

# ***From the Hill***

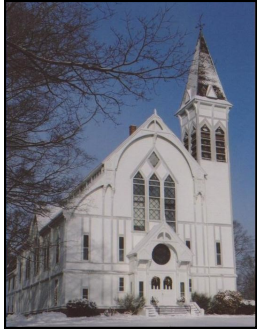
## **First Congregational Church of Georgetown**

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**December 2020**



### **In-Between Times**

By its very nature, Advent is an in-between time - one of *already*, but also *not yet*. Jesus has *already* come at Christmas, God in human flesh, serenaded by angelic promises of peace on earth and good will to all people. But Advent is also a season of preparation and waiting for those *not-yet* promises to be fulfilled, when Jesus returns to reign forever.

On the whole, in-between times tend not to be very popular. Most of us are all about reaching the destination: the COVID vaccine, the presidential inauguration, the arrival of our Settled Pastor! Are we there yet?

But in God's economy, the in-between seasons fill the journey *toward* the destination with purpose and meaning. These waiting times are not meant to be passive, but rather active seasons of growth and leaning into God. I think Oswald Chambers said it especially well in *My Utmost for His Highest*:

*What people call preparation, God sees as the goal itself. God's purpose is to enable me to see that He can walk on the storms of my life right now. If we have a further goal in mind, we are not paying enough attention to the present time. However, if we realize that moment-by-moment obedience is the goal, then each moment as it comes is precious.*

As this congregation stands in between the departure of an Interim Pastor and the arrival of a Settled Pastor, you are called to trust God to "walk on" all the uncertainties of your shared life right now. Be mindful of what God is doing in this present moment and your part in it.

Holly is preparing for ordination and a brand-new call during a social-distancing season when getting to know you will be challenging. Ask God how you can encourage Holly in this present moment. Maybe pray for her? Maybe send her a note of welcome to introduce yourself? Maybe deliver a blueberry pie to her door? Maybe ask God about all of this?

God intends what we think of as in-between times to be moment-to-moment journeying in God's presence. Particularly as we journey together through this in-between season of Advent during this uncertain year of 2020, may your days be rich with awareness of God's presence and joy in your moment-to-moment journey.

Blessings,

Dallas

## Stewardship

**Stewardship Update** – We thank all who have contributed to the 2021 pledge drive. If you have not already done so, please take a few moments to fill out your pledge card and mail it to the church at P.O. Box 200, Georgetown, MA 01833. Please contact the church if you need to request a pledge card, and it can be mailed to you. Together, we choose to share the gifts of our time, talents and finances. Thank you for your generous spirit!

Blessings to all,  
The Stewardship Team  
Toni Cassidy, George Comiskey and Sylvia Johnston



## Annual Gingerbread House Contest!



Join us for a time of fellowship as we celebrate the Advent Season at the First Congregational Church in Georgetown. This year's event will occur virtually due to the pandemic. We're hoping everyone will join us for this festive activity.

Join the event on **December 6, 1:00 PM via ZOOM**. The ZOOM information will be shared on our website.

Take a picture of your completed house and email a copy to [churchoffice@fccgeorgetownma.org](mailto:churchoffice@fccgeorgetownma.org) by Friday, December 11. Awards will be posted to the website on Sunday, December 13, and announced during worship service. If anyone has questions about the event, please contact the Christian Development Team.



## Update from the Search Committee

### **Holly Brauner is our new settled pastor!**

We are so excited to let you know that Holly was voted unanimously to become our new pastor beginning Friday, January 22nd. Our team has had quite a search journey and we are thankful to begin our new year with Holly walking with us. Following our congregational vote, many of you drove by the church to welcome her with tooting horns and warm wishes. We appreciate your support as well as the support of the entire congregation while we have been on this journey over the two plus years. Below is a copy of the Search Committee's report as read during the Congregational Meeting for those of you who might be interested as we understand the sound was not as good as anticipated during Zoom worship.

Thankfully,

The Search Team

### Search Committee Congregational Meeting Report

I have been asked to provide a report of the work that we have done for the past 15+ months. It seems like so much longer than that because time seems to have worked differently since the COVID virus impacted our daily lives. When the Transition Team of Marie Birdsall, Michelle Brock, Antoinette Jones, Bob Knapp, and Susan Stead, with guidance from our interim pastor, Reverend Doctor Julie Mavity-Maddalena, was put together last summer, we knew that we were putting together a snapshot of our church to present to potential pastoral candidates. A snapshot that would show exactly what a fun loving, caring community we are. We had worked with our church community to discover what was important to us and to dream what our future could be. And we did it well! It was said more than once during our search by our potential candidates that our profile was well written and really reflected a community that was very enticing to potential pastors. One pastor even asked if the church he was leaving could use it as a model!

Then our Search Committee was put together. This team consisted of Rachel Angerhofer, Michelle Brock, Tom Chafee, Rachel Edwards, Sylvia Johnston, Paul Nelson and Kirsten Orender. Later, Steve Pinto stepped in for Paul Nelson. Thank you, Rich Brock for being thoughtful when putting together this team. The goal is to find people who represent different perspectives of who our church is and we think you did it. We met together in September to begin the process. We met in my home and shared stories and ideas, cookies and conversations, laughter and fellowship. While we knew the gravity of selecting our new pastor, I think some of us might have said to ourselves, "oh this is going to be an easy job finding our new pastor. We can do this quickly. We know who we want. It will only take a couple months. "Boy, were we wrong! God had other ideas.

Once we were ready, we sent our profile to the Conference and we waited for the pastoral profiles to start arriving in our inboxes. And they did! We enjoyed getting together to talk about the profiles we were getting, talking with candidates by phone, getting excited about the possibilities until..... Quarantine started! While it wasn't as easy, we continued to meet by using Zoom. We helped each other get used to this new form of being. The candidates did too. Their profiles continued to come in.

We had 46 individuals apply; followed by multiple telephone interviews, Zoom interviews and/or in-person

*(Continued from page 3)*

interviews with 27 candidates! They all had so many qualities that were appealing that it was hard to choose. We had a couple candidates whom we thought fit our prayers, but then God called them to a different place, literally to a different part of the country! Then, when our team was really feeling down, Holly's profile appeared! It was like she had read our profile when she was completing hers. This is what she said:

"I believe that I am being called to accompany faith communities as they discern next steps in how they respond to God's call. Perhaps what is needed is that they go out into the neighborhood, visit and learn how best to be God's hands and feet. There are many people not reached by today's traditional church model, but they still hunger for the Holy Spirit. There are many more formulas that bring together the faithful who are seeking community. The message need not change, just the mode of extending Christ's message of love, acceptance and transformation. "

After talking with her by Zoom and meeting with her in person, we knew that Holly was an excellent fit for our congregation.

We then went on to check with her stellar references and put together her compensation package. The salary she accepted is within the guidelines set by our Finance Committee. At this time, she will not need health insurance through our church, however, we have acknowledged through her contract that this can be revisited if her personal circumstances change. The language of her contract is consistent with the guidelines set by the UCC.

Many of you have had an opportunity to meet Holly while preparing for worship today and others have had the chance to meet her by Zoom this past week. She is kind and thoughtful, witty and smart, devoted to walking faithfully every day using God's word as her compass. We feel she will be there to love us as we walk into this new world that we are living here at church and in our lives.

Thank you for believing in us to recommend the next settled pastor for First Congregational Church of Georgetown.

### **THANK YOU FROM PHIL ROSENE**

Betty thanks you for her birthday card. It was lovely. She is now officially 96 years old. Her real actual birthday is 15 Sept. 1924. Her legal birthday is 30 Sept. 1924. She was named on 30 Sept. and when her mother told the doctor her name he filled out the Birth Certificate and put 30 Sept. 1924 as her birth date instead of her real birth date of 15 Sept. 1924.

Betty and her mother never noticed the error until 17 years later when Betty applied for her Teacher Certificate to teach rural school in Nebr. and had to get a birth certificate from the State of Nebr. Bureau of Vital Statistics. With two birthdays a year she must be 192!

Love to all,

Phil & Betty

# Outreach

## THE HISTORY OF H.O.M.E.

Sister Lucy Poulin, a young Franciscan nun in the early 70's saw a great need in her community in Northern Maine. There were many isolated cottage industry folk struggling to make a living from wood carving, furniture making, sewing quilts, knitting sweaters and painting pottery. Lucy put forth a fledgling business plan for these one-person businesses and called it **H**omemakers **O**rganized for **M**ore **E**mployment - helping people help themselves. H.O.M.E. became a craft shop, a mail order business, a school, a market stand, a mill, and a chapel.

Sister Lucy had relatives in our area. During one of her weekend visits, our Pastor asked her to speak during the Sunday worship service. Some of us remember her quite vividly as she approached the pulpit – a petite woman in a black dress, appropriate to her Franciscan Order. However, on her head she wore a bright bandana, such as a country woman would wear, but out of sync with a nun's traditional headpiece. She gave a powerful message though her voice was soft. It was an inspiring story about lifting people out of hopelessness and poverty.

Upon learning that there were so many families in this impoverished area with no funds to buy presents for their children at Christmas, our congregation began the tradition of granting the children's wishes from the tags on the H.O.M.E. Christmas tree. There are, at present, four other New England churches that also help this mission at Christmas. They provide gifts for older teens, adults and the elderly.

To this day Sister Lucy is held in high regard by her community. Nearly ninety years old, and somewhat frail, she has put the H.O.M.E. leadership into capable younger hands. She lives in a rambling farmhouse that has been turned into a boarding home with many residents who are working but not earning enough to rent. They are grateful for the support that this shared living arrangement provides. And, they have Lucy as their friend and mentor.

H.O.M.E. has expanded into ever widening circles over the decades, while overcoming a steady stream of maintenance problems that come with long cold winters and overused, secondhand farming equipment and trucks that are constantly breaking down! Lumber is now provided from H.O.M.E.'s own mill and used to build modest homes on Land Trust acreage brokered by Lucy. Educational initiatives (tutoring/GED classes) are integral to H.O.M.E.'s mission. Gardens are nurtured, though the soil is rocky and unfriendly, a food truck visits the elderly, the soup kitchen provides nutritious meals to those living on the edge, and H.O.M.E.'s store sells wares locally and in larger Maine cities from the talented hands of the area's crafts people. The challenges of this remote Northern Maine county still prevail, with isolation and lack of employment, but H.O.M.E. continues to champion the poor and underserved with love, compassion, and most importantly ... with hope. In closing, a quote from Sister Lucy:

***"If the world is to be a good place for anyone, it has to be a good place for everyone. These days we need to remember the importance of individual responsibility and the far-reaching effects of one act of human kindness."***

Joan Chatterton, on behalf of the Outreach Team



## Have You Started Christmas Shopping?

The FCC Georgetown is set up to receive a percentage of your purchases when you shop AmazonSmile!

[www.smile.amazon.com](http://www.smile.amazon.com)

- sign in or sign up
- find the dropdown for your account
- find Your AmazonSmile on the list & click on it
- select a charity—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](http://www.smile.amazon.com) for the church to receive credit - not the regular Amazon account (this won't give us credit).



Marie Birdsall

Evelyn Hills

Michael Tardy

Brigit Bratland

Michael Lee

Charlotte Winter

Toni Cassidy

Emily Moore

Joycelyn Wormell

Donna DeSisto

Jody Moore

Holly Harris

Tracy Southwick

## Greetings From The Diaconate

Christmas waves a magic wand over the world, and behold, everything is softer and more beautiful.

Christmas is coming! Time to celebrate! We wish each of you perfect moments during this special time of joy. Those special moments could be the simple aroma of freshly baked sugar cookies, a pine bough laden with “remember those” ornaments...sigh....and what would these Christmas moments be without the love of our Church Family. We are so blessed to share together through zoom and in our memory box the lighting of the advent candles ,signifying the coming of the “celebration of the birth of Christ.” The beautiful sounds of Christmas carols being sung and feeling the love of some of our church traditions. Of course we will very much miss the hugs and the “Merry Christmas!” when we greet each other, especially after our much loved Christmas Eve service. I always remember Haleigh Harris stewardship talk a few years ago when she declared it was her most favorite service... It is ok to miss that, it is ok to be disappointed and even a little sad, but let’s not let the “Covid Change” distract from our memories and remember our hearts are still filled!! I truly feel this will be a good holiday...because we will be focusing on our loved ones and the many simpler things we yearn for that sometimes in the past with all the hustle and bustle and shopping and parties have over-shadowed the true meaning of Christmas. Unpack those hand made mittens that were given to you in love, open your back door for a moment for a ‘smell’ our New England winter, and what in the world is better than a sugar cookie and a cup of hot chocolate, perhaps topped with marshmallow!!!!

Please read all the information here in the December newsletter. We will still be having our “Gingerbread House contest”, even if you have participated before, or never tried it, let’s do it...let’s try to get in the holiday spirit with the old ideas and perhaps suggest some new ones we can do ‘zoom’ wise! As we mentioned during our “Thankfulness, Blessings and Gratefulness” themes last month, why not make that phone call, snail mail a pretty Christmas card and still uncover those special Christmas mementos that make your heart smile when you unpack them!

Please be assured your Diaconate Team of Antoinette, Emily, Marie, Pam, Rachel and Gladie are always available for you, our Church Family.

We wish you : “May the light of the Star in the East cast Christmas magic over each of you and may your hearts smile this glorious Christmas season.”

Gladie Kneeland, Chair of Diaconate



### 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 Bob Knapp at 978-352-7489.



### "Advent 101"

Why do we celebrate Advent in the church? What does the lighting of the candles mean? Bring a cup of cocoa and learn more about the four weeks set aside on the Church calendar to prepare for the coming of the Christ child. And plan to celebrate Advent in your own home this year!

Wednesday, December 2, 7:00 p.m. via Zoom <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86736379561?pwd=T3FLVjdxSkE4c1FrL1dhZFYxWVFKZz09>

Meeting ID: 867 3637 9561

Passcode: 808905

### "O Come, O Come Emmanuel: Hymns of Advent"

We're all familiar with the wonderful carols of Christmas, but did you know that the season of Advent has some glorious music all its own? This adult Sunday school class will explore four Advent hymns across the four Sundays of Advent. There's no book to read. Lessons will be attached to the Friday eblasts, together with a link to a recording for you to preview each hymn before class.

Sundays, December 6, 13, 20 at 9:45 a.m. via Zoom

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84858817643?pwd=aEZ0bDM3ZEIxSU9XeDEyMDVxMVB5QT09>

Meeting ID: 848 5881 7643

Passcode: 477009



### **Annual Meeting January 2021**

**It will be here before you know it!**

Please prepare your team's **Annual Report** and send it to: [churchoffice@fccgeorgetownma.org](mailto:churchoffice@fccgeorgetownma.org) by Thursday, January 7th. Teams are asked to get their **2021 Budget** to the Finance team ASAP so they can prepare a report for the January Finance Meeting.





Virtual Christmas Program

**December 20** - The annual Christmas Pageant will take place during Sunday worship. Stay tuned for details!

**December 24** – The Christmas Eve service will take place at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom. There will also be in-person worship in the sanctuary if public health conditions in Georgetown permit. Register for in-person worship on the church website.



### **STORM CANCELATIONS**

In the event of a Saturday night or Sunday morning snowstorm or blizzard, check Channel 7 or Channel 56 (CW) for storm closings. There is also a mobile app you can download for free by searching WHDH in the app store to view storm status anywhere. We will also update our church Facebook page.



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. Donations made payable to FCC Georgetown and mailed to the church PO Box 200, Georgetown, MA 01833.

The deadline for your contribution will be Tuesday, December 15. A listing of those who have contributed will be printed in the Christmas Sunday bulletin.

Flowers will be delivered to members who are homebound or those who have recently lost a family member.

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

IN MEMORY OF/IN HONOR OF (please print)

From:

## Looking back:

### 60 years ago:

Pastor - Bill Fleming, Office Manager & Clerk - Eleanor Jonasch, Organist & Choir Director - Pauline Freeman, Treasurer - Carolee Miller, Collector - Mrs. Albert Lindquist, Sunday School Superintendent - Harry Bedell

### 50 years ago:

Pastor - Phil Southwick, Office Manager - Sandy Annis, Moderator - Lee Lowell, Clerk - Mina Marble, Organist & Sr. Choir Director - Carl Krumpke, Youth Choir Director - Carole Bridges, Jr. Choir Director & Sunday School Superintendent - Evelyn Boose, Treasurer - Carol Sheehan, Collector - Ruth Jones  
Christmas eve service postponed until Dec. 26th because of inclement weather.

### 40 years ago:

Pastor - Phil Southwick, Office Manager - Joan Chatterton, Moderator - Betty Davidson, Clerk - Mina Marble, Organist - Emily Perley, Sr. Choir Director - Bob Knapp, Youth Choir Director - Linda Games, Jr. Choir Director & Sunday School Superintendent - Evelyn Boose, Treasurer - Carol Sheehan, Collector - Ruth Jones  
Greeters for Dec. 7th - Beth, Wendell, Karen & 7 year-old, Kristen Arsenault  
The bellringers of the Beverly 2nd Congregational church provided music during a worship service (we didn't have a bell choir yet).  
The Mini Fair, where we presented for sale many hand-crafted items made by our parishioners and friends that did not sell at the October fair, was held after a worship service.  
An evening concert in our sanctuary by our choirs followed by a town-wide "Journey to Bethlehem" led by the Georgetown Theater Workshop with live animals and multiple stops at various town locations. (Don't try this today!)

### 30 years ago:

Pastor - Phil Southwick, Office Manager - Joan Chatterton, Moderator - Donn Chatterton, Clerk - Jacqueline Moore, Organist - Emily Knapp,  
Sr. Choir Director - Bob Knapp, Youth Choir Director - Cindy Bridges, Jr. Choir & Bell Choir Director - Evelyn Boose, Treasurer - Muriel Gordon,  
Collector - Ruth Jones, Sunday school superintendent - Dorothy Blanchard  
Our Capital Stewardship campaign, to fund an addition to our building, is now underway. We are guided by Jim Sanderson of Resource Services, Inc. "Not equal gifts but equal sacrifice" is our motto. Ultimately raising around \$250,000.  
Our thrift shop, which sold donated used clothing, located in "Metcalf House", the house behind the church where the Durkees now reside, sends a supply of warm clothing to Boston's Pine Street Inn.  
The Mini Fair.  
Another evening concert by our church's musicians followed by another "Journey to Bethlehem".

### 20 Years ago:

Pastor - Leonard Zecchini, Office Manager - Joan Chatterton, Moderator - Donn Chatterton, Clerk & Organist - Emily Knapp,  
Sr. Choir & Band director - Bob Knapp, Jr. Choir & Bell Choir Director - Evelyn Boose, Treasurer - Karla Szutak, Collector - JoEllen Fielding, Sunday School Superintendent - Pam Sheehan  
An evening concert by our musicians followed by a covered dish supper.

### 10 Years ago:

Pastor - Deborah Adams, Office Manager - Michelle Brock, Moderator - Tom Stewart, Clerk - Michelle Bridges, Organist - Emily Knapp,  
Sr., Jr., Bell Choir, & Band Director - Bob Knapp, Treasurer - Peggy Smith, Collector - JoEllen Fielding, Sexton - Rachel Edwards, Sunday School Superintendent - Gloria Webster  
Renovation of our sanctuary in full swing.



# December 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 Bell Choir 7PM Annual Gift Drive	2 7:00 PM Advent 101 Annual Gift Drive	3 Annual Gift Drive	4 Annual Gift Drive	5 Annual Gift Drive
6 Deadline for Annual Gift Drive Hymns of Advent 1:00 PM Gingerbread House Contest	7	8 Bell Choir 7PM	9	10	11 Send Gingerbread House pics!	12
13 Hymns of Advent	14	15 Poinsettia Dedication Deadline Bell Choir 7PM	16	17 6:30pm Council	18	19
20 Hymns of Advent	21	22 Bell Choir 7PM	23	24 Christmas Eve	25 Merry Christmas	26
27	28	29 Bell Choir 7PM	30	31		

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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.