journey! We appreciate our office manager Jessica, she keeps our communication active through the bulletins, newsletters, and being there for us!

Please read all of the information in this December newsletter; we are brimming with events this month. Take in your favorite ones, maybe try some new ones! "May the timeless message of Christmas fill your heart and home with joy now and throughout the coming year."

Alecia Balduf, Chair, Diaconate.



*Have You Started
Christmas Shopping?*

The First Congregational Church of Georgetown is set up to receive a percentage of your purchase when you shop AmazonSmile.

www.smile.amazon.com

- sign in or sign up
- find the dropdown for your account
- find Your AmazonSmile on the list & click on it
- change or select a charity—put in First Congregational Church of Georgetown (there will be 2 options, one is Boxford) "select" Georgetown to set your Smile account.

When you shop, be sure to go to www.smile.amazon.com for the church to receive credit - not the regular Amazon account (this won't give us credit).



**It will be here
before you
know it!
Annual Meeting,
January 2019**

Please prepare your team's **Annual Report** and send it into the office email: office@georgetowncongregational.org by Thursday, January 10th. Teams are asked to get their **2019 Budget** into the Finance team ASAP so they can prepare a report for the **January Finance Meeting**.



Storm Cancellations

In the event of a Saturday night or Sunday morning snowstorm or blizzard this winter, you can check with Channel 7 (NBC) or Channel 56 (CW) for storm closings. If you want to know if church is cancelled tune to the TV listings on these channels. There is also a mobile app that you can download for free by searching WHDH in the app store and view storm status anywhere, anytime. We will also update our church Facebook page.



Light The Church Fund

Contributions for lighting the church can be made in memory of loved ones or in honor of someone special. If you would like to make a contribution or need more information please contact JoEllen Fielding at 978-352-6904.



Marie Birdsall

Brigit Bratland

Betty Bruce

Toni Cassidy

Donna DeSisto

Catherine Dougherty

Iris Edwards

Holly Harris

Evelyn Hills

Michael Lee

Emily Moore

Jody Moore

Carol Sheehan

Tracy Southwick

Michael Tardy

Elizabeth Thomas

Charlotte Winter

Joycelyn Wormell



Sign Up for Greeters & Offering Collectors

We are looking for individuals, friends and families to serve as greeters on Sunday morning (you will never have to do it alone).