

From the Hill

First Congregational Church of Georgetown

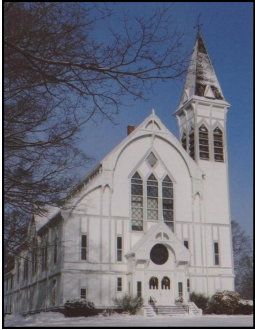
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December 2022



Dear Church,

And just like that!, here we are in Advent – a time of prepare and anticipate something life-changing. This season of watching and waiting – actively waiting for something fresh and new, even if it was promised long ago.

Often, we are caught up in the consumerist messages of these four weeks leading up to Christmas morning: the frenzy of decorating for the holiday, neighborly competition of Christmas lights and lawn ornaments, shopping for the perfect gift and invitations to Christmas parties. All good and fun!

And, we are reminded that Advent is not a countdown to the holiday on December 25th. It is a time of preparation for Christ's return to us; found in the coming of God's kin(g)dom here, right here. Advent reminds us that we are headed there, and we are works in progress, each longing for something more.

Each character in Luke's story of Jesus's birth is profoundly changed by Jesus's arrival. From the shepherds as messengers of this new day, to the Innkeeper who could not refuse them even if he found that lowly place for Love to be born anew, to the Magi who could not take their eyes of this star leading them onwards, to the parents who would remain befuddled by this new Holy presence.

We do well to remember that Mary and Joseph both had to say "yes" and get ready for this arrival. And Jesus rocked their world deeply because they said "yes". Jesus, this Messiah, was the coming of a new way of living to those who choose to turn and see, and to be changed.

Ancient texts written centuries before Jesus's arrival in the stable speak of the coming of this Savior who would rock the world with love. And Jesus showed up! In the Flesh! And he did rock the world, he still does.

One of my favorite theologians of today, Rev. Bruce Epperly writes that, "Advent is a time to imagine the impossible and to take the first steps toward achieving it. Advent is a time for hopes and dreams, for provocative possibilities that take us beyond the world as we know it to the world as it could be – and should be – a place of healing, restoration, justice, and Shalom."

To me this sounds a bit like our *proposed* new Vision Statement here at FCC:

"Called as God's Beloved Community, in faith, we will:

*Endeavor to strengthen our congregation by **fostering** trust and confidence in each other;*

***Connect** with the wider community by establishing dynamic partnerships of mutual support;*

*Be inspired and intentionally **committed** to responding in faith to the needs of the wider community.*

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Ruth's House

The Church Council approved that 20% of the Advent Offering be donated to Ruth's House in Haverhill.

Ruth's House is a non-profit thrift store incorporated in 1992 by Jackie Silver, a young woman living in poverty with her young child. She founded Ruth's House to help others like herself who could not afford to properly clothe themselves or their growing children.

Thirty years later, Ruth's House serves over 2,000 people in the Merrimack Valley annually, including families in need, veterans, and senior citizens, providing not only clothing and household goods for free or at reduced cost, but also providing basic job skills to those who were formerly unemployable, including punctuality, cleanliness, and dressing properly. Participants practice their skills by volunteering in the store at Ruth's House, and when trainees are ready, local businesses assist in placing them in jobs.

Collection for COA

The Mission/Outreach Team is continuing to collect products for the Council on Aging Marketplace. The Marketplace, housed at the Georgetown Senior Center, is a food pantry serving individuals in need in our community. The Mission Team has chosen the Marketplace as an ongoing project for our church.

Currently we are collecting paper products--toilet tissue, paper towels, tissues, personal care items, toiletries and dish and laundry detergent. A table is set up in the long room and goods may be dropped off on the table at any time. A member of the Missions' Team will deliver items to the Senior Center on a monthly basis. People in need may make an appointment to visit the Marketplace, and the staff at the Senior Center also makes monthly deliveries to needy elders in our community.

Colleen Ranshaw-Fiorello has expressed her gratitude for the ongoing partnership between the Senior Center and our church for this project.

Knitting Mission

The Knitting Mission, led by Ruth Soper, continues to meet on alternate Thursday evenings to knit a variety of items which will be donated. Warm hats, mittens and scarves for winter are piling up, waiting for donation to HOME and other organizations. Ruth has been busy knitting prayer squares, many of which were given to visitors at our Church Fair in October. Everyone is welcome to attend, and no experience is necessary. All supplies are provided. Join in for some fun fellowship as you make an item to put a smile on someone's face.



(Continued from page 1)

To this end, we believe that The First Congregational Church of Georgetown will be a resource to help foster holistic health -- the harmonious balance of body, mind and spirit -- in our community, and that, through our collective will and shared energies, this principle will transform our faith to life-affirming action."

This is our way of saying "yes" to God, to be messengers of God's love in a hurting world. We are a community in process, constantly invited to learn and deepen our faith to be God's hands and feet, and a place of healing, restoration, justice and Shalom.

Steady on, Jesus is coming, again! And it is going to be amazing!

In faith,
Rev. Holly

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 share the lighting of the advent candles, signifying the coming of the "celebration of the birth of Christ." Add to that the beautiful sounds of Christmas carols being sung, our very own bell choir and the sweet voices of all who share their talent and love of our church. The gathering together on Christmas Eve for our candlelight service is one of those beloved traditions. I always remember Haleigh Harris stewardship talk a few years ago when she declared it was her most favorite service! Christmas actually falls on a Sunday this year and we will be holding a Sunday morning service at our usual 10:30 and would love to see you, to greet you, and share an hour celebrating the birth of Christ.

So, Unpack those handmade 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. 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! As we shared in November over Thanksgiving, our blessings abound.

Please be assured your Diaconate Team of Antoinette, Emily, Pam, Sharon 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.



Have You Started Christmas Shopping?



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

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

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



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 Robert Knapp at 978-352-7489.

*Our steeple will be lit for December in loving memory of Karen L. Young, from the Young family.
All hearts come home for Christmas.*



Annual Meeting January 2022

It will be here before you know it!

Please prepare your team's **Annual Report** and send to: churchoffice@fccgeorgetownma.org by **Monday, January 9th.**

Teams are asked to get their 2022 Budget to the Finance team ASAP so they can prepare a report for the January Finance Meeting to be held on January 10.



Marie Birdsall

Michael Lee

Toni Cassidy

Jody Moore

Donna DeSisto

Tracy Southwick

Charles Dickens'



Sunday, December 18 at 7 PM

Witness the classic tale of A Christmas Carol come beautifully to life as actor J.T. Turner portrays Charles Dickens and every single character from the story in this one-man show. Charles Dickens was famous for bringing his A Christmas Carol to life for audiences every year, and this version brings all the drama, comedy, and redemption Dickens intended. To purchase tickets go to our website!



Join us on **Christmas Eve at 5 PM** - Bell choir will be playing beautiful holiday music on this holy night.



Christmas morning at 10:30 AM - We will gather for informal worship and celebrate Jesus's birth.

STORM CANCELATIONS

In the event of a Saturday night or Sunday morning snowstorm, 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 website & Facebook page.



The front of our sanctuary will be filled with beautiful flowers on Christmas morning. The Diaconate welcomes your contributions in memory of beloved friends and family. Donations can be made payable to FCC Georgetown & mailed to the church.

The deadline for your contribution will be Sunday, December 11. 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:

A Thank you to the Diaconate

During the morning worship service on Sunday, November 6, members of the Diaconate under the leadership of Gladie Kneeland, paid tribute to the women who created our beautiful wall hanging in the Narthex, depicting events and landmarks of historical significance in our church's 290 years of existence. This informative presentation, and the plaque that has been created to accompany the wall hanging, is an important part of our history to be preserved. Many of the artists who contributed their talents have passed away, including Pat Barlow, who sewed the squares together and was responsible for all the finishing touches. The Rededication of the hanging, not only honored those women who have left us, and those who are still with us, but it emphasized the rich history of our church, and its place in our community. To remember the past gives inspiration for heading into the future.

Thank you, Diaconate members, for the plaque that will inform, and be displayed in the Narthex. Another thank you to our Technology Team for the video that accompanied Gladie's message. It was thoughtfully and lovingly researched, and a meaningful contribution to this service.

Sincerely,
Joan Chatterton

Thank you to everyone who supported the Country Store

I couldn't have done it without your help. I appreciate all the cookie and bread makers who made such yummy treats. Some of you anonymously donated and others who have made those favorites year after year. I really knead you. To the crafters who made such cute things and our jam and mustard makers. Your things give the Country Store it's vibe. And I can't forget our soap and honey family. You are the bee's knees. :) And last but not least, a special thanks to my helpers Joan Chatterton and Sylvia Johnson who manned the booth while I had lunch and a break.

All kidding aside, every one of you is appreciated.

Here's to next year. May it be as good as this one.

Michelle Brock



Women's Guild

HOLIDAY DESSERT SOCIAL

Tuesday, December 6 at 1:00 O'Clock


Church Fair Pies & Ice Cream will be served at 1:00 o'clock followed by Advent entertainment.

**Christmas Story by Shirley Powell

**Strumming & Songs by Richard Aberman **Carol Sing with Mary Ann Nelson



December 2022

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 7 PM Knitting Last meet until March	2 5-6:30 PM Girl Scouts	3
4 Second Sunday of Advent 9:30 Bells 10:30 AM Worship	5 6:30 PM Bells 7:30 PM Band	6 10 AM Bible Study 1 PM Women's Guild Holiday Dessert Social	7 7 PM Evening Bible Study 7 PM Book Club 7PM Boy Scouts	8 7 PM Diaconate Meeting	9 3-6:00 PM Girl Scouts	10 8 AM Men's Breakfast Café Sarina
11 Third Sunday of Advent 10:30 AM Worship	12 	13 10 AM Bible Study 6 PM Finance 6:30 PM Bells 7:30 PM Band	14 7 PM Missions Meeting 7PM Boy Scouts	15	16 3-7 PM Girl Scouts	17
18 Fourth Sunday of Advent 9 AM Bells/9:30 Band 10:30 AM Worship 7 PM Christmas Carol - JT Turner	19	20 10 AM Bible Study	21 6:30 PM Council 7PM Boy Scouts	22 6:00 PM Christian Development	23	24 5 PM Christmas Eve service
25 Merry Christmas 10:30 AM Worship	26 Office Closed Christmas Day Observed	27 10 AM Bible Study	28 7PM Boy Scouts	29	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.