



Steeple Sounds

The monthly newsletter of Central Square Congregational Church, UCC
December 2023

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*

Beloved in Christ,

For many of us, December is a month full of “I should” and “I have to.” We have our usual responsibilities at home, at work, or school. Perhaps there is even more to do than normal as students and educators face the end of a term and we all scramble toward the close of the calendar year. And then there is the joyful but exhausting work of the Christmas season: travel arrangements and holiday parties, Christmas decorations and gift-shopping.

The church season of Advent, which starts four Sundays before Christmas (December 3rd this year), offers us an alternative. Where our society plays Christmas music starting the day after Thanksgiving (and in some places the day after Halloween!!!), Advent invites us to quiet our hearts and wait for Christ. Where our society sees December as a month-long shopping spree so we can shower one another with gifts, Advent calls us to turn away from consumerism and await the gift of the incarnation. Where our society says “speed up,” Advent says “slow down.”

Too often, though, Advent can feel like just one more “should,” an item on an ever-growing to-do list, or a guilt trip added to the franticness of our holiday preparations. But I wonder... what would it be like to experience the Advent season not as a chore, but as a gift? Here are some ways I might explore the gift of Advent this year, ways that might be helpful for you too:

“...let justice roll down like a river...”

Perhaps we could choose holiday gifts that help justice roll down. We could choose to stem the rising tide of consumerism, giving fewer and smaller gifts. We could choose fair-trade items produced by justly compensated workers, or gifts made by local artists. For the loved one who has everything, perhaps we could make a small charitable gift in their honor.

“...the people who have walked in darkness have seen a great light...”

Advent is all about waiting in darkness, yet we are constantly surrounded by glowing screens and illuminated light bulbs. Perhaps we could choose to “unplug” a bit in Advent, turning off the computers and televisions and lights, and spending a bit more time with the darkness.

“...be still and know that I am God...”

Even in the midst of the hustle and bustle of December, perhaps we could find moments to be still. Perhaps we could reflect on Sunday’s scriptures on our Monday morning commute. Perhaps we could offer prayers for those in need near and far while we wait in a long check-out line.

“...let it be...”

In a month where so many are consumed by perfectionism, I treasure Mary’s words to the angel: “let it be.” I treasure these words which challenge me to accept what is, even if it isn’t what I had envisioned. And so when the Christmas machine pushes us all to spend more, speed up, do and be it all, I pray that we will remember Mary’s words to the angel, and God’s gift of grace and love given that we may have life abundant. And I pray that we will slow down, take a breath, and let it be. Amen.

In Christ,
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.

Remote Worship on Facebook and YouTube

Sunday Worship will continue to be livestreamed from the Sanctuary at 10 a.m.

Use the link on the homepage of www.cscucc.org to access Sunday worship, or visit our Facebook page. Past worship services are also available in both places.

**Next Cabinet meeting is Wednesday,
January 17, 7pm
Please note: there is no December
Cabinet meeting**

Monthly meetings of the church leadership are currently being held in the Fellowship Hall. All church members are also welcome to attend.

CSCC Team Leadership 2023-24

Spiritual Engagement Team Leaders:
Denise Molinari, Deb Sorgman, Eric Stotts

Congregational Engagement Team Leaders:
Carol Chaffee, Kathleen Mosher, Ginny Young

Property & Finance Team Leaders:
Dave Hanson, John Sharland, Mark Sorgman

Community Engagement Team Leaders:
Krissy Cannizzo, Diane Glass, Terry Reynolds



**Tues, Thu, & Fri, 9am - 1pm
Wed 11am-3pm**

and by appointment

**Please note that the office will be closed
Dec. 21 and Dec. 25-29.**

Venmo!

All types of donations to CSCC are welcome via Venmo. Aim your phone camera below, or use the Venmo app to send your donation to @cscucc-ucc



Did you know that Venmo has fewer fees to the church than Paypal? So if you can't decide which one to use, choose Venmo.



**Bridgewater
Food Pantry**
at Central Square
Congregational Church, UCC
71 Central Square, Bridgewater

**Open to all Bridgewater residents
Thursdays, 10am-1pm and the
first Monday of the month, 6-7:30pm (except holidays)**

The Bridgewater Food Pantry, hosted and supported by CSCC, is open Thursdays, 10am-1pm, and the first Mondays of the month, 6-7:30pm, except holidays. All Bridgewater residents who are in need of food are welcome.

If you are a Bridgewater resident unable to come to the food pantry, but are in need of food, please contact the church office by email or phone (below) and arrangements will be made for you.



CARING FOR OUR COMMUNITY

Do you need a meal, a call, 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

Deacons

Deb Sorgman

— debsorgman@gmail.com

Jae Stotts — jaestotts@gmail.com

Savannah Wells, Jr. Deacon

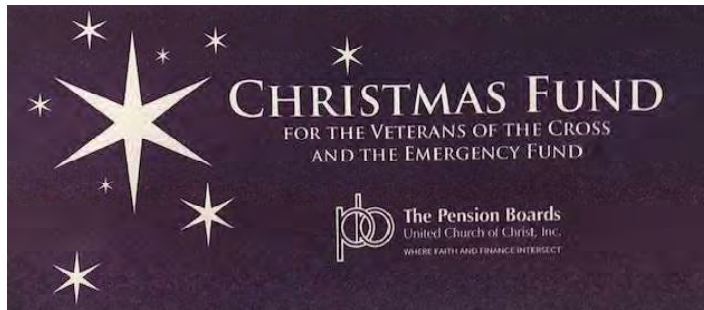
CSCC Care Team

Carol Chaffee

Bev Mitchell

Rev. Beth Stotts

Nina Gabel-Jorgensen



Dec. 17 & 24

The Christmas fund offering is often received on the fourth Sunday of Advent, which falls on December 24 this year. We, the Community Engagement Team, have decided to receive the offering on two Sundays, December 17 and the 24. Donations may also be made on our website, or via Venmo (specify "Christmas fund").

Who are the Veterans of the Cross? A first guess might be the retired clergy, and that would be a resounding yes. They have been there with us when we need them the most — it could be for a wedding, a death, or times when we are struggling. It also benefits some lay people who have been loyal and helpful to the people of the church and need some assistance. This offering could also benefit someone who needs assistance for a brief time. All are Veterans of the Cross.

Won't you give generously to this offering during the Christmas season? Think of these people who have given generously to us through the years.

The Community Engagement Team



Coins for Kids Church :

Sunday, Dec. 3

Don't forget to bring your spare change for the Coins for Kids Church

collection! This helps to pay for Kids Church supplies and teaching materials.



Open to the public! All are welcome!

Community Breakfast

**Join us for breakfast on
Sunday, Dec. 17**

(Note, there is no breakfast on Dec. 3 due to Christmas on the Common)

CSCC Junior Choir 2023-24!

**Rehearsals at 9:20am:
Dec. 3 - Dec. 10 - Dec. 17**

**Performance at 10am:
December 17**



Holiday Open Mic

CSCC and The Music Loft are thrilled to announce that CSCC will be hosting a Holiday Open Mic on **December 8th** at 6pm! We encourage musicians and performers of all ages to share their favorite holiday song. Individuals and groups can sign up to perform starting Nov.1 and **signups will be closed on December 3rd** after Christmas on the Common. Please contact the church office at 508-697-6016 or The Music Loft to sign up. We will need to know the performer's name, email, phone number, song selection (or up to three selections) and what instrument/s you'll be playing.

This Holiday Open Mic will be free, livestreamed, and available on BTV so that those who are homebound can enjoy this community holiday event. Following the Open Mic, THE GRINCH will be visiting and we'll have cookies and hot cocoa for all to share. Let's celebrate the season together!



Christmas Season Poinsettias: Orders due Dec. 3

Purchase a poinsettia to remember a loved one and to decorate our sanctuary for the Advent season. As of the writing of this article, there are still many unknowns about this year's poinsettia ordering (like the price) but we wanted to get the word out that we will be going forward with our poinsettia tradition.

If you have any questions, or you want to place an order via email (see email address below), please be sure to include your name, phone number and your memorial message.

The flowers will decorate the sanctuary during the Advent season, through Christmas eve, and then you are welcome to take it home if you wish.

*Congregational Engagement Team Member,
Carol Chaffee, galchaffee@gmail.com*



Advent & Christmas at CSCC

Sunday, Dec. 3 - First Sunday of Advent - "Hope"

Jr. Choir Rehearsal • 10am Communion Sunday Worship, online and in-person • Kids Church • Coins for Kids Church Collection • Poinsettia orders due!

Friday, Dec. 8

Holiday Open Mic night, 6pm

Sunday, Dec. 10 - Second Sunday of Advent - "Peace"

Jr. Choir Rehearsal • 10am Sunday Worship, online and in-person • Kids Church

Saturday, Dec. 16

Caroling Party at 10 Heritage Circle, 4-6pm

Sunday, Dec. 17 - Third Sunday of Advent - "Joy"

Breakfast • Jr. Choir Rehearsal • Music Sunday • 10am Sunday Worship, online and in-person • Kids Church • Jr. Choir Performance • Christmas Fund Collection • All-ages book study discussion at 11:30am • Christmas cookie collection 3pm

Sunday, Dec. 24 - Fourth Sunday of Advent - "Love" & Christmas Eve

10am Advent & Christmas Eve Worship, online and in-person • Kids Church • Christmas Fund Collection • 10pm Candlelight Service

Sunday, Dec. 31

10am Hymn Sing Sunday worship, online and in-person

Sunday, Jan. 7 - Epiphany

10am Communion Sunday Worship, online and in-person • Kids Church • Coins for Kids Church Collection



Advent is Here!

Advent is here and we have an exciting month of activities planned! The Kids Church theme this Advent is "Season of Giving" so in addition to exploring the story of Jesus's birth, we'll be working on various projects that are representations of giving in various forms. Giving to our community, giving to our church space, giving to nature, and giving to those in need.

We will have a Kids Church Advent wreath on our altar, and we'll be lighting Advent candles that will be accompanied by liturgy written by Reverend Beth. We will also have a Christmas tree! With that in mind, earlier this year we were gifted a number of undecorated ornaments by John Schuller that were handmade by Lin Schuller before her passing. So as part of our many activities this Advent season, we will be decorating them and using them to adorn our tree. So if you

get a chance after worship, come back and take a look at our tree that will be dressed with the combination of Lin's craft and the kids' art!

There are so many more things that we're doing this month that just won't fit inside a newsletter article. So if you have a child that hasn't been coming to Kids Church, there's no better time than now for them to join us and get involved!

Director of Kids Church, Eric Stotts



Ashley helping some of the younger kids (Annemarie, Josephine, and Sammy) in Kids Church.



What is a Christmas tree without presents!? As part of our Season of Giving theme this year, the Kids Church of Central Square Congregational Church, United Church of Christ is taking donations for the Cardinal Cushing School. Cardinal Cushing is a school that "...provide(s) an environment that facilitates healthy emotional, personal, and physical growth for all students with mild to severe special needs including autism, intellectual disabilities, and other multiple challenges."

This Advent season we're asking for donations of items for their school store. But this is no ordinary store. Students earn 'paw prints' daily for good behavior and accomplishing

goals in school. They then trade those paw prints in for an item at the school store at the end of the week, or bank them for a larger item the next week.

Items should be no more than \$5 and preferably (although not required) picked out by kids with the thinking being, if your child would want it, other kids would too. It also doesn't necessarily have to be a toy. Coloring books, colored pencils, markers, games, puzzles... Like all kids, their interests and tastes vary widely. From My Little Pony, to Marvel movies, to Peanuts characters; if it's under \$5 and something that a youth under 18 would enjoy, then it's perfect!

Items don't need to be wrapped and can be turned in at the church office or put underneath the Christmas tree that will be in the Kids Church room behind the Sanctuary for the entire month of December. Thank you in advance for your help and generosity, and may you and your loved ones have a blessed Christmas and holiday season!

Director of Kids Church, Eric Stotts

Women's Guild & Fellowship

Women's Guild and Fellowship will have their annual Christmas communion service with Rev. Beth on Wednesday, December 6, in the sanctuary. It is a wonderful time of friendship and quiet reflection of the season. The service will start at 6:30 and then we will gather in Fellowship Hall for refreshments and our meeting. All women from the church are welcome; and members can always bring a friend! We will also be filling boxes and mailing packages to the troops on December 10 — so remember to bring some items to the meeting. If anyone would like to write a note to a service member you could do that ahead of time and bring it to the meeting as well.

Your Help is Needed: Boxes for the Troops

The Women's Guild and Fellowship is collecting items for our active-duty military troops. These items will be collected until December 10th when we will pack them up and send them to two different companies serving overseas. There is a labeled bag located in the church entranceway where you can deposit your items. Thank you in advance for your generosity and support. Here is the list of items requested by the troops- small sizes please:

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Flavor packets for water | Gum |
| Deodorant | Cocoa packets |
| Toothpaste and brushes | Beef jerky |
| Chapstick | Slim Jim |
| Coffee pods | Health bars |
| Tea | Candy |
| Women's hygiene products | Nuts |
| Baby wipes | Sunflower seeds |
| Black/white socks | Word search and Crossword Puzzle books |



Homemade Christmas Cookies Needed!

We are once again providing personal bags of homemade holiday cookies to those less fortunate. If you are able, please bake a dozen or two of your favorite cookies and bring them to the church on Dec. 17.

Because all the cookies will be mixed up and packaged in groups of 3-4, **please avoid the use of nuts**. Also please **no cookies that are too sticky or creamy** on top.

Cookies will be delivered to the Brockton homeless that week.

Dropoff date: Sunday, Dec. 17, 3-3:30pm
Or bring them to worship that morning

December Book Study

Discussion: Sunday, Dec. 17, 11:30am

When I think of the holiday season, I think of stories. The story of the Holy Family. The story of Charlie Brown and Linus discovering the true meaning of Christmas. The stories that the Hallmark channel sucks me into each year. The stories of The Grinch, Buddy the Elf, Clark W. Griswold. December is filled with stories.

One iconic story is "A Christmas Carol" by Charles Dickens. I've seen many adaptations of this story. The one with Bill Murray, the one with George C. Scott, the one with Jim Carrey, the Muppet one with Michael Caine, and of course, Mickey's Christmas Carol.



One thing I realized this year is that I've never actually READ THE BOOK! In talking with a few members of our community, we all expressed interest in reading it together this year.

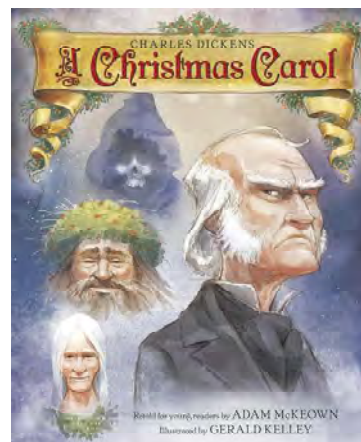
So... our December Book Study will be Charles Dickens "A Christmas Carol".

And this is a book study for all ages! There are kid-friendly versions of the book, too. If your youth want to participate, and you need a recommendation for an age-appropriate version, put 0553511998 into the search bar in Amazon, and you'll find a lovely

illustrated version. And then bring the kids along to the discussion!

We'll meet up on **Sunday, December 17th at 11:30am** in the Fireplace Room to discuss the story over coffee and hot cocoa. All ages are welcome to come discuss this tale of transformation and grace!

Rev. Beth





December is finally here! If you haven't finished your Christmas shopping, stop in to the Central Closet Thrift Shop. You might just be pleasantly surprised. We have slightly used items for gifts and holiday decorations of all kinds. Our gift certificates are still available—\$10 gift cards for just \$9.

December's special sale day will be on December 23rd.

With a purchase you will get to pick one sale item for free. The shop will be closed the week of Christmas (Dec. 27 & 30) and will reopen on January 3rd.

We will be celebrating our 1st anniversary in January. The first year has been amazing! Thanks to all for helping with your donations and support since day 1. We will be celebrating all month, please come in and help us celebrate.

We are still accepting goods during the month of December. Keep us in mind as you decorate your homes this year. Those extra decorations might be just what someone is looking for.

Merry Christmas from all of us - Connie Chandler, Jane O'Connell, Lynn Pietras & Gail Wright

A-Caroling We Go!

Saturday, December 16,
4-6 PM, we will host a Caroling Party in the community room at 10 Heritage Circle in Bridgewater.

We will serve hot chocolate and cookies to the residents and sing carols with them, spreading holiday cheer!

Please email Carol Chaffee (galchaffee@gmail.com) or Marci Langevin (marcilynn.gaudette@gmail.com) if you would like to participate. We will communicate details via email once we have an idea of how many people are interested in participating.

Carol and Marci



Sunday, December 3, 12-4

When the month of December arrives, it brings the cold crisp weather and you know that winter is on the way. It is the season for familiar carols, tasty food, Christmas shopping, and so much more. The Bridgewater Common is all decorated and so is our church with the hanging of the greens. One event that begins this wonderful time of the year is Christmas on the Common. As you look up and down the road in the center of town you will see all kinds of vendors selling food for your lunch or tasty treats for afterwards. Check out the Bluestone parking lot for more vendors. There will be booths with items to purchase as well as crafts to make. If your child wishes they can take a pony ride around the common. The parade will come marching down the road and end at the Common. Santa will arrive so your children can have their picture taken with him to save for a future memory.

Our church doors will be open for all to come inside and warm up while listening to carolers sing on our stairs, as well as to use our restrooms if needed. In the Fellowship Hall, tables full of our homemade Christmas ornaments and crafts will be available to purchase for Christmas decorations and gifts. The jewelry tables will be full of all kinds of trinkets for children and adults...necklaces, bracelets, rings, watches and more. So, come and bring your whole family to enjoy an afternoon of **Christmas on the Common, Sunday, December 3rd, from 12:00 until 4:00.** We will see you there.

Merry Christmas from The Community Engagement Team & The Church Fair Crafters

PS - Please take note of a few Christmas on the Common logistics:

- The streets along the common will have limited to no access between the hours of 10am and 4:30pm. (Be aware for worship that morning.)
- There won't be vendors in our Fellowship Hall, but shop our crafters and jewelry table inside the Hall.
- CSCC will be open all afternoon for guests to use our bathrooms as needed.



What is a cow's favorite holiday? MOO-year's Day! January is right around the corner which means HEIFER! It's Heifer season at Central Square Church and I'm so excited to celebrate all month with the children and families!

During Kids Church in January, children will explore the Heifer International program, an amazing organization with the mission to end hunger and poverty in a sustainable way by supporting and investing in local farmers and their communities. The curriculum is based on sharing, kindness, and treating others with compassion...all the values we embrace at our church! Then on February 11, we will celebrate with our Living Gift Market!

It's an amazing program but we need your help! We need adults each week to lead the lessons. The curriculum and activities are already planned or you are welcome to get creative and plan your own activities. No experience needed! If you could help, or if you have questions, please contact me at maximus202@comcast.net.

Krissy Cannizzo



Warmth in Cold Places

As the weather begins to get colder, the need to help others stay warm in our community grows. Please consider donating new or very gently used hats, gloves, socks, sweat shirts, base layers and coats (winter items only). Cash donations are greatly appreciated and will go towards the purchase of needed items. Checks can be mailed to the church noting "Warmth in Cold Places", or donate through our website or Venmo.

Please place all donated items in the receptacle container marked "Warmth in Cold Places" found in the shelving unit by the side entrance of our church. The Community Engagement Team will be collecting until further notice. Should you have any questions, please contact Krissy Cannizzo, maximus202@comcast.net.

Care Team Corner

We are Partners in Prayer, and we are Persistent in Prayer

The Power of Persistence in Prayer

by Mike Bennett

Luke 18:1, 7-8

Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart. ... "And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?"

Jesus Christ used the parable of the persistent widow (verses 2-6) to emphasize the need to be tenacious and persevering in prayer. If even the unjust judge of the parable would eventually avenge the widow because of her persistence, how much more will our just and loving God hear and respond to us!


God does not delay because He doesn't care or because He is cruel and unjust. But sometimes He does delay, and through those delays we must learn patience, persistence and faith—faith that He does hear and does have our best interests in mind, even if we can't understand why He doesn't respond immediately.

Consider how Daniel fasted and prayed three weeks for an answer, and finally God's angel told him, "Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand, and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard; and I have come because of your words. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days" (Daniel 10:12-13).

This is all recorded that we might always pray and "not lose heart." We may not know what is going on behind the scenes, but we can have faith that God has our eternal best interests at heart.

Submitted by Carol Chaffee, Care Team

Note: There are no Cabinet minutes in this issue of Steeple Sounds, as the November meeting took place after the issue was finalized. The minutes will appear in the January issue.



**BRIDGEWATER STATE UNIVERSITY
ALUMNI CHAMBER CHOIR**

Winter Magic concert

**SUNDAY
DECEMBER 10TH, 2023
3:00 PM**

**CENTRAL SQUARE
CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
BRIDGEWATER, MA**

Charles A. Dillingham, Director
Derelyn Baker Kahler, Accompanist

Tickets at the door
\$15 general | \$10 Seniors/Students | Children under 10 free
Handicapped Accessible | for info 508.245.9116
<https://alumni.bridgew.edu/get-involved/alumni-chamber-choir>
alumnichamberchoirbsu@gmail.com

The BSU Alumni Chamber Choir is a nonprofit organization

Tickets at the door
\$15 general | \$10 Seniors/Students
Children under 10 free
Handicapped Accessible | for info 508.245.9116
<https://alumni.bridgew.edu/get-involved/alumni-chamber-choir>
alumnichamberchoirbsu@gmail.com



It's That Time of Year Again: Inclement Weather Policy

The Senior Deacon in conjunction with the Senior Pastor will discuss the need and reason for cancellation of worship service. Upon the decision to cancel worship service, the following procedures shall be put into effect:

1. The Pastor will notify the Minister of Music no later than 6am the Sunday morning of the service in question. The Minister of Music will in turn notify the choir.
2. The Pastor will notify the Sexton and other staff, including the Office Manager and the Communications Coordinator.
3. The Office Manager will update the office answering machine with the cancellation announcement and notify the appropriate television media.
4. The Communications Coordinator will send a general church email and a text notification, and will update the website and Facebook page.
5. The Senior Deacon will notify the other members of the Spiritual Engagement Team.

The main factors used to decide a cancellation are:

1. Excessive amounts of snow
2. Parking availability (or parking ban)
3. Damage to the church
4. State of Emergency
5. Power Outage

To ensure you receive timely notification of weather issues, be sure you are on our email list as well as our cell phone text message notification list. Contact the office with questions.



The Fair was a Success!

Thanks to the many hands that make the fair what it is, as well as to the amazing weather we had on the day of the fair, the fair brought in over \$7,300! This figure includes the turkey dinner takeout event, and the extremely generous donation by an angel of the church who paid the Boston Tavern bill on the church's behalf. We are truly blessed.

Your Fair Committee: Denise Molinari, Carla Jackson, and Diane Sheibley

To find this Lectionary online, visit www.sneucc.org/Lectionary



Southern New England Conference
United Church of Christ
Living the Love & Justice of Jesus

Daily Lectionary Scripture References – December 2023 (Year B)

Fri., Dec. 1
 Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19
 Zechariah 14:1-9
 1 Thessalonians 4:1-18

Sat., Dec. 2
 Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19
 Micah 2:1-13
 Matthew 24:15-31

Sun., Dec. 3
First Sunday of Advent
 Isaiah 64:1-9
 Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19
 1 Corinthians 1:3-9
 Mark 13:24-37

Mon., Dec. 4
 Psalm 79
 Micah 4:1-5
 Revelation 15:1-8

Tues., Dec. 5
 Psalm 79
 Micah 4:6-13
 Revelation 18:1-10

Wed., Dec. 6
 Psalm 79
 Micah 5:1-5a
 Luke 21:34-38

Thurs., Dec. 7
 Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13
 Hosea 6:1-6
 1 Thessalonians 1:2-10

Fri., Dec. 8
 Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13
 Jeremiah 1:4-10
 Acts 11:19-26

Sat., Dec. 9
 Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13
 Ezekiel 36:24-28
 Mark 11:27-33

Sun., Dec. 10
Second Sunday of Advent
 Isaiah 40:1-11
 Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13
 2 Peter 3:8-15a
 Mark 1:1-8

Mon., Dec. 11
 Psalm 27
 Isaiah 26:7-15
 Acts 2:37-42

Tues., Dec. 12
 Psalm 27
 Isaiah 4:2-6
 Acts 11:1-18

Wed., Dec. 13
 Psalm 27
 Malachi 2:10—3:1
 Luke 1:5-17

Thurs., Dec. 14
 Psalm 126
 Habakkuk 2:1-5
 Philippians 3:7-11

Fri., Dec. 15
 Psalm 126
 Habakkuk 3:2-6
 Philippians 3:12-16

Sat., Dec. 16
 Psalm 126
 Habakkuk 3:13-19
 Matthew 21:28-32

Sun., Dec. 17
 Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11
 Psalm 126 or Luke 1:46b-55
 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24
 John 1:6-8, 19-28

Mon., Dec. 18
 Psalm 125
 1 Kings 18:1-18
 Ephesians 6:10-17

Tues., Dec. 19
 Psalm 125
 2 Kings 2:9-22
 Acts 3:17—4:4

Wed., Dec. 20
 Psalm 125
 Malachi 3:16—4:6
 Mark 9:9-13

Thurs., Dec. 21
 Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26
 2 Samuel 6:1-11
 Hebrews 1:1-4

Fri., Dec. 22
 Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26
 2 Samuel 6:12-19
 Hebrews 1:5-14

Sat., Dec. 23
 Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26
 Judges 13:2-24
 John 7:40-52

Sun., Dec. 24
Christmas Eve
Fourth Sunday of Advent
 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16
 Luke 1:46b-55 or Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26
 Romans 16:25-27
 Luke 1:26-38

Mon., Dec. 25
Christmas Day
 Isaiah 62:6-12
 Psalm 97
 Titus 3:4-7
 Luke 2:[1-7] 8-20

Tues., Dec. 26
 Psalm 148
 Jeremiah 26:1-9, 12-15
 Acts 6:8-15; 7:51-60

Wed., Dec. 27
 Psalm 148
 Exodus 33:18-23
 1 John 1:1-9

Thurs., Dec. 28
 Psalm 148
 Jeremiah 31:15-17
 Matthew 2:13-18

Fri., Dec. 29
 Psalm 148
 Isaiah 49:5-15
 Matthew 12:46-50

Sat., Dec. 30
 Psalm 148
 Proverbs 9:1-12
 2 Peter 3:8-13

Sun., Dec. 31
 Isaiah 61:10—62:3
 Psalm 148
 Galatians 4:4-7
 Luke 2:22-40

DECEMBER 2023

| SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY |
|--|--|--|---|--|---|---|
| <i>*Unless otherwise noted, worship services are both online and in-person</i> | | | | | | |
| 1st Sunday of Advent 8:30am Sr. Choir 9:20am Jr. Choir 10am Communion Worship*, Kids Church 12-4 Christmas on the Common 5pm Girl Scouts #82777 6pm Girl Scouts #69063 7:30pm AA Meeting | 4 5:30pm Girl Scouts #62143 6-7:30pm Food Pantry Open | 5 9-1 Church office open 6pm LGBTQ+ Peer Support & Social (HS age) 7pm Women's NA 6pm LGBTQ+ Peer Support & Social (18+) | 6 10-1 Thrift Shop open 11-3 Church office open 6:30pm Women's Guild & Fellowship 7:30pm BSU Alumni Choir | 7 9-1 Church office open 10-1 Food Pantry Open 5pm Girl Scouts #64997 & 62521 7pm Al-Anon | 8 9-1 Church office open 6pm Holiday Open Mic at CSCC | 9 10-1 Thrift Shop open 2pm Pedi-Pal Potluck 6pm Be: Queer Open Mic Night |
| 2nd Sunday of Advent 8:30am Sr. Choir 9:20am Jr. Choir 10 Worship*, Kids Church 11:30 Advent Book Study 3pm BSU Alumni Concert 5pm Girl Scouts #82722 7:30pm AA Meeting | 11 4:30pm Girl Scouts #64998 | 12 9-1 Church office open 6pm LGBTQ+ Peer Support & Social (HS age) 7pm Women's NA 6pm LGBTQ+ Peer Support & Social (18+) | 13 10-1 Thrift Shop open 11-3 Church office open 5pm Girl Scouts Holiday Craft Exchange 6pm Girl Scouts #84495 7pm Prop & Finance Mtg | 14 9-1 Church office open 10-1 Food Pantry Open 5:30pm Girl Scouts #70833 7pm Al-Anon | 15 Steeple Sounds Submissions Due 9-1 Church office open 7pm Writers Group | 16 10-1 Thrift Shop open 4-6pm Caroling Party at 10 Heritage Circle |
| Music Sunday 3rd Sunday of Advent 8:30am Sr. Choir 9-10 Breakfast 10 Worship*, Kids Church, Jr Choir Performance 3pm Cookie Collection 5pm Girl Scouts #82722 6pm Girl Scouts #69063 7:30pm AA Meeting | 18 5:30 Girl Scouts #62143 | 19 9-1 Church office open 6pm LGBTQ+ Peer Support & Social (HS age) 6pm BALC 7pm Women's NA 6pm LGBTQ+ Peer Support & Social (18+) | 20 10-1 Thrift Shop open 11-3 Church office open | 21 Church office CLOSED 10-1 Food Pantry Open 5pm Girl Scouts #64997 & 62521 7pm Al-Anon | 22 9-1 Church office open | 23 10-1 Thrift Shop open |
| Christmas Fund 4th Sunday of Advent 8:30am Sr. Choir 10 Advent/Christmas Eve Worship*, Kids Church 7:30pm AA Meeting 10pm Candlelight Service | 25 Christmas Day Office closed | 26 Church office closed 6pm LGBTQ+ Peer Support & Social (HS age) 7pm Women's NA 6pm LGBTQ+ Peer Support & Social (18+) | 27 Church office closed | 28 Church office closed 10-1 Food Pantry Open 5:30pm Girl Scouts 70833 7pm Al-Anon | 29 Church office closed | 30 |
| Hymn Sing Sunday 10:00 Worship 7:30pm AA Meeting | 31 | | | | | |

Treasurer's Report
October 31, 2023
Fiscal Year July 2023 - June 2024

| | YTD Actual | YTD Budget | Difference | Annual Budget |
|------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|------------|------------------|
| Income | | | | |
| Regular Pledges | 43,416 | 42,123 | 1,292 | 125,000 |
| Unpledged Offerings | 2,841 | 3,370 | (529) | 10,000 |
| Plate Offering | 120 | 842 | (722) | 2,500 |
| Kid's Church | 170 | 101 | 69 | 300 |
| Total · Pledges / Offerings | 46,547 | 46,437 | 110 | 137,800 |
| Special Collections | | | | |
| MACUCC Fellowship Dues | 286 | 674 | (388) | 2,000 |
| Total · Special Collections | 286 | 674 | (388) | 2,000 |
| Fundraisers/Events Revenue | | | | |
| Breakfasts | (27) | 0 | (27) | 0 |
| Church Fair | 40 | 2,696 | (2,656) | 8,000 |
| Central Closet Thrift Shop | 5,109 | 4,381 | 728 | 13,000 |
| Concert/Special Event | (83) | 0 | (83) | 0 |
| Misc Fundraisers | | 1,685 | (1,685) | 5,000 |
| Total · Fundraisers/Events Revenue | 5,039 | 8,762 | (3,723) | 26,000 |
| Facility Usage Income | | | | |
| Non Profit Bldg Use | 1,847 | 1,011 | 836 | 3,000 |
| Private Bldg Use | 300 | 168 | 132 | 500 |
| Wedding Rentals | 0 | 1,685 | (1,685) | 5,000 |
| Food Pantry support | 400 | 404 | (4) | 1,200 |
| Total · Facility Usage Income | 2,547 | 3,269 | (722) | 9,700 |
| Miscellaneous Income | 72 | 337 | (265) | 1,000 |
| Total Income | 54,491 | 59,478 | (4,988) | 176,500 |
| Expenses | | | | |
| Total · Senior Minister Expenses | 37,208 | 39,175 | 1,968 | 116,252 |
| Total · Support Staff Expenses | 13,427 | 16,841 | 3,413 | 49,974 |
| Total · Office Expenses | 4,046 | 2,999 | (1,047) | 8,900 |
| Total · Church Building Costs | 7,602 | 11,491 | 3,890 | 34,100 |
| Teams | | | | |
| Congregational Engagement | 45 | 312 | 266 | 925 |
| Spiritual Engagement | 445 | 312 | (133) | 925 |
| Community Engagement | 530 | 312 | (218) | 925 |
| Property and Finance | 242 | 312 | 70 | 925 |
| Community Engagement Reserve | 651 | 632 | (19) | 1,875 |
| Total · Teams | 1,913 | 1,879 | (34) | 5,575 |
| MACUCC Fellowship Dues | 0 | 674 | 674 | 2,000 |
| Pilgrim Assn Fellowship Dues | 0 | 67 | 67 | 200 |
| Miscellaneous Expenses | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total Expenses | 64,196 | 73,126 | 8,931 | 217,001 |
| Net income (loss) | (9,705) | (13,648) | 3,943 | (40,501) |
| Transfer from Investments | 10,000 | 13,648 | 3,648 | 40,501 |
| | 295 | 0 | | 0 |

Treasurer's Report
October 31, 2023
Fiscal Year July 2023 - June 2024

| | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Cash balances | | |
| Operating account | | 3,355 |
| Money Market | | 23,152 |
| Minister's Discretionary account | | 702 |
| Outreach account | | 1,239 |
| Capital Campaign account | | 2,539 |
| PayPal account | | 232 |
| Venmo account | | 88 |
| Total cash balances | | <u>31,308</u> |
| Endowments investment fund | | |
| Protected principal | | 135,513 |
| Unrestricted funds, beginning | 39,564 | |
| Deposits (withdrawals) | | |
| Gain (loss) for month | <u>(4,066)</u> | |
| Unrestricted funds, ending | | <u>35,498</u> |
| Total value 10/31/2023 | | 171,011 |
| Parsonage investment fund | | |
| Beginning balance | 48,601 | |
| Deposits (withdrawals) | 0 | |
| Gain (loss) for month | <u>(1,078)</u> | |
| Total value 10/31/2023 | | <u>47,522</u> |
| Total investments 10/31/2023 | | <u>218,534</u> |

| | |
|--|----------------|
| Food Pantry account balance September 30, 2023 | 9,616 |
| Donations | 459 |
| Expenses | <u>(1,427)</u> |
| Food Pantry account balance October 31, 2023 | <u>8,649</u> |

| Giving Comparison | | | | | | |
|-------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| | 2021 Month | 2022 Month | 2023 Month | 2021 YTD | 2022 YTD | 2023 YTD |
| Jan. | 13,532.33 | 10,029.82 | 10,307.95 | 13,532.33 | 10,029.82 | 10,307.95 |
| Feb. | 11,754.66 | 6,562.91 | 9,713.95 | 25,286.99 | 16,592.73 | 20,021.90 |
| March | 11,538.00 | 13,355.24 | 9,535.31 | 36,824.99 | 29,947.97 | 29,557.21 |
| April | 13,129.33 | 11,808.31 | 15,149.70 | 49,954.32 | 41,756.28 | 44,706.91 |
| May | 11,279.57 | 14,476.24 | 21,938.88 | 61,233.89 | 56,232.52 | 66,645.79 |
| June | 13,469.24 | 11,304.13 | 8,696.40 | 74,703.13 | 67,536.65 | 75,342.19 |
| July | 13,048.91 | 16,505.70 | 15,290.21 | 87,752.04 | 84,042.35 | 90,632.40 |
| Aug. | 10,053.72 | 9,586.37 | 8,061.22 | 97,805.76 | 93,628.72 | 98,693.62 |
| Sept. | 10,624.57 | 9,379.22 | 10,587.06 | 108,430.33 | 103,007.94 | 109,280.68 |
| Oct. | 15,581.54 | 15,615.55 | 12,608.01 | 124,011.87 | 118,623.49 | 121,888.69 |
| Nov. | 12,400.72 | 9,164.75 | | 136,412.59 | 127,788.24 | |
| Dec. | 10,377.35 | 15,622.72 | | 146,789.94 | 143,410.96 | |



1821-2021

Central Square Congregational Church, UCC

71 Central Square
Bridgewater, MA 02324 • www.cscucc.org



Church Administration

Pastor: Rev. Elizabeth Stotts, csccpastor@hotmail.com

Office Manager: Jennifer Foronjy, office@cscucc.org

Sexton: Rich Sullivan

Minister of Music: Julia Scott Carey, juliascottcarey@gmail.com

Director of Video Evangelism: Paul Holmes

Treasurer: David Sheibley, treasurer@cscucc.org

Office telephone: (508) 697-6016

Facebook pages: facebook.com/cscuccbridgewaterma (main page),
facebook.com/groups/801550253194149 (youth page)

Instagram: [@centralsquarechurch](https://instagram.com/centralsquarechurch)

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

Amazon Shopping!

Shopping on Amazon and feeling generous? Check out the CSCC Wish List, and drop an item in your cart for us! Visit www.cscucc.org/giving for the link to our Amazon wish list.

Central Square Congregational Church, UCC
71 Central Square
Bridgewater, MA 02324

FIRST CLASS MAIL