



Steeple Sounds

The monthly newsletter of Central Square Congregational Church, UCC
December 2024

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*

As we enter the season of Advent, a time of anticipation, of expectant waiting, this year I want us to also look at Advent as a time of Growth. The four weeks leading up to Christmas are an opportunity to prepare our hearts for the coming of Christ in a deeper way, nurturing both our faith and our relationships with God. This is a season for spiritual growth through the Advent themes of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love. It's also an invitation to make more room for the Holy Spirit in our lives through prayer, scripture, service, and community.

1. Growth Through Prayer: Advent offers us a unique opportunity to grow in our relationship with God through prayer. Whether through quiet moments of reflection or more intentional prayer times, we are called to seek God's presence in new and meaningful ways. Consider, this Advent, setting aside time each day to pray, asking God to help you grow in love.

2. Growth Through Scripture: The Advent season invites us to dive deeper into scripture. Reading and reflecting on the prophetic passages that point to Christ's coming can strengthen our faith and remind us of God's promises. You might consider reading an Advent devotional or starting a new Bible study with friends or family to encourage growth together.

3. Growth Through Service: Advent is also a time to grow in our love for others. Just as Jesus came to serve, we are called to serve others too. This could mean volunteering, reaching out to someone in need, or finding other ways to bless those around us. Serving others not only helps them but also strengthens our own faith as we live out the love of Jesus.

4. Growth Through Community: Advent is a season that brings us together as a church family. This is a time for fellowship, for encouraging one another in our spiritual journeys, and for growing together in Christ. Attend Advent services, join in activities, and share in the joy of preparing for Christ's birth together.

As we journey through this sacred season, let's remember that Advent is about more than just waiting; it's about growing. We grow in our faith, in our love for others, and in our relationship with God. May this Advent be a season of deep spiritual renewal, where we prepare our hearts to receive Christ anew.

Let us commit to growing in faith this Advent season, making room for the light of Christ to shine in our lives and in our world.

In Christ's Love,
Rev. Beth

Growing
Together
in Faith



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.



Tues, 11am - 3pm
Wed, Thu, Fri, 9am-1pm
and by appointment

Please note that the office will be open only limited hours on Dec. 18, and closed Dec. 25-27, and Dec. 31-Jan. 1.

Next Cabinet meeting is Wednesday, December 18, 7pm

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 2024-25

Spiritual/Congregational Engagement Team
Leaders:

Carol Chaffee, Linda Chipman,
Deb Sorgman, Eric Stotts

Property & Finance Team Leaders:
Dave Hanson, John Sharland, [one open seat]

Community Engagement Team Leaders:
Heather Ciaramitaro, Diane Glass, Terry Reynolds

CSCC Junior Choir 2023-24!

Rehearsals at 9:20am:
Dec. 8 - Dec. 15 - Dec. 22

Performance at 10am:
December 22



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

**Open Thursdays, 10am-1pm and the
first Monday of the month, 6-7:30pm**

www.cscucc.org/food-pantry

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
Anne Malmquist - amalmquist@comcast.net
Cristi Ciaramitaro
Savannah Wells, Jr. Deacon

CSCC Care Team
Carol Chaffee
Bev Mitchell
Rev. Beth Stotts
Nina Gabel-Jorgensen



The Furnace is Funded!

Thanks to all of your incredible generosity, we raised all the money needed for our new furnace! Thank you, thank you, thank you.



Warmth in Cold Places

Every year we support the homeless in Taunton with warm clothing for the cold winter months. **We are now accepting donations.** Please check your closets for gently used WARM items and/or consider shopping at Ocean State! Items needed: jackets, hooded sweatshirts (size L or XL), long underwear, socks, hats, and gloves.

Distribution will take place December 16, so please bring your items as soon as you are able, and **no later than December 15.**

Thank you from the Community Engagement Team.



December after-worship coffee hour/fellowship time will be held on the following Sundays: the 8th, the 22nd, and the 29th. Volunteers are needed to help with set up, serving, and clean up. This can be accomplished very quickly with 2 to 4 volunteers. Please consider helping out on one of the dates. Contact the church office or Connie Chandler at 508-697-3405 to volunteer and enjoy some time together after worship. Thank you in advance.

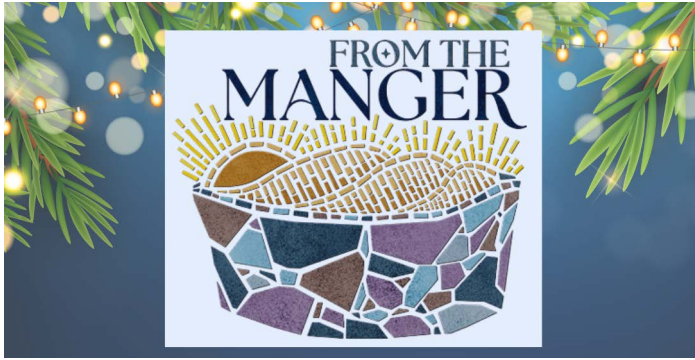
It's Lunch Time!

Potluck Lunch and Fellowship
Third Sunday of the month,
following worship.

Not able to bring anything? No worries.
Please join us anyway.



Next monthly potluck lunch is
Sunday, December 15!



**Advent Sermon Series:
“From the Manger”**

This Advent season we will gather around the birth story in Luke 2, embracing the symbolism of a newborn Jesus, born in a town called “House of Bread.” Beginning Advent with the birth of Jesus invites us into greater reflection on the life-sustaining hope, peace, joy, and love Jesus brings. Together we will notice how the baby born in a bread town continues to feed a hungry world today.

POST THIS ON YOUR FRIDGE!



Advent & Christmas at CSCC

Sunday, Dec. 1 - First Sunday of Advent - “Hope”

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

Sunday, Dec. 8 - Second Sunday of Advent - “Peace”

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

Friday, Dec. 13

Holiday Open Mic night, 6pm

Saturday, Dec. 14

9am Advent Book Study with Rev. Beth: “An Unlikely Advent” by Rachel Billups

Sunday, Dec. 15 - Third Sunday of Advent - “Joy”

Jr. Choir Rehearsal • 10am Sunday Worship, online and in-person • Kids Church • Potluck lunch 11am

Saturday, Dec. 21

Longest Night Service, 7pm

Sunday, Dec. 22 - Fourth Sunday of Advent - “Love”

Jr. Choir Rehearsal • 10am Sunday Worship, online and in-person • Music Sunday • Jr. Choir Performance • Kids Church • Christmas Fund Collection

Tuesday, Dec. 24 - Christmas Eve

5pm Christmas Eve family service, online and in-person
• 10pm Christmas Eve Candlelight worship, online and in-person • Christmas Fund Collection

Sunday, Jan. 5 - Epiphany

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

This month is one of holiday celebrations but it also brings the shortest day and the longest night of the year. This time of year can bring back memories of past pain, sorrow, and grief. We gather together on the longest night to support each other in care and in love.

LONGEST NIGHT SERVICE

DECEMBER 21
7 PM



Poinsettia Memorial Orders

Poinsettia Memorial Orders will be taken on December 1, 8, and 15. If you would like to purchase a Poinsettia and have it decorate our sanctuary on Sunday, December 22 through the Tuesday, December 24 Christmas Eve services, please place your order no later than December 15.

This year, the plants are 6.5" pots, red or white, at \$15.00 each. You may honor a loved one, include a memorial message that will be printed in our worship bulletin and then take your Poinsettia home, or gift it yourself to friend and/or church member. Please print legibly.

Your name: _____

Your Phone #: _____ Your email: _____

Your Memorial message: _____

of plants: RED _____ WHITE _____ Amount owed (@ \$15 each): \$ _____

You can pay with cash, check made payable to CSCC, Venmo, or through our website link, being sure to note what the payment is for. You can email your order to the church office at office@cscucc.com, order online through our website, or fill out this form and hand it in on Sundays.

Thank you,

*The Congregational/Spiritual Engagement Team
Carol Chaffee*

~ I will be available on the 1st, 8th and 15th to take orders and also to answer any questions.

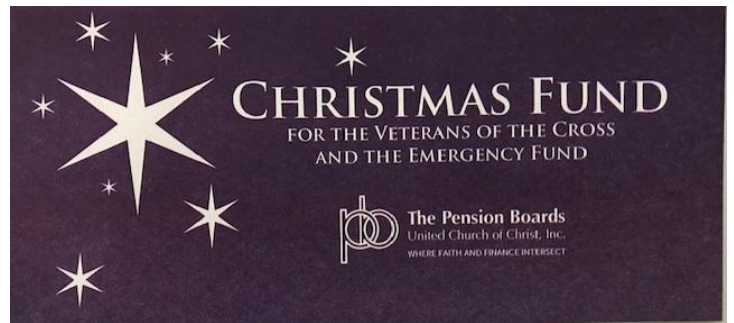


Holiday Open Mic

CSCC and The Music Loft are thrilled to announce that CSCC will once again be hosting a Holiday Open Mic on **December 13th** at 6pm! Perform your favorite holiday song, or just come and watch! Enjoy a festive evening, surrounded by family and friends from the Bridgewater community.

We encourage musicians and performers of all ages to share their talents. Individuals and groups can sign up to perform, and **signups will close on December 3rd**. Please contact The Music Loft at musicloftbridgewater@gmail.com to sign up.

This Holiday Open Mic is free! 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!



December 22 and 24

The Christmas fund offering is often received on the fourth Sunday of Advent, which falls on December 22 this year, as well as Christmas Eve. Donations may also be made on our website (click on "donate to CSCC" and choose "Christmas Fund"), 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

Care Team Corner!

This is one of my favorite Christmas songs/hymns and I discovered it when I was helping the liturgical dancers worship through voice and movement. I have found many versions of it on YouTube. Check it out. It's in our hymnal as "Love Came Down at Christmas," #165.

Born in 1830 in London, Christina Rossetti (1830-1894), the author of *Goblin Market and Other Poems*, is a major Victorian Poet.

Carol Chaffee

Christmastide

Love came down at Christmas,
Love all lovely, Love Divine;
Love was born at Christmas,
Star and Angels gave the sign.

Worship we the Godhead,
Love Incarnate, Love Divine;
Worship we our Jesus:
But wherewith for sacred sign?

Love shall be our token,
Love be yours and love be mine,
Love to God and all men,
Love for plea and gift and sign.

*This poem was published in Verses (E. & J. B. Young, 1893).
This poem is in the public domain.*



Wednesday December 4th at 6:30pm will be the next meeting of the Women's Guild and Fellowship. Rev Beth will lead us in a Christmas service including Communion, followed by refreshments and a business meeting. Bring a friend and relax before the busy holiday season!

Guild members will be supporting our troops and two sober houses in Bridgewater by bringing items to our meeting. Anyone in our church is welcome to contribute items also.

ITEMS REQUESTED BY DEPLOYED TROOPS: (N.B. SMALL SIZES)

- HYGIENE ITEMS (deodorant, toothpaste and brushes, chap stick, female items, q-tips)
- COCOA PACKETS
- SMALL PACKAGES OF CRACKERS (peanut butter, cheese)
- OATMEAL PACKETS
- HEALTH BARS
- BEEF JERKY/SLIM JIMS
- GUM/CANDY (Chocolate is ok)
- WASH CLOTHS
- DECKS OF CARDS
- NUTS/SUNFLOWER SEEDS
- COFFEE PODS
- WORD SEARCH, CROSSWORD PUZZLES, SUDOKU BOOKS

Second, from Material Aids:

We would like to give each resident of the sober houses (20 male and 20 female residents total) a new large bath towel, hand towel, and wash cloth for a Christmas gift! We would like them to be good size and thirsty so they will last through many washings. It would be great if you could each purchase one gift set that is unique, so each person would know theirs from the rest of the residents. You can bring it wrapped or in a gift bag (please indicate if color is a female preference on wrap). If shopping is a concern, please consider a donation so that we can shop for you and achieve our goal of 40 Christmas gifts total!

Thank you,

Diane Glass & Donna O'Neil
CoPresidents



Hi Friends,

All of us at BTV Access Corporation would like to wish you all a wonderful Christmas and Holiday Season. We are very grateful for our volunteers and viewers and we look forward to continued partnership with the Central Square family in the new year.

For those who may be traveling or at home on Christmas Eve, Paul Holmes (our BTV Santa) will be livestreaming both the 5pm Christmas Eve Family service and the 10pm Christmas Eve Candlelight Service, on Facebook and YouTube.

All the best for a Safe and Healthy 2025.

Jeff

Jeff Fowler

BTV Access Corp, <http://btvaccess.com>, 508-697-1833



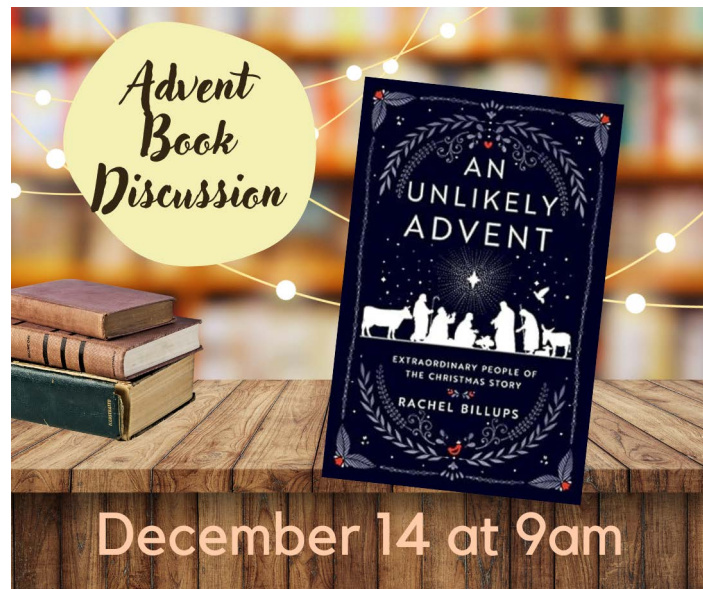
Christmas has arrived at Central Closet Thrift Shop! Come in and have a cup of coffee with us. Check out all the Christmas decor and some slightly used or new items for gifting. \$10 gift certificates are still only \$9.

Note that we have a bonus day, open on Sunday, December 1 during Christmas on the Common (11-4). Christmas week and again on New Year's day, the Central Closet Thrift Shop will be closed for the holidays. We will reopen on January 4th.

We are still accepting new and gently used winter clothing, footwear, pocketbooks, jewelry, household items, glassware, linens, books, and toys. Please limit all donations to 20 items per visit. Donations are accepted during shop hours, Wednesdays and Saturdays, 10 - 1.

Please note, as of December 1st, we can no longer accept any Christmas items. We appreciate all your donations and your understanding. Our limited space only holds so much.

Merry Christmas from all of us - Lynn, Connie, Sandy, Jane, and Gail



Sunday, December 1

Note: earlier start time of 10am

Christmas on the Common is a holiday celebration of vendors, food, activities, and a visit from Santa. It is sponsored by the Bridgewater Business Association, and will take place on Sunday, December 1 this year, in and around the town common. Unlike past years, **the event this year begins at 10am.**

Because the event overlaps with our worship service, our involvement won't begin until after worship ends, about 11am. At that time, our church doors will be open for all to come inside and warm up if needed, as well as to use our restrooms. 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, and the Thrift Shop will be open!

Please take note of important Christmas on the Common logistics:

- The street along our side of the common, as well as Church St., will have limited-to-no access between the hours of 8am and 4:30pm. (Be aware for worship that morning.) As far as we know, there will be parking in the library parking lot, as well as along Church St. But note that because the event begins at 10, there will be many more cars than in prior years already parked in these two places when you arrive for worship.

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



**Coins for Kids Church :
Sunday, Dec. 1**

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.

Advanced Care Planning Drop-In

Led by Rev. Beth Stotts
Certified Five Wishes Facilitator
Bridgewater Senior Center
Dec. 10, 11am-noon

Five Wishes is an end of life planning document combining a living will and health care power of attorney in addition to addressing matters of comfort care and spirituality.

Wishes 1 and 2 are both legal documents. Once signed, they meet the legal requirements for an advance directive. Wishes 3, 4, and 5 address matters of comfort care, spirituality, forgiveness, and final wishes.



~ Plymouth County ~
**SUICIDE PREVENTION
COALITION**

**Plymouth County Suicide Prevention
Coalition along with Central Square
Congregational Church, UCC
presents**

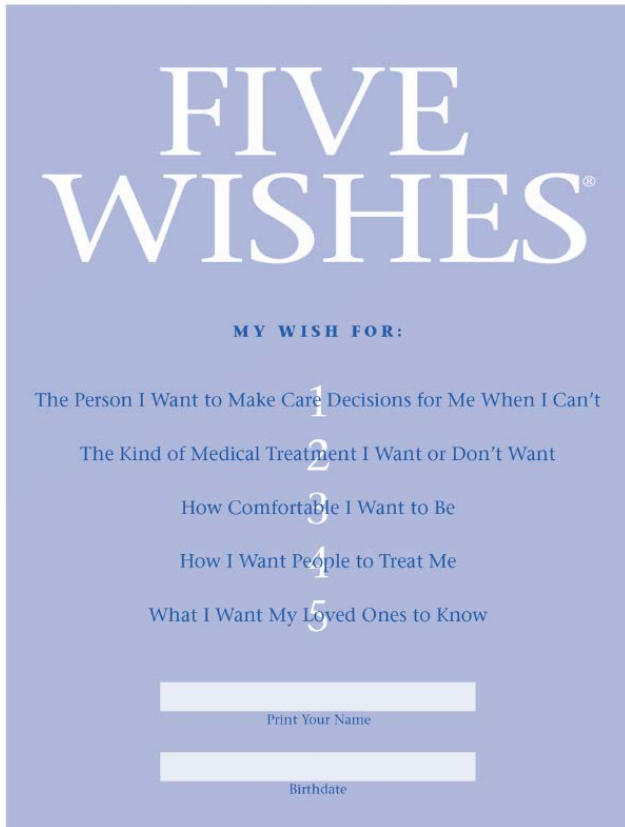
Adult Mental Health First Aid Training
January 11th, 2025
10-5, lunch provided

Thanks to grants, there will be no charge for this training, and CSCC will be providing lunch. This training is open to the public, and is approved for 7.0 Social Work Continuing Education hours for relicensure. (There is a flat fee of \$50 for CEUs.)

For more information on this training session, visit www.cscucc.org/MHFA. For more information on mental health first aid, visit www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org.

Why Mental Health First Aid?

Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) is a 7 1/2-hour course that teaches how to help someone who is developing a mental health problem or experiencing a mental health crisis. The training helps an individual to learn to identify, understand, and respond to signs of mental illness and substance use disorders.



A Magical Success!

Because of the dedication of Terry Reynolds and her enthusiastic and creative team, the “Magical Event” held last month was a huge success! CSCC was transformed to a land of imagination and creativity like never before, and the feedback was overwhelmingly positive.

And the results prove it - the event raised almost \$1500!

Congratulations to all that made the event happen and go smoothly, and to all who participated.





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(s).

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.

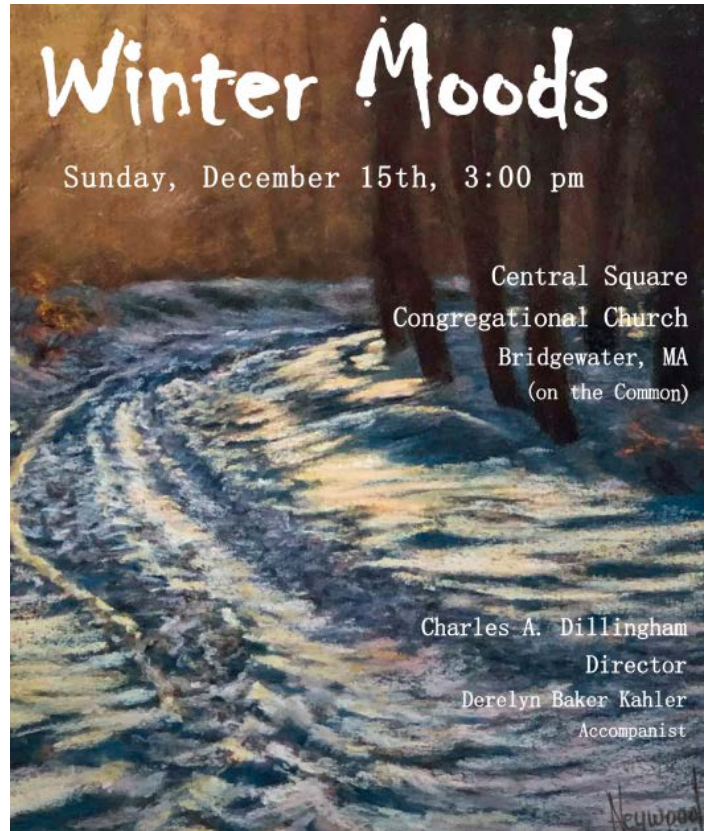
4. The Communications Coordinator will send a general church email and a text notification, and will update the website and Facebook page.

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. Links to both are on www.cscucc.org. Contact the office with questions.



**BSU Alumni Chamber Choir
Winter Concert
Sunday, Dec. 15, 3:00pm
Tickets at the door
alumnichamberchoirbsu@gmail.com**

Fall HARVEST Fair

Our Fall Harvest Fair was a tremendous success. The Fair Committee feels very strongly that we brought our church community together in a bold united effort and it was FUN! And we made some money, about \$6700 and counting. The Fair Committee is so very grateful for all of YOU; our team members, our cheerleaders, our sponsors, our patrons, our work crews, our young, our old, our in-between, etc. YOU ARE THE BEST!

From our hearts to your hearts, we are grateful, we are blessed.

The 2024 Fair Committee ~ Carol, Connie, Gail, Lynn, Mary and Sandy



Last week in Kids Church we completed our 5-week program on women in the Bible! It was a lot of fun exploring with the kids the role of these women, some of whom only had a single biblical passage mentioning them. To help flesh out their role and their importance at the time, we used both the Bible and scholarly texts to understand their strength, resilience, faith, and often times boldness during a time that often downplayed the role of women.

Coming up this month we are jumping right into Advent! As we did last year we will have our own Advent wreath and candles on the Kids Church altar, a Christmas tree, and we will be exploring weekly the aspects

of hope, joy, peace, and love, that the season represents. The curriculum that Rev. Beth and I chose is a mirror image of what the adults will be doing for the entire month. Our use of the same structure was intentional and in the hope that this will spark intergenerational discussions about the story of the birth of Christ.

As always, there's a lot more going on than I can fit in a short newsletter article, so if you have any questions about Kids Church, please don't hesitate to reach out to me directly.

From all of us at Kids Church, Merry Christmas!

Eric Stotts

Kids Church Director



Goodbye, Brady

by Sheri Turner

"The righteous care for the needs of their animals," (Proverbs 12:10, NIV)

I was thinking about kindness and what it means in the context of our pets. There are many kinds of animals that can be considered pets, but when I think about pets, I mostly think about dogs and cats. I have written in a previous newsletter that I love dogs. I grew up with dogs and currently I have three of them. They each have their own personalities and needs, but at a certain point in their lives they all need end-of-life care. Providing compassionate and thorough end-of-life care is one of the kindest gifts you can bestow on your furry family members when their time comes.

In 2019, I was preparing to wrap presents with my husband Steve on Christmas Eve. He and I both tend to procrastinate and we end up wrapping everything we bought for everyone on Christmas Eve. When I say "we," I mean that my husband wraps the majority of the gifts while I cook whatever cookies, fudge, pies and breakfast foods I am cooking for Christmas. We usually wind up being awake until 4:00 a.m. or so. This has gone on for years, mostly because we aren't great planners. Thank goodness my children were 20, 16 and 14 on this particular year, so they were old enough

to grasp what happened and why we wound up not wrapping their gifts that year.

This was the year we were forced to say goodbye to Brady, our thirteen year-old Golden Retriever. While I had been talking with my husband Steve I noticed that Brady seemed to be panting. He hadn't been running around or wrestling and something just didn't seem right. Brady had been outside about a half an hour before to potty and he had come back inside and plopped on the tile in front of the door in the living room. I went over and stroked his head and said, "Are you ok



Brady?" His beautiful brown eyes looked up at me sadly. I became worried. I listened to him pant and decided to check

continued...

Goodbye, Brady
continued from previous page

his gums for color. I had been told that if a dog's gums are pale or white, that is concerning. I checked his gums and yup, they were indeed pale. I became concerned. I second-guessed myself, trying to assure myself that it was nothing. I went back and forth in my head and finally decided to say something to Steve.

"If you're worried, call the vet," he said. "Otherwise it will bother you all night and you won't be able to enjoy yourself." So I called the vet. I described what was happening and they asked me to count how many breaths he breathed in a minute. When I told the vet she recommended that I immediately bring Brady to the emergency vet to be evaluated.

I did as recommended, and the news did not come back positive. The vet on call found that Brady had a tumor. She said that surgery was not going to be able to help because of how it was wrapped around the bladder and that Brady was probably suffering. She recommended euthanasia.

Tears filled my eyes as I thought about how Brady must feel and how I was going to have to tell my children that on Christmas Eve we were going to have to say goodbye to a beloved family member. I called Steve and explained the situation.

Brady had been with us since we first bought the house in Bridgewater in 2007. After we had closed on the house I had looked at my husband and told him, "I am not someone who needs expensive vacations, I don't buy lots of clothes or wear costly jewelry, but I want a dog." Steve agreed we could get a dog and we had hunted and found Brady. When I had arrived to pick Allison up from kindergarten with Brady beside me she had been thrilled.

"Mom, are you dog-sitting?" she had asked.

"Nope. This one is ours," I had said and watched a big smile cross her lips as she wrapped her arms around Brady in a bear hug. Brady wiggled in excitement, enjoying Allison's affection for him.

As our family grew Brady was a big part of our lives. He went to the drive-in movies with us (where he got lots of attention from moviegoers, which he loved). He didn't particularly like fetch even though he WAS a retriever. He liked getting the stick, he just didn't want to give it back. He was the only dog my mother-in-law liked (she was afraid of most dogs). She grew to love Brady when she and my father-in-law took care of our home and family while I was

hospitalized in 2008. Brady took part in 4H dog shows with Allison – he often would drag her out of the show ring to say hello to some friendly stranger, smiling. "That dog is smiing!" We often heard people say this while Brady was at 4H shows with Allison. If they had created a category for happiest dog, Brady would have won, no contest. We have a copy of a picture of Brady from one of the local newspapers when Daniel was small – he and Brady watched the Fourth of July parade while Daniel lounged on Brady on the ground. There was also the summer that Christopher used Brady's fur as a napkin to wipe juice from a popsicle that was dripping off his chin.

When I finally sat my children down to tell them we had to say goodbye to Brady, we offered them the option to be present when they euthanized him. I wanted them to be able to say goodbye and to see that the vet wasn't doing anything to hurt our dog if they wanted to be with him. I realized however, that sometimes children are just too upset by this to do it, so Steve and I told them that it was okay if they didn't want to be there. Regardless of their decision, I wanted to be with Brady to say goodbye.

Being with Brady was important for another reason too. I had read an article one time about how one of the hardest things vets encounter in their practice is when a dog owner decides not to be present when their dog is euthanized. From the dog's perspective they have grown with this family they love in an environment that they love for many years. When they are sick enough to need to be euthanized, the last thing they experience is being in a strange room with people they do not know. They feel scared, confused, uncomfortable and want to know where their owners are. Many dogs will cry. I just could not let that be Brady's last experience here on earth. Steve offered to sit in the waiting room with any of our children who did not want to stay with Brady while he was euthanized. There was a little reluctance at first on the part of some of our children, but ultimately our kids all decided that they wanted to be with Brady while he was put down. So Brady was surrounded by those who loved him most, on a comfortable blanket of his we brought from home, being hugged and loved until his eyes slowly closed and he drifted away. We shed our tears and hugged him one last time and gave him his last pets on the head.

And that was another way we taught our children about showing kindness.

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 2024 (Year C)

<p>Sun., Dec. 1 First Sunday of Advent Jeremiah 33:14-16 Psalm 25:1-10 1 Thessalonians 3:9-13 Luke 21:25-36</p>	<p>Wed., Dec. 11 Psalm 126 Isaiah 35:3-7 Luke 7:18-30</p>	<p>Sun., Dec. 22 Fourth Sunday of Advent Micah 5:2-3a Luke 1:46b-55 or Psalm 80:1-7 Hebrews 10:5-10 Luke 1:39-45 [46-55]</p>
<p>Mon., Dec. 2 Psalm 90 Numbers 17:1-11 2 Peter 3:1-18</p>	<p>Thurs., Dec. 12 Isaiah 12:2-6 Amos 6:1-8 2 Corinthians 8:1-15</p>	<p>Mon., Dec. 23 Psalm 113 Genesis 25:19-28 Colossians 1:15-20</p>
<p>Tues., Dec. 3 Psalm 90 2 Samuel 7:18-29 Revelation 22:12-16</p>	<p>Fri., Dec. 13 Isaiah 12:2-6 Amos 8:4-12 2 Corinthians 9:1-15</p>	<p>Tues., Dec. 24 Christmas Eve Isaiah 62:6-12 Psalm 97 Titus 3:4-7 Luke 2:[1-7] 8-20</p>
<p>Wed., Dec. 4 Psalm 90 Isaiah 1:24-31 Luke 11:29-32</p>	<p>Sat., Dec. 14 Isaiah 12:2-6 Amos 9:8-15 Luke 1:57-66</p>	<p>Wed., Dec. 25 Christmas Day Isaiah 9:2-7 Psalm 96 Titus 2:11-14 Luke 2:1-14 [15-20]</p>
<p>Thurs., Dec. 5 Luke 1:68-79 Malachi 3:5-12 Philippians 1:12-18a</p>	<p>Sun., Dec. 15 Third Sunday of Advent Zephaniah 3:14-20 Isaiah 12:2-6 Philippians 4:4-7 Luke 3:7-18</p>	
<p>Fri., Dec. 6 Luke 1:68-79 Malachi 3:13-18 Philippians 1:18b-26</p>	<p>Mon., Dec. 16 Isaiah 11:1-9 Numbers 16:1-19 Hebrews 13:7-17</p>	<p>Thurs., Dec. 26 Psalm 148 2 Chronicles 24:17-24 Acts 6:1-7; 7:51-60</p>
<p>Sat., Dec. 7 Luke 1:68-79 Malachi 4:1-6 Luke 9:1-6</p>	<p>Tues., Dec. 17 Isaiah 11:1-9 Numbers 16:20-35 Acts 28:23-31</p>	<p>Fri., Dec. 27 Psalm 148 Proverbs 8:32-36 John 21:19b-24</p>
<p>Sun., Dec. 8 Second Sunday of Advent Baruch 5:1-9 or Malachi 3:1-4 Luke 1:68-79 Philippians 1:3-11 Luke 3:1-6</p>	<p>Wed., Dec. 18 Isaiah 11:1-9 Micah 4:8-13 Luke 7:31-35</p>	<p>Sat., Dec. 28 Psalm 148 Isaiah 54:1-13 Revelation 21:1-7</p>
<p>Mon., Dec. 9 Psalm 126 Isaiah 40:1-11 Romans 8:22-25</p>	<p>Thurs., Dec. 19 Psalm 80:1-7 Jeremiah 31:31-34 Hebrews 10:10-18</p>	<p>Sun., Dec. 29 First Sunday after Christmas 1 Samuel 2:18-20, 26 Psalm 148 Colossians 3:12-17 Luke 2:41-52</p>
<p>Tues., Dec. 10 Psalm 126 Isaiah 19:18-25 2 Peter 1:2-15</p>	<p>Fri., Dec. 20 Psalm 80:1-7 Isaiah 42:10-18 Hebrews 10:32-39</p>	<p>Mon., Dec. 30 Psalm 147:12-20 2 Chronicles 1:7-13 Mark 13:32-37</p>
	<p>Sat., Dec. 21 Psalm 80:1-7 Isaiah 66:7-11 Luke 13:31-35</p>	<p>Tues., Dec. 31 Ecclesiastes 3:1-13 Psalm 8 Revelation 21:1-6a Matthew 25:31-46</p>

DECEMBER 2024						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<i>*Unless otherwise noted, worship services are both online and in-person</i>						
1 First Sunday of Advent 8:30am Sr. choir 10am Communion Worship*, Kids Church 10-4 Christmas on the Common 7:30pm AA Meeting	2 6-7:30pm Food Pantry Open	3 11-3 Church office open 7pm Women's NA	4 9-1 Church office open 10-1 Thrift Shop open 6:30pm Women's Guild & Fellowship	5 9-1 Church office open 10-1 Food Pantry Open 7pm Al-Anon	6 9-1 Church office open	7 10-1 Thrift Shop open
8 Second Sunday of Advent 8:30am Sr. choir 9:20am Jr. choir 10am Worship*, Kids Church 7:30pm AA Meeting	9	10 11-3 Church office open 11-12 Rev. Beth's "Advanced Care Planning" at Sr. Ctr. 7pm Women's NA	11 9-1 Church office open 10-1 Thrift Shop open 7pm Property & Finance Meeting	12 9-1 Church office open 10-1 Food Pantry Open 7pm Al-Anon	13 9-1 Church office open 6pm - Holiday Open Mic	14 9am Advent Book Study 10-1 Thrift Shop open
15 Third Sunday of Advent Steeple Sounds Due 8:30am Sr. choir 9:20am Jr. choir 10am Worship*, Kids Church 11am Potluck Lunch 7:30pm AA Meeting	16	17 1-3 Church office open 7pm Women's NA	18 9-9:45 & 12-1 Church office open limited hours 10am CSCC staff meeting offsite 10-1 Thrift Shop open 7pm Cabinet Meeting	19 9-1 Church office open 10-1 Food Pantry Open 7pm Al-Anon	20 9-1 Church office open	21 10-1 Thrift Shop open 7pm Longest Night Service (in person only)
22 Fourth Sunday of Advent Christmas Fund offering Music Sunday 8:30am Sr. choir 9:20am Jr. choir 10am Worship*, Kids Church. Jr. choir perf 7:30pm AA Meeting	23	24 Christmas Fund offering 11-3 Church office open 5pm Christmas Eve Family Service* 7pm Women's NA 10pm Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship*	25 Christmas Day [Church office closed]	26 [Church office closed] 10-1 Food Pantry Open 7pm Al-Anon	27 [Church office closed]	28
29 Hymn Sing Sunday 10am Worship* 7:30pm AA Meeting	30	31 [Church office closed]				

CSCC Cabinet Meeting – Minutes November 20, 2024 at 7pm

Location: Fellowship Hall, Church

The meeting was called to order at 7:06 by Anne Malmquist, Moderator.

Cabinet members in attendance:

Rev. Beth Stotts, Pastor
Anne Malmquist, Moderator
David Sheibley, Treasurer
Terry Reynolds, Community Engagement Team
Eric Stotts, Spiritual Engagement Team
Carol Chaffee, Congregational Engagement Team

Others in Attendance:

Josephine Stotts
Lynn Pietras
Gail Wright

Reverend Beth opened the meeting with a devotion and a prayer.

October minutes

The meeting minutes from the October meeting were presented and reviewed.

Carol Chaffee motioned to accept the minutes as written; Dave Sheibley seconded. The minutes were approved as written.

Congregational and Spiritual Engagement Team – Eric Stotts

1. Great help from Cristi and Savannah as deacons.
2. 5-week “Women of the Bible” curriculum in Kids Church. The kids like it. They had fun. Attendance has been between 7-21 each week.
3. The Kids Church classroom needs to be put back in place after use. Especially the tables and chairs.
4. New Member Sunday soon.
5. Carol reported that Congregational Engagement had soup making with Rev. Beth.
6. “We had the fair. That was a lot of congregational engagement. And spiritual engagement. And community engagement And Property and finance engagement.”
7. Poinsettias will be ordered. Dec. 22 they’ll be placed in the sanctuary.
8. Maybe cookie making on the 14th but it’s tentative.

Pastor's Report

Rev. Beth reviewed her report. No questions or objections. (For details, read her report)

1. Ecumenical Thanksgiving Worship is 11/26 @ 7pm
2. Holiday Open Mic with The Music Loft (the Grinch will be there!)
3. Blue Christmas Service planned for 12/21 @ 7pm
4. Monthly Advance Care Planning at the Senior Center is going well.
5. January she will run a weekly grief support group
6. Book studies are planned for November, December, and January

Treasurer's Report

1. Dave said October wasn't a great month. We're running \$4,000 behind where we were last year.
2. We're on budget for where we thought we would be.
3. The boiler fundraiser raised \$31,000!!! We get the new boiler in March!
4. The Harvest Fair raised \$6,621.70 (so far)!!!

continued...

CSCC Cabinet Meeting Minutes continued

continued...

Community Engagement Report

1. Terry reported that Warmth in Cold places donations are going well.
2. Swing sign is missing letters from wind storm. We need a new sign.
3. Possibility for involvement with Habitat for Humanity.
4. Christmas Fund Offering will be Dec. 22 & 24.
5. Christmas on the Common advertisements say 10am – 4pm. Terry is going to follow up to see if that's correct. Rev. Beth emailed Bridgewater Business Association to get clarity.

Property and Finance

Dave and Rev. Beth shared report on behalf of Property & Finance.

1. Leaking roof, broken windows are on hold at the moment.
2. Last night we met to discuss changing Rev. Beth's call agreement to change to $\frac{3}{4}$ time. The conference assisted in working on the change in the salary. This will give us a \$10,000 deficit each year as opposed to a \$40,000 deficit. Dave says a \$10,000 deficit (psychologically) is easier for the congregation to close.
3. Terry shared that the Magical Evening made almost \$1,400!!!! Rev. Beth will send an all-church email to celebrate. It'll be bigger and better next year!
4. Rev. Beth said Kids Church wants to gather donations but wants to know what to do. Dave says check with the schools. Anne says call the guidance counselors. Terry says check Toys for Tots.
5. Gail reported that WGF is doing boxes for soldiers.

Meeting adjourned at 8:17pm.

Next cabinet meeting is December 18th.

Treasurer's Report
September 30, 2024
Fiscal Year July 2024 - June 2025

	YTD Actual	YTD Budget	Difference	Annual Budget
Income				
Regular Pledges	28,396	31,421	(3,025)	125,000
Unpledged Offerings	2,085	3,016	(932)	12,000
Plate Offering	60	251	(191)	1,000
Kid's Church	76	126	(50)	500
Total · Pledges / Offerings	<u>30,616</u>	<u>34,814</u>	<u>(4,198)</u>	<u>138,500</u>
Special Collections				
MACUCC Fellowship Dues	20	503	(483)	2,000
Total · Special Collections	<u>20</u>	<u>503</u>	<u>(483)</u>	<u>2,000</u>
Fundraisers/Events Revenue				
Church Fair	51	2,011	(1,960)	8,000
Central Closet Thrift Shop	5,521	3,770	1,750	15,000
Concert/Special Event	0	0	0	0
Misc Fundraisers	165	754	(589)	3,000
Total · Fundraisers/Events Revenue	<u>5,737</u>	<u>6,536</u>	<u>(799)</u>	<u>26,000</u>
Facility Usage Income				
Non Profit Bldg Use	775	1,005	(230)	4,000
North River Collaborative	3,000	3,770	(770)	15,000
Private Bldg Use	0	126	(126)	500
Food Pantry support	300	302	(2)	1,200
Total · Facility Usage Income	<u>4,075</u>	<u>5,203</u>	<u>(1,128)</u>	<u>20,700</u>
Miscellaneous Income	143	251	(109)	1,000
Total Income	<u>40,591</u>	<u>47,307</u>	<u>(6,716)</u>	<u>188,200</u>
Expenses				
Total · Senior Minister Expenses	29,121	30,088	967	119,698
Total · Support Staff Expenses	10,494	12,695	2,200	50,503
Total · Office Expenses	1,079	2,237	1,158	8,900
Total · Church Building Costs	2,348	8,195	5,846	32,600
Teams				
Spiritual Engagement	250	377	127	1,500
Kid's Church	0	0	0	
Congregational Engagement	0	226	226	900
Community Engagement	195	251	56	1,000
Breakfasts	0	0	0	0
Property and Finance	0	75	75	300
Community Engagement Reserve	412	471	59	1,875
Total · Teams	<u>857</u>	<u>1,401</u>	<u>544</u>	<u>5,575</u>
MACUCC Fellowship Dues	0	503	503	2,000
Pilgrim Assn Fellowship Dues	0	50	50	200
Miscellaneous Expenses	0	0	0	0
Total Expenses	<u>43,900</u>	<u>55,169</u>	<u>11,268</u>	<u>219,476</u>
Net income (loss)	<u>(3,310)</u>	<u>(7,862)</u>	<u>4,552</u>	<u>(31,276)</u>
Transfer from Investments	10,000		(10,000)	31,276
	<u>6,690</u>	<u>(7,862)</u>		<u>0</u>

Treasurer's Report
September 30, 2024
Fiscal Year July 2024 - June 2025

Cash balances	
Operating account	14,162
Money Market	22,879
Minister's Discretionary account	151
Community Engagement Reserve	2,518
Capital Campaign account	1,334
PayPal account	149
Venmo account	281
Total cash balances	<u>41,472</u>

Vanguard investment funds	
Protected principal	135,513
Unrestricted funds, beginning	91,934
Deposits (withdrawals)	
Gain (loss) for month	<u>4,247</u>
Unrestricted funds, ending	<u>96,181</u>
Total investments 9/30/2024	231,694

Food Pantry account balance August 31, 2024	16,250
Donations	6,708
Expenses	<u>(1,939)</u>
Food Pantry account balance September 30, 2024	<u>21,019</u>

	Giving Comparison					
	<u>2022 Month</u>	<u>2023 Month</u>	<u>2024 Month</u>	<u>2022 YTD</u>	<u>2023 YTD</u>	<u>2024 YTD</u>
Jan.	10,029.82	10,307.95	10,226.11	10,029.82	10,307.95	10,226.11
Feb.	6,562.91	9,713.95	7,168.42	16,592.73	20,021.90	17,394.53
March	13,355.24	9,535.31	11,414.05	29,947.97	29,557.21	28,808.58
April	11,808.31	15,149.70	21,591.08	41,756.28	44,706.91	50,399.66
May	14,476.24	21,938.88	18,534.50	56,232.52	66,645.79	68,934.16
June	11,304.13	8,696.40	9,079.51	67,536.65	75,342.19	78,013.67
July	16,505.70	15,290.21	8,518.30	84,042.35	90,632.40	86,531.97
Aug.	9,586.37	8,061.22	7,908.21	93,628.72	98,693.62	94,440.18
Sept.	9,379.22	10,587.06	13,892.94	103,007.94	109,280.68	108,333.12
Oct.	15,615.55	12,608.01		118,623.49	121,888.69	
Nov.	9,164.75	8,281.58		127,788.24	130,170.27	
Dec.	15,622.72	13,625.20		143,410.96	143,795.47	



1821-2021

Central Square Congregational Church, UCC

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Church Administration

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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
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Bridgewater, MA 02324

FIRST CLASS MAIL