

Central Square Congregational Church, United Church of Christ

# Steeple Sounds

December 2020

*We are a Christian community of people who are reaching out to our neighbors, at home and abroad, sharing our faith and our resources.*



**From the Desk of Rev. Beth**

*Rev. Elizabeth Stotts, Pastor*

Friends,

We don't think about it often, but Jesus came into a world full of darkness and doubt, oppression and fear. At Christmastime we prefer to tell the glorious tale of angels lighting the night sky, of shepherds tending their flocks on an otherwise peaceful evening. We imagine a somehow quiet Baby Jesus, asleep in the hay. But historically, that was not the world Jesus entered. Palestine and Israel were occupied territories. The Romans were brutal oppressors who had no qualms killing in the name of a false "peace." (On one occasion when Jesus would have been a child, they crucified 1000 people in one day to put down a rebellion.) The shepherds, as well as in all likelihood Mary and Joseph, would have been super poor- landless workers just striving each day to get their daily bread. Even within the story we get a glimpse of this. The Christmas story is incredible because of the world so desperately in need of peace and joy.

And yet, into that dark world, into that moment, came Jesus. Into that world, into the moment, came this promise. "The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it." Jesus was a light shining in the night of Roman oppression. Jesus was a light shining in the night of abject poverty felt by the majority of the population. Jesus was a light that proclaimed that even when the world seemed to be at its worst, God was still among them. Immanuel was there. And in the challenges and even horrors of the historical moment angels were able to proclaim "peace on earth," shepherds were able to go away praising God for all they had seen, and Mary was able to "treasure all these things in her heart." In a world gone mad some 2000 years ago, the light shined. And the world was changed forever.

This Advent, this Christmas, is a more challenging time than many of us have ever faced and worse than some have faced for decades. Traditions have been shattered, families have been separated, and Americans are dying at more than 1000/day. COVID-19 has upended so much of what we knew or had done before. Our world is not the same. It may not ever be the same. It certainly will not be the same by Dec. 25. At times it feels like we are in a world gone mad. A world we no longer recognize. And yet... and yet the light still shines. And yet Jesus still comes.

Christmas will be different this year, but the light still shines. It's true that we won't be singing carols in our sanctuary on Christmas Eve. Instead we'll meet Jesus in new ways through new rituals this season. We'll sing carols in our own homes. We'll light our Advent wreaths at home. We'll recount the amazing story of Jesus coming to a dark world, in our homes. But the basic truth of this season still remains. At Christmas, we celebrate that God has come among us. We sing praises to Immanuel. The light still shines. Jesus still comes, no matter where we are, whether in the church or at home. Joy still comes to the world. And even though much has changed here in 2020, Jesus will still be waiting in Bethlehem, waiting for us to come and rejoice! In this different Christmas season, let us remember what is the same. For the light still shines. Thanks be to God.

Shalom and peace,

*Rev. Beth*



*Central Square Congregational Church, UCC, of Bridgewater, Massachusetts is an open and affirming church. No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here.*



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## Building closure extended until January 3, 2021\*

*\* The building is available to the Bridgewater Food Pantry, 12-step support groups, and small group gatherings under strict guidelines and protocols, by reservation only.*

### Remote Worship on Facebook and YouTube

- Use the link on the homepage of [www.cscucc.org](http://www.cscucc.org) to access Sunday worship. Click on the COVID-19 update link to access the YouTube link for past services.
- Sunday Worship will continue to be livestreamed from the Sanctuary at 10 a.m. Only the Pastor, the Minister of Music, and the Director of Video Evangelism will be in the building.

### Building Users

- Even if you have a key to the building, **please do not enter the building during this time** unless you are part of a pre-approved building use group, at the time of the approved use. Each one of us that enters is a potential carrier, even if we're not feeling sick. If you are tempted to say, "well, I'm sure that doesn't mean me.", **IT DOES.** If you have any questions or think that you should enter the building for any reason, call the church office at 508-697-6016 (phone is being answered remotely during the shutdown) or send an email to [office@cscucc.com](mailto:office@cscucc.com).



### CARING FOR OUR COMMUNITY

**Do you need a meal, a call, a mask, spiritual care, or even just a prayer or a chat? Contact the Pastor, a Deacon, the church office, or a member of our Care Team.**

**To contact Rev. Beth,** call the church office at 508-697-6016\* or email her at [csccpastor@hotmail.com](mailto:csccpastor@hotmail.com)

*\* the church phone is being answered remotely during the building shutdown*

#### CSCC Deacons

Deb Sorgman

– [debsorgman@gmail.com](mailto:debsorgman@gmail.com)

Lynn Pietras – [lsypie@aol.com](mailto:lsypie@aol.com)

#### CSCC Care Team

[CentralSquareCareTeam@gmail.com](mailto:CentralSquareCareTeam@gmail.com)

Carol Chaffee Bev Mitchell

Phoebe Hogg John Scott

Rev. Beth Stotts



### Food Pantry

The Bridgewater Food Pantry, hosted by CSCC, will remain open its usual days and times (Thursdays, 10am-1pm, first Mondays of the month, 6-7:30pm), although with slightly different format to respect COVID precautions.



**Welcome to Alexander James, born 11/16/20 to Jess & Ben Stearns!**



## Historical Church Building Committee

Phase 1 restoration of the church, which involves the steeple only, will be starting late in the spring of 2021. We will need to put into place a Preservation Restriction (deed restriction) on the church before this work can start. It is a requirement of the Town of Bridgewater when Community Preservation grants are awarded to privately-owned historic buildings. There is a cost applied to this step and we have asked the CPC to absorb it.

In addition to this first CPC grant of \$200,000 awarded to us, we have also had our grant writer apply for numerous other appropriate grants. Denials and acceptances take several months to hear back, but the good news is that even if our application is denied the first time, we can reapply as many times as is acceptable by that organization. There are several large monetary grants which allow one to apply annually, whether denied or approved.

We have also sent out more than 25 letters to prominent local businesses to inform them of this wonderful project we are undertaking, stating how the restoration of this building in downtown Bridgewater will preserve and enhance the beauty of the Bridgewater Common. We have asked them to support us financially if they are able to. Some of these companies have charitable foundations and they may be the ones to support us.

This project was started well over a year ago (almost two). None of us on the committee would ever have dreamed that this would take so long. We are all dedicated and believe in preserving our church building, especially with 2021 fast approaching, which marks our 200th anniversary. When our committee organized, we thought that our project might be completed by our anniversary date. It looks like we may be starting the project when we hoped to be completing it, but what's two years in the scope of two hundred?

*Barbara Morey*

**Next Cabinet meeting is Wednesday,  
Dec. 16, 7pm via Zoom.**

Contact the office for the login info if you are interested in attending. All are welcome!



We're delighted to announce our continuing music programs. We are truly honored to have all of these talented musicians sharing their gifts with our community. All services (unless otherwise noted below) will be streamed live at 10am, on our YouTube channel and will be on Facebook live. Feel free to join in the live chat and let us know that you're watching!

**December 4th, 7-8pm - Julia Scott Carey leads a Christmas Carol Singalong fundraiser, together with Rev. Beth, performing piano arrangements of beloved Christmas songs. Visit [www.cscucc.org](http://www.cscucc.org) for information on how to request songs and make donations. All funds raised will support the programs and ministry of our church.**

**December 6th** - Stephanie Riley and Greg Mancusi-Ungaro of the Tanglewood Festival Chorus will perform Christmas duets and excerpts from Handel's Messiah.

**December 13th** - Trumpeter Cameron Shave returns for a rousing Christmas program.

**December 20th** - Soprano Rose Hegele, contemporary music specialist and member of the Tanglewood Festival Chorus, along with our church's own 10-year-old Cristianna Ciaramitaro, will perform Christmas solos and duets, including works by Samuel Barber and Benjamin Britten.

*A huge shoutout to our Minister of Music, Julia Scott Carey for these musical blessings. None of them would be possible without her considerable efforts and talents.*

December 2020						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

## End of Year Giving

If you find that you need to do some catching up with your pledge giving, or you are able to give a bit more this holiday season, note that the Treasurers need to receive all gifts no later than 1pm on Tuesday, December 29 in order for it to be counted toward your 2020 giving. Payments are accepted by mailed check or credit card payment through the website.



## Women's Guild & Fellowship

### Calling All CSCC Women

The Women's Guild and Fellowship invites all women of Central Square Congregational Church to join us for our annual Christmas program on Wednesday, December 2 at 6:30 PM. Rev. Beth is our guest and she will lead us in a meaningful service of worship at 6:30, to be followed by our business meeting and time of fellowship.

Since we are unable to worship in the church, we will hold our meeting via Zoom. If you are not currently a member of the Guild and would like to join the Zoom meeting, please email Bette at [bdekoning3@gmail.com](mailto:bdekoning3@gmail.com) for access to the link. All Guild members will receive access to the link on December 2.

If you have not yet paid your annual dues of \$20, you may send a check to Treasurer Jane O'Connell, 108 Spruce Street, Bridgewater, MA 02324. Please put "Dues" in the memo line. Also, since we are not able to meet in person, if you would like to make a donation to the Angel Fund, perhaps equal to the amount you would normally contribute for our next 5 monthly meetings, you may also send a check to Jane. Please put "Angel Fund" on the memo line. All checks should be made out to: Women's Guild & Fellowship, CSCC. Thank you.

We had 23 participants at our November Zoom meeting and we hope to see even more of you in December. It is the best way for now to stay connected. See you in December!

*Sandra Alley, Bette de Koning*  
Co-Presidents



### Free Piano

There is a family in Bridgewater who would like to give away their baby grand piano. The person who wants it will have to make the arrangements to move it. If you are interested, contact Barbara Morey at 508-697-4239 or [bmoreyeel@aol.com](mailto:bmoreyeel@aol.com).



The Central Square Congregational Church Building Re-opening Task Force has been meeting since mid-September to find ways to safely reopen our church. We are following guidelines set by our public officials and UCC leaders. To make this a smooth and successful opening we have broken it down into smaller goals:

#### 1-Reopen Fellowship Hall for meetings

As of October 21, groups have been meeting and following all guidelines set.

#### 2- Reopen the sanctuary for worship services

We are working on this, and most steps are complete. Unfortunately COVID case numbers are going up, so we are also watching new state guidelines.

#### 3- Reopen the kitchen

We are researching what needs to be done and hopefully it will be an easier than anticipated process.

We continue to ask for your patience, cooperation, and prayers,

The Task Force

*Deb Sorgman, Ed Buckland, Krissy Cannizzo, Eric Stotts, and Lynn Pietras*

**amazon.com**

### Remember to 'Smile' while Christmas Shopping!

Remember that when you shop on Amazon, type "smile.Amazon.com" into your browser rather than just "Amazon.com", and designate Central Square Congregational Church as the charity to benefit from your purchases. It costs you nothing extra, but the church gets a percentage of most of your purchases. And tell your friends, too! Contact the church office at [office@cscucc.com](mailto:office@cscucc.com) or 508-697-6016 with questions or to help you get set up.



## Outreach in Action

This month our efforts turn to warm food and warm clothing. Two hundred dollars is being donated to Father Bill's Mainspring House to help with the cost of Thanksgiving dinners they will be providing. Like most dinners this year, the dinners will be available for pick up.

Our Warmth in Cold Places will have a new look as well. Along with your help, we are going to provide clothing to Our Daily Bread at St Thomas Episcopal Church in Taunton in December. The Board of Christian Outreach will purchase clothing and they ask that if you would like to join in, please drop off new or gently used hooded sweatshirts (M, L, or XL), sweatpants (M, L, or XL), or gloves at our church. We will be collecting these items on **Thursdays, December 10 and 17**, between the hours of 10am and 1pm at the Church Street door. They will then be delivered to Taunton and the staff there will distribute them to those in need the week of Christmas.

Please spread the word, and thank you for your continued help during these times when reaching out is so important and essential.



## Success!

Thank you to the many people who helped with this year's fair events! While we didn't take in as much as usual, we exceeded our expectations for this challenging year. Here's how we did: Pie Sales: \$1,007; Crafts: \$1,337; Attic Treasures Yard Sale: \$675; Hanson Farm Harvest Table: \$300; Turkey Dinner Takeout: \$2,735... all for a total of \$6,054!

Thanks to all who helped organize, set up, clean up, bake pies, call pie bakers, make crafts, donate used items as well as products to sell; all who bought turkey dinners (catered by Boston Tavern in Middleboro); and all who shared and promoted the events on Facebook.

And a VERY special and heartfelt thank you to the anonymous angel who sponsored the entire bill from Boston Tavern for the turkey dinner catering, allowing the church to keep the entire amount for each dinner. We are truly blessed!

## A Big Band Christmas Season!

This Holiday season will be very different for many and the Cameron Shave Jazz Orchestra's 16-19 musicians have been busy playing and recording Holiday Big Band favorites for the public to view for free. The first video will be available on YouTube on the day after Thanksgiving, **November 27th**, and the second video will be released on Tuesday, **December 1st**. A new video be will released every December Sunday following with special videos for Christmas Eve and a Big Band Extravaganza for Christmas Day. If you go onto [CameronShave.com](http://CameronShave.com), you will find a pop-up tab with links to all of the released videos.

Cameron has transcribed and prepared all of the music, sent each part to each musician and has collected the videos back to place the ensemble together. The band is hoping to bring joy to the community with their music through this holiday season. They will also be sharing this link with assisted living facilities around the country. Please consider tuning in to support these fine young players.

*CSCC's own Cameron Shave is a 17-year-old junior in high school. His big band is comprised of high school and college musicians. Many of these young musicians began playing with Cam when they were much younger — now many of them are all over the country studying at music colleges, but thanks to technology can still play together.*

*Cam has been working around the clock since September on transcribing some incredible big band charts that bands cannot play because the music is not put out for sale. These are mostly secular big band charts involving a jazz vocalist or two on several. After transcribing and laying out the parts for his players, he creates audio backtracks for each of the 17-18 parts on each song, emails them out to each player, then receives each player's recording back to piece together for the whole ensemble's finished audio and video. He and his bandmembers do this because they love these familiar Christmas songs but also want to spread cheer during this unusual holiday season to others through music.*





### Our Care "Ring" Program

It is so wonderful to have so many  
a part of a Care Circle.

We started with 4 groups in October and we have enough  
interest to launch a 5<sup>th</sup> group for the Thanksgiving, Advent  
and Christmas seasons. We have had to make a few  
adjustments to the program but there has been  
overwhelming positive feedback.

If you have an interest in taking part, even for just the  
Advent season, please reach out to  
Gail Wershing or myself.

Truly and prayerfully,

Carol Chaffee

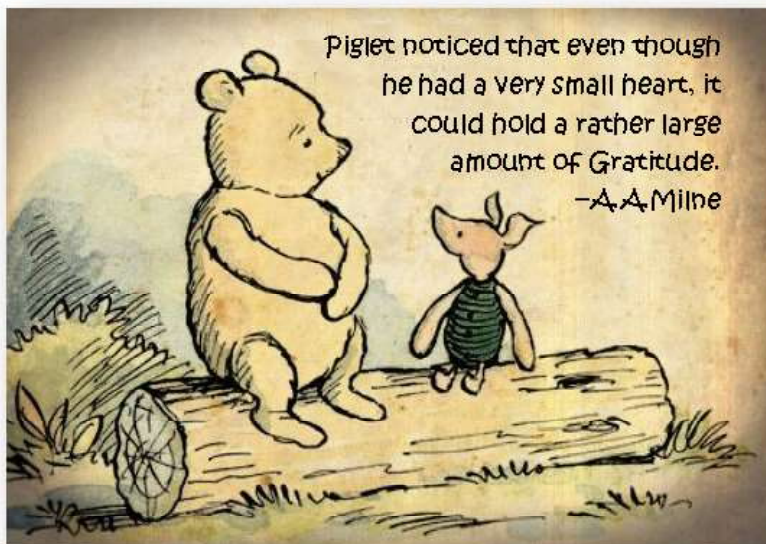
### **"Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life.**

It turns what we have into enough, and more.

It turns denial into acceptance, chaos into order, confusion to clarity...

Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today, and creates a vision for tomorrow."

~Melody Beattie



Piglet noticed that even though  
he had a very small heart, it  
could hold a rather large  
amount of Gratitude.  
-A.A.Milne

Finding and praying for a sense of gratitude  
during a pandemic of unknown proportions may  
seem a daunting prayer. But it is the CSCC Care Team  
prayer for you as we enter the Advent Season. May  
you rise each morning or retire each night knowing  
and realizing one small notion of gratitude. Don't just  
think it; speak it out loud, write it down, post it on  
Facebook or Instagram. MAKE IT REAL!




*The CSCC Care Team*










## Make a List, Check it Twice!

Here are some of the things your gift can do:


-  \$20 - Heats the building for a day
-  \$25 - Supplies water to the building for a week
-  \$25 - Covers one week's cleaning and maintenance

supplies

-  \$35 - Buys hosting of church web site for a month
-  \$45 - Pays for the fire alarm monitoring for one month
-  \$100 - Supplies electricity to the building for one week
-  \$110 - Pays for one piano tuning
-  \$150 - Pays for the internet service for one month

(allowing streaming of services!)

-  \$150 - Pays one month of telephone charges

-  \$400 - Buys one tank of heating oil

What would you like to give from this Wish List? Let's all put our beloved church family on our lists.

Christmas gift checks can be mailed to Treasurer, Central Square Congregational Church, 71 Central Square, Bridgewater, MA 02324. Or, hit the donate button on the website: CSCCUCC.ORG.



## Homemade Christmas Cookies Needed! Sunday, Dec. 20, 3pm



We are once again providing personal bags of homemade holiday cookies to the Brockton homeless via the L Street Mission. If you are able, please cook a dozen or two of your favorite cookies and bring them to the church on Sunday, December 20, between 3 and 3:30pm. Weather permitting, there will be a table just outside of the Church St. door for you to leave them on. (If you have a bag of individually wrapped Christmas candy, we'll take that, too!)

Because all the cookies will be mixed up and packaged in groups of 3-4, please avoid the use of nuts altogether. Also please no cookies that are too sticky or creamy on top as they will be put into baggies with other cookies.

Great project to do with your family! Thank you, as always, for your generosity.

## Tune in for a Christmas Carol Singalong & Fundraiser with Julia and Rev. Beth! Friday, Dec. 4 7-8pm



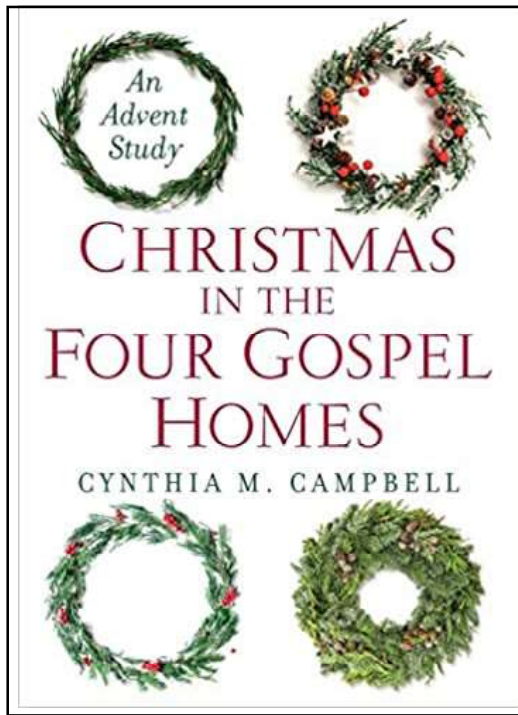
Join Minister of Music Julia Scott Carey and Rev. Beth (virtually, of course) for an hour of Christmas Carols! A great way to kick off the holiday season, and spend some family fun time.

Request your favorite song! Give a shoutout to family and friends! Make some hot chocolate, and get ready to sing.

The event will be broadcast on YouTube and Facebook, much like our Sunday worship. There will be a link on the church website ([www.cscucc.org](http://www.cscucc.org)) home page for easy access to the YouTube stream.

**SEE THE INSERT WITH THIS NEWSLETTER TO REQUEST SONGS AND MAKE A DONATION!**

**OR VISIT [www.cscucc.org/singalong](http://www.cscucc.org/singalong)**



## Advent Book Study Saturday, Dec. 12

Advent began on November 29, and Reverend Beth's Advent book study book will be "Christmas in the Four Gospel Homes" by Cynthia M. Campbell. Amazon has this to say about it:

"How might a house look for Christmas based on what each Gospel says about it? In *Christmas in the Four Gospel Homes*, beautiful illustrations from architect Kevin Burns reimagine each of the four Gospels as a 'house,' which the church visits at Christmas. In each section, Cynthia M. Campbell reflects on the distinctive perspective of the birth of Jesus or the incarnation offered by each Gospel. Suitable for individual or group study, *Christmas in the Four Gospel Homes* creatively reimagines the season and inspires new and exciting reflection for Advent."

Join Rev. Beth on **Saturday, December 12** at 10am in the Fellowship Hall for a lively discussion on the book. Reservations are required, and masks and physical distancing, along with the other building use protocols, will be observed. Contact the office for your reserved seat!

### Photo Opportunity!

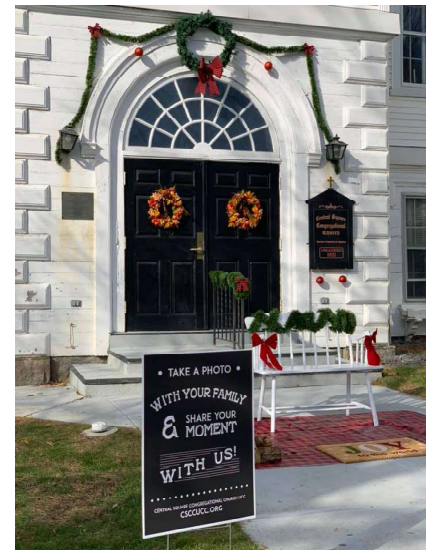
Do you usually take a Christmas photo? This year the church has a Christmas-themed Photo Booth in front of the church for all of Advent. Get your fancy Christmas clothes on! Gather the family! Pop by at your convenience. And if you are so inclined, share the picture with us (just email it to [office@cscucc.com](mailto:office@cscucc.com))!

### Silent Night

Silent night, holy night  
All is calm, all is bright  
Round yon Virgin Mother and Child  
Holy Infant so tender and mild  
Sleep in heavenly peace  
Sleep in heavenly peace

Silent night, holy night  
Shepherds quake at the sight  
Glories stream from heaven afar  
Heavenly hosts sing Alleluia!  
Christ, the Savior, is born  
Christ, the Savior, is born

Silent night, holy night  
Son of God, love's pure light  
Radiant beams from Thy holy face  
With the dawn of redeeming grace  
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth  
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth



### Christmas Eve "Silent Night" Sing-a-long

A favorite tradition for many people is singing "*Silent Night*" on Christmas Eve by candlelight in the church sanctuary. This year, let's all do it together from our own homes! At **7pm on Dec. 24**, light a candle, step outside your home, maybe stand at the end of your driveway or on your porch, and sing "*Silent Night*"! Rev. Beth has been talking with the other churches in Bridgewater and everyone agrees that we need this experience of togetherness this year. Raise your voice in praise and celebration!



# ALL ABOUT ADVENT

## What is Advent?

In the church's calendar (called the liturgical calendar), Advent marks the beginning of the church year. Advent starts on a Sunday, and marks the four Sundays prior to Christmas. This means, depending on how the days of the week fall, that Advent may begin in the final days of November or the first days of December each year. This year, Advent begins on Sunday, November 29. For Christians, Advent is a time of preparation and expectant waiting. We prepare our hearts and our lives for the birth of the baby Jesus and all that His life brings. In this time of waiting, we can engage in spiritual practices that help center us and prepare us for this day. Advent is a time of great opportunity, a time to slow down, to rest, and to center ourselves in our faith.

## What is Christmas?

We often think of Christmas as a single day, December 25, but the liturgical celebration of Christmas is actually a whole season of the church year! Starting on December 25, the day we celebrate Jesus's birth, and ending on January 6, the season of Christmas is a joyful time to celebrate all that Christ's birth means in our lives. We call January 6 "Epiphany". On Epiphany we celebrate the journey of the Magi to visit Jesus and bring him gifts.

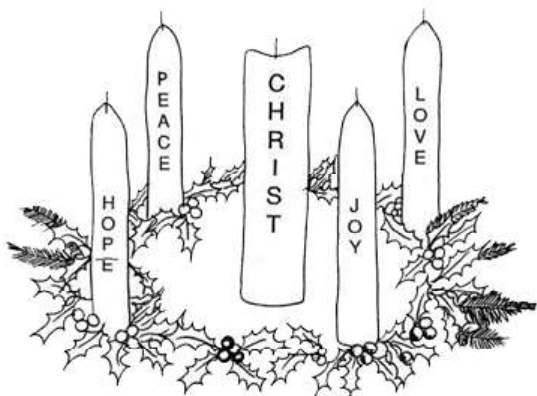
And it's this time from Christmas Day until Epiphany that comprise the "Twelve Days of Christmas".

## The Advent Wreath

Many Protestant and Roman Catholic churches use Advent wreaths to mark the passing of the four weeks in Advent. The candles are lit, one additional one per week, for four weeks. On Christmas Eve, a fifth candle is lit to represent Jesus, the light of the world. The family gathers around a very simple votive wreath to have dessert together and reflect on each of the four Advent values: Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love.

To make your wreath, place four candles on a plate in a circle with a pillar candle in the center. Light one candle per week, starting with the first Sunday in Advent (this year November 29), four weeks before Christmas. On each subsequent Sunday, light an additional candle. The first week represents Hope; the second, Peace; the third, Joy; and the fourth, Love. On Christmas Eve, light all four candles as well as the candle in the middle, representing the baby Jesus.

During each of the four weeks of Advent, on Sunday evening after dinner, sit around the table with your dessert and candles and go through the simple routine of lighting the candle, discussing the Advent value, and ending with a simple prayer. The depth of discussion will vary, depending on those involved. For very young children, simply saying the word and ending with the prayer is a beautiful beginning and lays the foundation for future years.



**Christmas Eve worship service  
(streaming only, on YouTube and  
Facebook) will be at 6:00pm on  
Thursday, December 24.**



**Advent Bible Study  
Wed, Dec. 9 - 16 - 23, 12 noon**

Join Reverend Beth in exploring the lectionary and the Advent themes of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love on three consecutive Wednesdays. Study will take place in the Fellowship Hall, physically distanced and masks required. 12 noon on December 9, 16, and 23.

Due to gathering limitations, reservations are required. Contact the church office to reserve your spot.

# A HOME ADVENT STUDY

## Week 1 (November 29, 2020): HOPE

**Light:** Tonight we light the candle of Hope.

**Read:** Romans 5:1-5

*Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.*

**Discuss:**

What does it mean to have Hope?

What do you think about when you hear the word Hope?  
How can we share Hope with others?

**Pray:**

*God, we thank you for giving us Hope.  
Help us to have Hope and to share Hope as we wait for Jesus to be born. Amen.*

## Week 2 (December 6, 2020): PEACE

**Light:** Tonight we light the candle of Hope and the candle of Peace.

**Read:** John 14:25-27

*I have said these things to you while I am still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.*

**Discuss:**

What does it mean to have Peace in your heart?  
How can we share Peace in our family and in the world?

**Pray:**

*God, please help us to understand Peace and to share it with others. We wait for Jesus to be born with Hope and Peace. Amen.*

## Week 3 (December 13, 2020): JOY

**Light:** Tonight we light the candles of Hope, Peace, and Joy.

**Read:** Philippians 4:4-6

*Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.*

**Discuss:**

What does it mean to rejoice?  
How is Joy the same or different from happiness?  
How can we share Joy with others?

**Pray:**

*God, we thank you for the gift of Joy.  
Help us to share it with one another.  
We wait for Jesus with Hope, Peace, and Joy. Amen.*

## Week 4 (December 20, 2020): LOVE

**Light:** Tonight we light the candles of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love.

**Read:** 1 John 4:7-8,11-12

*Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us.*

**Discuss:**

When have you felt or seen God's Love?  
How can we show God's love to the world?

**Pray:**

*God, thank you for showing us what true Love is.  
Help us to Love you and to Love one another.  
We wait for Jesus with Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love. Amen.*

*Continue for Christmas Eve/Christmas Day...*

# A HOME ADVENT STUDY

## *Continued from previous page*

### Christmas Eve or Christmas Day: THE CHRIST CANDLE

**Light:** Tonight/today we light the candles for Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love, and we light the center candle for the birth of Jesus.

**Read:** Luke 2:1-16  
*In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!" When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger.*

#### **Discuss:**

The day we have been waiting for is here!  
 How does it feel to celebrate the birth of Jesus today?  
 What does the birth of Jesus mean to you?

#### **Pray:**

*God, today we are thankful for the birth of Jesus, and for the lessons he teaches us about how to love one another. Help us throughout the year to share Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love. Amen.*

### Advent Prayers

#### **Advent Gratitude:**

*Thank you, God, for time together.  
 Thank you, God, for special food.  
 Thank you, God, for special moments.  
 Thank you, God for gifts.  
 Thank you, God, for each new day. Amen.*

#### **Before a Meal:**

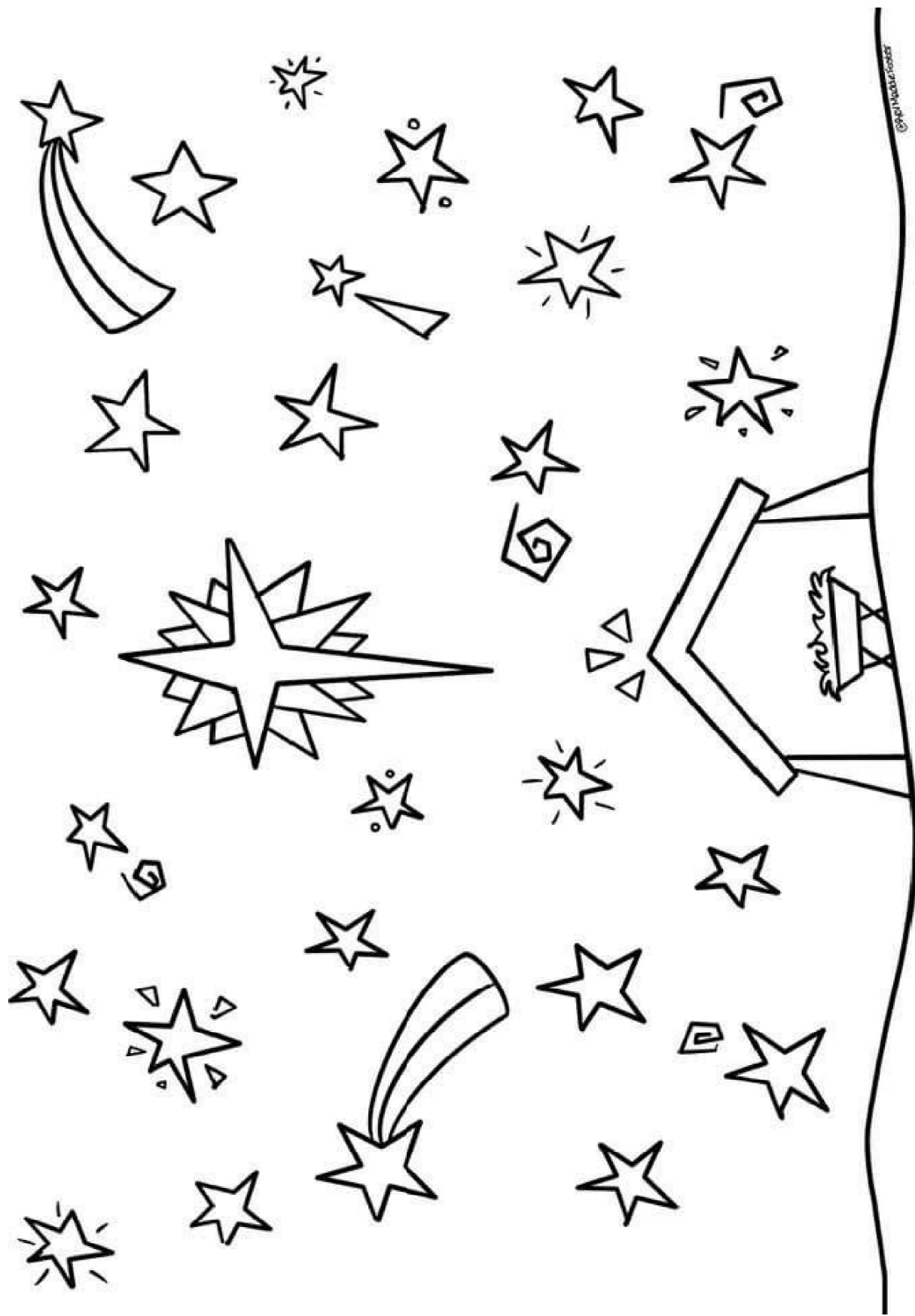
*Thank you, God, for the company of family,  
 the gift of nourishing food,  
 and time to enjoy family and food together. Amen.*

#### **For Family and Friends:**

*God, we send blessings and love to friends and family far away:  
 May they feel our love.  
 May they know we miss them.  
 May they be happy and at peace.  
 May their Advent and Christmas be full of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love. Amen.*







## My Advent Countdown Picture!

Count down to Christmas Day by coloring in one star each day,  
beginning on the first Sunday of Advent (November 29)!

# Advent – Christmas – Epiphany

November 29, 2020 – January 6, 2021

## Advent

In the church's calendar (called the liturgical calendar), Advent is the four weeks prior to Christmas and begins on Sunday, November 29. Advent is a time of preparation and expectant waiting. We prepare our hearts and our lives for the birth of the baby Jesus and all that his life brings. During Advent we focus ourselves on the concepts of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love.

## Christmas

Christmas is more than just one day. It's actually 12 days! The season of Christmas spans from December 25, the day we celebrate the birth of Jesus, to January 5.

## Epiphany

In the story of Jesus's birth, three wise people travelled from far way to visit the newborn baby. The season of Epiphany (which begins on January 6 and lasts until Lent) is a season where we reflect on our spiritual journey and our call from God to live LOVE into the world.

During these times, we can engage in spiritual practices that help us to slow down, to rest, and to center ourselves in our faith. While this year is different because of the pandemic, there are still things we can do to honor and celebrate Jesus!



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
29 <b>LIGHT</b> Light a candle for Hope.	30 <b>PRAY</b> Thank God for this day.	1 <b>SERVE</b> Write a note to someone to say thanks.	2 <b>SHARE</b> What are you thankful for today?	3 <b>CONNECT</b> Drink hot chocolate with someone special.	4 <b>REFLECT</b> What are your hopes for this Christmas?	5 <b>CREATE</b>
6 <b>LIGHT</b> Light a candle for Peace.	7 <b>PRAY</b> Pray for those who are lonely.	8 <b>SERVE</b> Make something for a neighbor.	6 <b>SHARE</b> What does peace feel like?	7 <b>CONNECT</b> Take a walk in nature.	8 <b>REFLECT</b> How can you help create a peaceful world?	9 <b>CREATE</b> Cut out a paper heart and write "Peace is..." on it.
10 <b>LIGHT</b> Light a candle for Joy.	11 <b>PRAY</b> Pray for friends and family by name.	12 <b>SERVE</b> Donate food to the food pantry.	13 <b>SHARE</b> What brings you joy?	14 <b>CONNECT</b> Read a story with someone you love.	15 <b>REFLECT</b> What traditions are most important to you?	16 <b>CREATE</b>
17 <b>LIGHT</b> Light a candle for Love.	18 <b>PRAY</b> Pray for someone you don't know.	19 <b>SERVE</b> Do something kind for a stranger.	20 <b>SHARE</b> How do you show love?	21 <b>CONNECT</b> Spend 5 minutes in quiet. Listen to your breath.	22 <b>REFLECT</b> How have you been shown love by others?	23 <b>CREATE</b> Make a birthday cake for Jesus.
24 <b>LIGHT</b> Light a candle for Christ's birth.	25 <b>CONNECT</b> Call someone you love but can't see this year.	26 <b>REFLECT</b> When have you felt God's love?	27 <b>SHARE</b> How did you help others today?	28 <b>SERVE</b> Scatter seeds for animals.	29 <b>REFLECT</b> What are you most grateful for?	30 <b>CREATE</b> Make a poster of your goals for next year.
31 <b>LIGHT</b> Light a candle in honor of 2020.	1 <b>CREATE</b> Draw a picture of your home.	2 <b>PRAY</b> Pray for peace on earth.	3 <b>SHARE</b> What are your hopes for this year?	4 <b>CONNECT</b> Go outside. Touch a tree. Breathe 3 deep breaths and thank the tree.	5 <b>SERVE</b> Donate an item you don't use anymore.	6 <b>LIGHT</b> Light a candle to honor your faith journey.



**Southern New England Conference**

United Church of Christ

*Living the Love & Justice of Jesus*

## Daily Lectionary Scripture References -December 2020 (Year B)

### **Tues., Dec. 1**

Psalms 79  
Micah 4:6-13  
Revelation 18:1-10

### **Wed., Dec. 2**

Psalms 79  
Micah 5:1-5a  
Luke 21:34-38

### **Thurs., Dec. 3**

Psalms 85:1-2, 8-13  
Hosea 6:1-6  
1 Thessalonians 1:2-10

### **Fri., Dec. 4**

Psalms 85:1-2, 8-13  
Jeremiah 1:4-10  
Acts 11:19-26

### **Sat., Dec. 5**

Psalms 85:1-2, 8-13  
Ezekiel 36:24-28  
Mark 11:27-33

### **Sun., Dec. 6**

*Second Sunday of Advent*  
Isaiah 40:1-11  
Psalms 85:1-2, 8-13  
2 Peter 3:8-15a  
Mark 1:1-8

### **Mon., Dec. 7**

Psalms 27  
Isaiah 26:7-15  
Acts 2:37-42

### **Tues., Dec. 8**

Psalms 27  
Isaiah 4:2-6  
Acts 11:1-18

### **Wed., Dec. 9**

Psalms 27  
Malachi 2:10-3:1  
Luke 1:5-17

### **Thurs., Dec. 10**

Psalms 126  
Habakkuk 2:1-5  
Philippians 3:7-11

### **Fri., Dec. 11**

Psalms 126  
Habakkuk 3:2-6  
Philippians 3:12-16

### **Sat., Dec. 12**

Psalms 126  
Habakkuk 3:13-19  
Matthew 21:28-32

### **Sun., Dec. 13**

*Third Sunday of Advent*  
Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11  
Psalms 126 or Luke 1:46b-55  
1 Thessalonians 5:16-24  
John 1:6-8, 19-28

### **Mon., Dec. 14**

Psalms 125  
1 Kings 18:1-18  
Ephesians 6:10-17

### **Tues., Dec. 15**

Psalms 125  
2 Kings 2:9-22  
Acts 3:17-4:4

### **Wed., Dec. 16**

Psalms 125  
Malachi 3:16-4:6  
Mark 9:9-13

### **Thurs., Dec. 17**

Psalms 89:1-4, 19-26  
2 Samuel 6:1-11  
Hebrews 1:1-4

### **Fri., Dec. 18**

Psalms 89:1-4, 19-26  
2 Samuel 6:12-19  
Hebrews 1:5-14

### **Sat., Dec. 19**

Psalms 89:1-4, 19-26  
Judges 13:2-24  
John 7:40-52

### **Sun., Dec. 20**

*Fourth Sunday of Advent*  
2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16  
Luke 1:46b-55 or  
Psalms 89:1-4, 19-26  
Romans 16:25-27  
Luke 1:26-38

### **Mon., Dec. 21**

Luke 1:46b-55  
1 Samuel 1:1-18  
Hebrews 9:1-14

### **Tues., Dec. 22**

Luke 1:46b-55  
1 Samuel 1:19-28  
Hebrews 8:1-13

### **Wed., Dec. 23**

Luke 1:46b-55  
1 Samuel 2:1-10  
Mark 11:1-11

### **Thurs., Dec. 24**

*Christmas Eve*  
Isaiah 9:2-7  
Psalms 96  
Titus 2:11-14  
Luke 2:1-14 [15-20]

### **Fri., Dec. 25**

*Christmas*  
Isaiah 52:7-10  
Psalms 98  
Hebrews 1:1-4 [5-12]  
John 1:1-14

### **Sat., Dec. 26**

Psalms 148  
Jeremiah 26:1-9, 12-15  
Acts 6:8-15; 7:51-60

### **Sun., Dec. 27**

*First Sunday after Christmas*  
Isaiah 61:10-62:3  
Psalms 148  
Galatians 4:4-7  
Luke 2:22-40

### **Mon., Dec. 28**

Psalms 148  
Jeremiah 31:15-17  
Matthew 2:13-18

### **Tues., Dec. 29**

Psalms 148  
Isaiah 49:5-15  
Matthew 12:46-50

### **Wed., Dec. 30**

Psalms 148  
Proverbs 9:1-12  
2 Peter 3:8-13

### **Thurs., Dec. 31**

*New Year's Eve*  
Ecclesiastes 3:1-13  
Psalms 8  
Revelation 21:1-6a  
Matthew 25:31-46

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# DECEMBER 2020

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b> 6:30pm Women's Guild & Fellowship worship & meeting (zoom)	<b>3</b> 10-1 Food Pantry Open 7pm Al-Anon	<b>4</b> 7:00pm Christmas Carol Singalong (online)	<b>5</b>
<b>6</b> 10am Worship (Online)	<b>7</b> 6-8pm Food Pantry Open	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b> 12-1 Advent Bible Study (Fellowship Hall)	<b>10</b> 10-1 Food Pantry Open 10-1 Warmth-Cold places donations 7pm Al-Anon	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b> 10-11 Advent Book Study
<b>13</b> 10am Worship (Online)	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b> 12-1 Advent Bible Study (Fellowship Hall) 7pm Cabinet - Zoom	<b>17</b> 10-1 Food Pantry Open 10-1 Warmth-Cold places donations 7pm Al-Anon	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>20</b> 10am Worship (Online) 3-3:30pm Christmas Cookie Donations	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b> 12-1 Advent Bible Study (Fellowship Hall)	<b>24</b> 10-1 Food Pantry Open 6pm Worship (online) 7pm Candle Lighting	<b>25</b> OFFICE CLOSED	<b>26</b>
<b>27</b> 10am Worship (Online) (Pre-recorded)	<b>28</b> OFFICE CLOSED	<b>29</b> OFFICE CLOSED	<b>30</b> OFFICE CLOSED	<b>31</b> 10-1 Food Pantry Open 7pm Al-Anon OFFICE CLOSED		

## **CSCC Cabinet Meeting – Minutes** **November 18, 2020 via Zoom teleconferencing**

The virtual meeting was called to order at 7:04.

**Cabinet members in attendance:** Rev. Beth Stotts, Pastor; Anne Malmquist, Moderator; Denise Molinari, Vice Moderator; Dave Sheibley, Treasurer; Larry Brown, Asst. Treasurer; Diane Sheibley, Clerk; Lynn Pietras, Board of Deacons; Ed Buckland, Board of Trustees; Margaret Weilhauer, Board of Christian Education; Bill O’Neil, Board of Christian Outreach; Barbara Morey, History & Memorials Committee; Gail Wershing, Growth Committee; Terry Reynolds, Women’s Guild & Fellowship

**Also present:** Gordon Brailsford (Trustees); Ellen Atherton, Congregational Administrator; Sandy Alley (Women’s Guild), Mike Bundock (Growth), Carol Chaffee

Rev. Beth opened the meeting with a prayer.

Diane Sheibley did the roll call.

### **MINUTES FROM OCTOBER CABINET MEETING**

The minutes from the October meeting were reviewed and there were no objections or corrections. Gail Wershing moved to accept the minutes; Terry Reynolds seconded. The minutes were approved.

### **PASTOR’S REPORT**

Rev. Beth referred everyone to the printed report she distributed ahead of time. She then shared her screen and showed everyone her advent calendar. Included were the Christmas Carol singalong that Julia and Rev. Beth will be providing on Dec. 4; the Advent book study on Dec. 12; the Advent bible study on three consecutive Wednesdays beginning Dec. 9; and the Christmas eve livestreamed worship service at 6pm on Dec. 24, followed by the lighting of candles and singing of *Silent Night*, where everyone at home is encouraged to participate.

Rev. Beth also reminded folks that this Saturday (11/21) was the pickup at the church for everyone’s Advent materials, as well as a time where she’ll be decorating the front of the church and setting up this season’s outdoor “photo booth” for anyone to use to take a holiday photo.

She reminded everyone that the bible studies and the book study are by reservation only, due to safe gathering limitations due to COVID. Christmas Eve service will be a livestream event only.

### **TREASURER’S REPORT**

Dave Sheibley hoped everyone received the copies of the treasurer’s report that he distributed via email. We are running about 7-8% below projected income, but that’s not too bad given the situation. He noted that the church fair did well in its fundraising endeavors, so we’re happy to have that cash influx. We are still transferring money in from the endowments, but that will slow down for a while with the fair money. He also noted that with the status of the stock market, the value of the endowments has increased about \$15,000 in recent weeks.

### **CONGREGATIONAL ADMINISTRATOR’S REPORT**

Ellen called attention to her status report showing all the work she’s been doing. One item she forgot to include was that, to prepare for the eventual return to worship and use of the building, she went through the whole church and removed anything that was not attached – bibles and pencils from pews, etc. She also gave a shoutout to Dave and Diane Sheibley for arranging for a donation of 4 hand sanitizer stations to be placed around the church.

### **BUILDING RE-OPENING REAFFIRMATIONS**

The Re-Opening Task Force finds it necessary to ask Cabinet to vote on the following 2 items:

First, the task force asks Cabinet to affirm that CSCC follows Massachusetts masking requirements; that everyone who is in our building wear a mask, covering both their nose and mouth, at all times with only the following two exceptions:

1. A staff member who is working alone in their own enclosed space.

*continued...*

*Cabinet minutes, continued...*

2. A worship leader in the sanctuary who is socially distanced from anyone else.

Second, since the Trustees are the keepers of our building, we recommend that the Cabinet give them a vote of confidence to enforce the safety precautions that have been instituted to use our building. The Trustees would follow our Behavioral Covenant speaking directly with violators and, if necessary, ultimately asking them to turn in their key and leave the building. -- *Respectfully submitted, Deb Sorgman, on Behalf of the Re-Opening Task Force*

After brief discussion, the Cabinet affirmed both of the recommendations.

## **HISTORICAL CHURCH BUILDING COMMITTEE**

Barbara Morey updated Cabinet on the progress of their project. She noted that the next step, following the approval of the town to grant us \$200,000 for phase one of the building renovation, is to secure a deed restriction. She has been in touch with Brian Pfeiffer, who did the original assessment of the building for us, and asked for an estimate of the work necessary to complete a deed restriction. His estimate was \$6500, and Barbara is working with the Community Preservation Committee to have the town pay that fee. The project of the deed restriction is estimated to take between 3-4 months and 8 months to finalize.

The committee has sent out about 25 letters to local businesses soliciting donations to the project. They have also found several large corporations with a presence in the area that they can approach as well. The grant writer has assisted in communications with these prospects.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

- Bill O'Neil noted that the food pantry is organizing Thanksgiving bags and will be putting them together this Saturday in the Fellowship Hall. The Food Pantry/Board of Christian Outreach has also sent checks to several places to help them out with their outreach. The annual Warmth in Cold Places project will still take place this year, but will be structured a bit differently. We will be holding a warm clothing drive and then the items will be delivered to Taunton the week before Christmas. Items to be donated can be brought to the church during Thursday food pantry open hours.

- Mike Bundock from the Growth Committee will be contacting greeters to do more virtual Sunday greetings. [The Cabinet then recorded their own virtual greeting, to be used on a future Sunday to open worship]. Gail Wershing also discussed a possible fundraiser that involved a beard and mustache growing contest. Contestants would pay a small fee to participate, and people wishing to vote for their favorite might also pay a small donation.

- Rev. Beth mentioned the photo booth she was going to set up on the front lawn of the church. "Take a photo and share it with us." The church will be the background.

- Diane mentioned that Jess Stearns had her baby, Alexander, on Nov. 16. Mother and baby are doing well.

- Diane also reported the results of this year's fair events: Pie sale: \$1,007; Craft sale: \$1,337; Attic Treasures Yard Sale: \$675; Turkey Dinner Takeout: \$2735; and Hanson Farm Harvest Table: \$300; for a total of \$6,054. Diane also noted that an anonymous angel stepped up and sponsored the entire bill from the turkey dinner caterer (Boston Tavern, Middleboro), so ALL of the proceeds from the night went to the church.

- Diane briefly discussed the Christmas Carol singalong fundraiser with Julia and Rev. Beth, and alerted people to be on the lookout for information on how to watch, request a carol, and donate. It will be held online on Friday, Dec. 4, 7-8pm.

- Bill O'Neil requested that the Moderator consider moving the Cabinet meetings from Zoom to in-person in the Fellowship Hall, as we're now allowing small groups to meet. Lynn, a member of the Building Re-opening Task Force, noted that while the Fellowship Hall has been reopened for a limited number of small group meetings, the numbers in the state are going the wrong way. Anne responded by saying that we would all love to have in-person meetings, but part of loving our neighbor is watching out for each other. She also noted that the last time we considered having an in-person meeting, not enough people were able/willing to attend to provide a quorum.

- Anne thanked everyone for adapting to the current environment, and Rev. Beth added that in many ways, people are blossoming with the creative ways of handling what needs to be done.

- Mike gave a shoutout to Julia for all the music she's been bringing in from the outside for our Sunday streamed services.

Rev. Beth closed the meeting with a Thanksgiving prayer.

The meeting adjourned at 8:00.



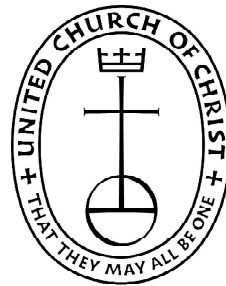
Treasurer's Report  
 October 31, 2020  
 Fiscal Year July 2020 - June 2021  
 33% thru Fiscal Year  
 Based on FY 2019-2020 Budget

	YTD	Budget	% of Budget
Income			
Regular Pledges	35,226	138,000	26%
Unpledged Offerings	1,837	4,500	41%
Plate Offering	0	1,000	0%
Total · Pledges / Offerings	37,062	143,500	26%
Special Collections			
MACUCC Fellowship Dues			
Total · Special Collections	0		
Fundraisers/Events Revenue			
Golf Tournament		7,200	0%
Breakfasts			
Church Fair	580	7,000	8%
Misc Fundraisers	129		
Total · Fundraisers/Events Revenue	709	14,200	5%
Facility Usage Income			
Non Profit Bldg Use	300	1,800	17%
Private Bldg Use	50	850	6%
Total · Facility Usage Income	350	2,650	13%
Miscellaneous Income	285		
Total Income	38,407	160,350	24%
Expenses			
Total · Senior Minister Expenses	36,258	107,029	34%
Total · Support Staff Expenses	15,652	48,266	32%
Total · Office Expenses	4,201	8,300	51%
Total · Church Building Costs	5,782	29,800	19%
Operating Committees			
Christian Education	165	750	22%
Church Growth	158	1,000	16%
Deacons	0	1,000	0%
Music (Materials/Substitutes)	110	600	18%
Stewardship		350	0%
Outreach	1,108	4,339	26%
Total · Operating Committees	1,540	8,039	19%
MACUCC Fellowship Dues		2,700	0%
Miscellaneous Expenses			
Pilgrim Assn Fellowship Dues	215	200	107%
Total Expenses	63,647	204,334	31%
Net income (loss)	(25,240)	(43,984)	57%
Music expenses reimbursed by Pierce Fund		17,131	
Transfer from Investments	23,700	26,853	
	(1,540)	0	

Treasurer's Report  
 October 31, 2020  
 Fiscal Year July 2020 - June 2021  
 33% thru Fiscal Year

Cash balances		
Operating account		7,473
Money Market		
Restricted	27,998	
Unrestricted	726	
		<u>28,724</u>
Fair account		16
Minister's Discretionary account		216
Outreach account		
Includes paid pledge set-aside	2,920	
Food Pantry	32,688	
		<u>35,608</u>
Capital Campaign account		<u>12,826</u>
Total cash balances		<u><u>84,863</u></u>
Endowments investment fund		
Protected principal	135,513	
Unrestricted funds	69,503	
Income YTD FY 2020	9,108	
Total value 10/31/2020		<u>214,124</u>
Parsonage investment fund		
Principal parsonage sale	60,314	
Profit (Loss)	18,092	
Total value 10/31/2020		<u>78,406</u>
Total investments 10/31/2020		<u><u>292,530</u></u>
Anniversary Committee expenses	33,313	

Central Square Congregational Church  
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**Church Administration**

**Pastor:** Rev. Elizabeth Stotts, [csccpastor@hotmail.com](mailto:csccpastor@hotmail.com)

**Congregational Administrator:** Ellen Atherton, [office@cscucc.com](mailto:office@cscucc.com)

**Sexton:** Rich Sullivan

**Minister of Music:** Julia Scott Carey, [juliascottcarey@gmail.com](mailto:juliascottcarey@gmail.com)

**Director of Video Evangelism:** Paul Holmes

**Treasurer:** David Sheibley, [treasurer@cscucc.com](mailto:treasurer@cscucc.com)

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[facebook.com/groups/801550253194149](https://facebook.com/groups/801550253194149) (youth page)

*Steeple Sounds submissions deadline is the 15th of the month prior to publication.*

**Amazon Shopping!**

Remember that when you shop on Amazon, use "smile.Amazon.com" rather than just "Amazon.com", and designate Central Square Congregational Church as the charity to benefit from your purchases. It costs you nothing extra! Contact the church office with questions.

Central Square Congregational Church, UCC  
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