



## Midwinter Worship: A Time to Explore Our Faith Together

Sundays in January @9:20 AM, Chidley Hall

Join us at Midwinter Worship in January! Whether you have always attended (or never attended!) the small group discussions and lively services of Midwinter Worship, we hope you will consider participating this January. Our four Sundays of exploration, conversation, and informal worship will focus on important stories of the life of Jesus:

- January 10: Jesus is Baptized (Luke 3:1-22)
- January 17: The Wedding at Cana (John 2:1-11)
- January 24: Jesus Brings Good News (Luke 4:14-30)
- January 31: Jesus Heals (Luke 4:38-44)

The church school will also examine these stories and join in family-friendly worship afterwards.

We have fabulous small group discussion leaders lined up for 2016: David Page, Kate Puzanghera, Nancy and Aaron Kneiss, and Nick Wankowicz. We are grateful to them for agreeing to lead us in this meaningful mid-winter practice.

The morning begins at 9:20 AM with a light breakfast and an introduction to the scripture, followed by small group discussion. We will shift to worship at 10:15 AM and end a bit after 11 AM. Childcare will be available in the nursery.

This year, the small group discussions AND worship services will all take place in Chidley Hall. We've had such excellent experiences with the Blessing of the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



## Stewardship Campaign Update

We celebrated stewardship on Pledge Sunday, November 8th and we are happy to report that to date 102 pledges have been received totaling over \$457,850, which is 92% of our goal of \$500,000. If you have already pledged, thank you for your generous and joyful giving. If you haven't yet, please take a moment to fill out a pledge card and mail it to the Church care of Elizabeth Cooper, Treasurer, or just drop it off with the offering on Sunday. You can also send a confidential email with your pledge amount to [first.congregational@verizon.net](mailto:first.congregational@verizon.net).

Active participation in the stewardship of our church not only supports the financial needs of our church, it is a spiritual practice that serves to strengthen our connections to God and to one another and makes a

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

**THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL  
CHURCH IN WINCHESTER**

*An Open and Affirming Congregation*

www.fcc-winchester.org

Church Phone Number: 781-729-9180

## Senior Staff

**The Congregation**, Ministers to the World

**The Rev. William Burhans**

Lead Pastor

iwillb@fcc-winchester.org Ext 104

**The Rev. Ms. Judith B. Arnold**

Associate Pastor

jarnoldfccw@verizon.net Ext 110

**Ms. Kathleen Zagata, RN, MS, CS,**

Minister of Congregational Health and Wellness

kathleenzag@gmail.com Ext 106

**Mr. Benjamin Pulaski**

Minister of Christian Faith Formation

ben@fcc-winchester.org Ext 105

**Ms. Jane Ring Frank**

Minister of Music and Worship Arts

jringfrank@comcast.net Ext 107

**Mr. Jeffrey Mead**, Organist

Jeffrey@fcc-winchester.org Ext 107

**Mr. Bradley Ross**, Sexton

Brad@fcc-winchester.org Ext 103

**Ms. Sarah Marino**, Office Manager

first.congregational@verizon.net Ext 100

**Ms. Gay Williams**, Bookkeeper

ggwill@aol.com Ext 101

**The Rev. Dr. Kenneth Orth**

Pastoral Counselor (Affiliate)

Ken.orth@comcast.net 781-376-0022

## Officers

Moderator—**Penny Sparrow**

Treasurer—**Elizabeth Cooper**

Assistant Treasurer—**Keith Russell**

Clerk—**Anne Hoenicke**

Librarian—**Leslie French**

Historian—**Bill McCarter**

Delegates to MBA—**Bill McCarter,**

**Laurie Roby, Jena Roy**

Spire Editor—**Nancy Kneiss**

## Speak Up!

Do you have something to share? If you would like to contribute to *The Spire*, please send your submissions to **newsletter@fcc-winchester.org** by the 15th of each month. For example, to include an article in the February issue, please submit by January 15th. Please note that submissions may be gently edited for length and clarity.

**Bulletin and email blast requests** should be sent to Sarah Marino, our Office Manager, at first.congregational@verizon.net by **Thursday at 9:00 AM**.

—NANCY KNEISS, EDITOR

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Our purpose is to be a  
Christ-centered, nurturing community,  
growing in faith, serving in love,  
welcoming all with joy.

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## Midwinter Worship

CONTINUED FROM COVER

Animals services in that space that we thought we'd try Midwinter Worship there as well. We may even have a crackling fire going at Chidley Fireside!

So, we hope you'll join us as we continue to explore the Midwinter Worship theme of Living Our Sunday in a Monday to Saturday World and discover how we can all serve as Ministers to the World.

Look for more details in the weekly e-mail blast and bulletin.

With anticipation,

—THE WORSHIP MINISTRY

# Music and Faith in Myanmar

It is a temperate December day here in Cambridge; I am sitting at my desk preparing for one more journey to Myanmar: special trip insurance, endless vaccinations, packing lists, educational materials, music scores and more. It is hard to believe that this trip marks my third in the last four years. While you wait out a long and cold January, I will be in the extreme heat and humidity of Yangon, followed by the frigid temperatures of the western mountain region.

While there was much damage and destruction throughout the country, fortunately, orphanages and villages in the western Chin State were not adversely affected by the heavy rain-falls, severe flooding and landslides that occurred in July and August. I do, however, await the full impact of the election held in November. Although Aung San Suu Kyi's party now has a majority in the 664 seat Parliament, the military still commands the crucial ministries of Defense, Border Affairs, and Home Affairs.

I depart for Myanmar on January 1, 2016, and will be back in worship with you on Sunday, January 24. The time away is a true gift, and I am ever grateful to this congregation for affording me the opportunity to deliver the transforming power of our faith to people whose lives look nothing like our own. First Congregational Church has been an integral part of each of my trips—pilgrimages, if you will—because of steady and faithful generosity—generosity of spirit, money and time. This year, the Outreach and Mission Ministry have kindly and

generously awarded a grant that will substantially impact the lives of children and youth in a poverty-stricken population. We have achieved a major success with Metta Geha, our orphanage high in the mountains of Kanpetlet: we have instituted a daily meal plan that adds protein and vegetables to the basic rice diet. With rising food costs, FCCW's grant will go a long way to ensuring balanced nutrition and care for these beautiful children.

This year, my time will be divided between three institutions. My first week is dedicated to the eager and talented students of Gitameit Music Conservatory in Yangon (Rangoon). There I will conduct four choral ensembles, from a large mixed chorus to a small professional close harmony group, as well as coach classical chamber music and teach instrumental and choral conducting. The next ten days will be devoted to two wonderful orphanages/schools in Myanmar. Sanda Rama Monastic Education Post Primary School, located in the outer slums of Yangon, is a successful example of the "Monastery School" system. It is run by the Buddhist Monastery next door to the school, and the head monk has been a true visionary. We are partnering with the monastery to stock and supply a critically needed medical clinic. This clinic has even succeeded in staffing a doctor 1-2X per week; the care afforded to the children of the school is also afforded to the entire surrounding community. This monastery has provided a model for successful community support—of a type that is



rarely seen or experienced in this part of Yangon. We will trek to the western Chin state as well, to our beloved orphanage in Kanpetlet. There, we will work with local leaders to further ensure the stability and future of the orphanage and to tend to the children's long term health, education and welfare.

As always, I leave with a mixture of trepidation and determination. It is hard to leave home, to leave my family and my comfortable life. But it is you, all of you at First Congregational Church, who bolster me as I go on another journey. I welcome your prayers and your thoughts, and I look forward to being with you once again, as I mount the "hidden tide and travel/Back home."

In faith and with gratitude, (and on behalf of the Ministry Team),

—JANE RING FRANK, MINISTER OF MUSIC AND WORSHIP ARTS

## Stewardship Campaign Update

CONTINUED FROM COVER

meaningful difference in the life of our faith community and beyond. It is a tangible way in which we can trust in the promise of God's plan for us, our faith community and the broader world.

So please join our growing stewardship campaign and pledge with an open and generous heart. Please do not hesitate to contact any of the members of the Financial Resources Ministry if you have any questions.

Faithfully,

—THE FINANCIAL RESOURCES MINISTRY

*Doug Clarke, DClarke@riemerlaw.com; Jena Roy, jenaroy@aol.com; Jennifer Wilson, jsamswils@aol.com; Rich MacNeille, rich@macneille.com; Becca Beltz, rebecca.crabtree@gmail.com; Tom Roche, Tom.Roche@marsh.com; Michael Bailey, baileymr1@gmail.com*

## The Burhans Family Is Home!



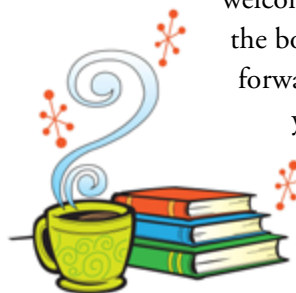
Good news: the Burhans family has bought a house in Winchester! We are delighted that they are investing themselves so wholeheartedly in our community and wish the whole family many happy years both in our church and in this town.

We are glad to report that the church participated in this process by financing a down payment for their new house. The Financial Resources Ministry, with the full support of the Leadership Team, arranged that the capital needed for a second mortgage be provided from the endowment in a manner which was advantageous both to the church and to Will and his family.

## January Ruth Group

The January meeting of the Ruth Group will be held Sunday, January 24th at 7 pm at the home of Connie Rosenberger, 32 Central Street. We will be discussing *Go Set a Watchman* by Harper Lee. All women of the church are

welcome and although we try to read the book before the meeting, we look forward to your participation whether you have read the book or not.



For additional information contact Joyce Mills, 617-835-4692 or joycemills1966@hotmail.com.

## CARE FOR GOD'S CREATION

### A Christmas Prayer for Creation

There is no pain in our hearts or in our planet that you do not know, O God,

for you have touched the lowest places on earth through your incarnation.

Teach us to grieve with you, O Christ, the loss of beauty in the world that has occurred

through our habits and practices that wound creation.

There is no place that cannot be touched by your presence among us.

Teach us to know our interconnectedness with all things and our responsibility

to be stewards of your brilliant creation.

Help us to grow in humility and gentleness with each other and all living creatures

through our celebration of your birth among us. Amen.

—ADAPTED FROM THE IONA COMMUNITY, SCOTLAND

## Your Leadership Team at Work



The Leadership Team is starting to hit our stride, and we have made good progress in recent months. In November, we solidified some of our internal operating rules, with much prayer and reflection. Judy led us through the exercise of developing a covenant of how we will operate, including our expectations of one another and our approach to discernment. We also discussed the best way to record and share minutes of our meetings with the congregation for utmost transparency. Finally, we continued the process of determining where decision making authority should lie for various re-

stricted funds.

At our December meeting, we discussed the upcoming budget process, wherein a subset of the Leadership Team will work closely with Treasurer Elizabeth Cooper and representatives of various ministries to develop a budget for fiscal year 2016 to be brought to the congregation for a vote in February.

The Leadership Team is also working on developing a strategic plan for the coming year that will holistically consider all of the good work going on throughout the congregation to ensure we are living into all aspects of

our mission statement. The LT will be working with the Purpose Forum to reach out to the various ministries for input to inform the plan as they put together their annual reports. It's an exciting time in the life of the church and a great chance to reflect on the vibrant year we've had and look forward to the future with faith and vigor.

If you have items you feel may be appropriate for a Leadership Team agenda, please reach out to Penny Sparrow (pjsparrow2@gmail.com).

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## Seeking a Treasurer

The Leadership Team has begun the process to look for a volunteer from our church community to serve the purpose and mission of our church as the new church Treasurer. Elizabeth Cooper, who has served us so well during a remarkable period for our church, has asked to be replaced effective at the 2016 Annual Meeting in the spring. The Leadership Team has assigned the task of recruiting a new Treasurer to Dick Sayre, Bruce Alexander and Rev. Will Burhans.

Elizabeth has worked with us to clarify the role of the Treasurer, how she/he collaborates with the Office Manager and the Bookkeeper and how the Treasurer should be integrated within our new church structure, especially the Leadership Team and the Financial Resources Ministry. Elizabeth has begun the steps to develop the 2016 church budget and will see that through to the annual Church Budget Meeting in February. She has also agreed to continue as Treasurer until her replacement is elected.

Our goal is to identify a candidate Treasurer and to have that person begin to work with Elizabeth during the spring

in order to be prepared to take over. In keeping with our congregational practices, the volunteer will need to be nominated and elected by the congregation at the Annual Church Meeting before assuming the duties fully.

If you or someone you know would be a good candidate, or if you have any questions about the position, please contact any one of us. Given the importance of this position in the life and functioning of our community, we would greatly appreciate your prayers for the right person to feel moved by the Spirit to step into this call!

Also please express your thanks to Elizabeth who has been such a diligent and prudent steward of our finances during a period that included the departure of Skip Waterbury, the interim pastorate of Marlayna Schmidt, and the call for our new Lead Pastor, Will Burhans. Elizabeth's enthusiasm and dedication to the success of First Church has been absolutely wonderful.

—DICK SAYRE, BRUCE ALEXANDER, AND REV. WILL BURHANS



*January cold and desolate;  
 February dripping wet;  
 March wind ranges;  
 April changes;  
 Birds sing in tune  
 To flowers of May,  
 And sunny June  
 Brings longest day;  
 In scorched July  
 The storm-clouds fly,  
 Lightning-torn;  
 August bears corn,  
 September fruit;  
 In rough October  
 Earth must disrobe her;  
 Stars fall and shoot  
 In keen November;  
 And night is long  
 And cold is strong  
 In bleak December.*

—CHRISTINA GIORGINA ROSSETTI  
*THE MONTHS*

SMILE!

## Directory Update

### January 15 Photo Deadline!



Things are coming together with our new photo directory, and we thank all of the families and individuals who came to get their photos taken by LifeTouch. Over 90 families participated! But we would love to have everyone in our church family included. In order to get everyone represented, we would be happy to accept photos submitted by you - but we need to have them by January 15th. LifeTouch will incorporate your photos into the body of the directory with everyone else, and you will

receive a free directory. LifeTouch is charging \$10 for each submitted photo, so we hope you don't mind contributing that too. So snap away over the Christmas holiday and send in your photos! Please send an electronic file or your original photo (which will be returned to you) along with \$10 to Sarah Marino in the Church office by January 15. Thank you! Any questions? Contact one of us from the Photo Directory team: Laura Bailey (bullbailey1@gmail.com; 781-756-0188), Connie Rosenberger (accr3150@gmail.com; 781-729-8518) or Sarah Marino (first.congregational@verizon.net; 781-729-9180).

## BIBLE STUDY

### Reading the Book of Job

The Second Wednesday Bible Study is an informal group of people who gather to read parts of the Bible, talk about them, try to discern what they mean for us today and to share doubts and difficulties. Sometimes we've just used a passage that speaks to what's going on in the world. Sometimes we've delved into a Book. On January 12th, we will begin reading the story of Job. Many of us think we know that story—Job's life fell apart and he continued to praise God. That is part of it, but there's a lot more. One reason I (Judy) love Job is because of the familiarity of the human interchange the book contains. We meet at 7:00 pm in the Health Ministry Office and end at 8:30. Make Bible Study a New Year's Resolution and have fun at the same time.



**SAVE THE DATE**  
**Reading Job**  
 January 12  
 7:00 PM  
 Health Ministry  
 Office

# Centering Prayer Workshop

Saturday, February 6th

8:30 AM – 12:30 PM

*“For God alone, my soul waits in silence,  
from Him comes my salvation.”*

Rev. Will Burhans and the Deacons would like to invite you to come to a half-day workshop and learn a contemplative practice that has deep roots in the Christian tradition and is sure to deepen your experience of Lent and the journey towards Easter this year.

Centering Prayer is a method for entering into loving intimacy with God. It facilitates both the deepening of our personal relationship with Christ and release from the attachments that hinder development of this relationship. The fruits of Centering Prayer are gradually experienced in daily life with increased ability to love and serve God and neighbor.

Mark Kutolowski, a presenter for Fr. Thomas Keating’s *Contemplative Outreach*, will be the facilitator of this workshop. Mark is a lay Oblate of Saint Benedict and has been practicing Centering Prayer for 14 years. He is a wilderness guide, and in 2007 founded the contemplative Christian wilderness spirituality ministry, New Creation Wilderness Programs.

Note to parents: childcare will be available during the workshop.

Please contact Rev. Will to learn more about this opportunity and let Deacon Teresa Cader know if you are interested in attending by calling or emailing her at [Teresa.cader@gmail.com](mailto:Teresa.cader@gmail.com) or 781-863-0166. Also, let us know if you need childcare.

## Schedule for the day:

8:30-9:00 AM	Gathering, coffee and bagels
9:00 AM-12:00 PM	Centering Prayer workshop
12:00-12:30 PM	Lunch and closing prayer
12:30-1:30 PM	Optional session on The Welcoming Prayer



**SAVE THE DATE**  
**Centering Prayer**  
**Workshop**

**February 6**  
**8:30 AM-12:30 PM**



*Passages*

## Baptisms

Curtis William Holman and Abigail Starbuck Holman, children of Andrew & Elizabeth Holman were baptized on Dec 13.

## In Memoriam

Esther “Terry” Seferian died on August 22.  
Richard “Dick” Bannister died on October 8.  
Anne Marie Strout died on December 4.  
Charles “Chas” Burr died on December 12.

# 2015-2016 Ministries

## MINISTRY TEAM, STAFF, AND AFFILIATES

Judy Arnold, Will Burhans, Jane Ring Frank, Sarah Marino, Jeffrey Mead, Ken Orth, Ben Pulaski, Bradley Ross, Gay Williams, Kathleen Zagata, Jessica Lima, Tyler Campbell

## LEADERSHIP TEAM

Bruce Alexander, Judy Arnold, Will Burhans, David DuBard, Anne Hoenicke, Marsha Lamson, Elizabeth Page, Dina Pradel, Ben Pulaski, Jane Ring Frank, Dick Sayre, Penny Sparrow, Kathleen Zagata

## OFFICERS AND DELEGATES

**Moderator:** Penny Sparrow **Officers:** Elizabeth Cooper, Leslie French, Anne Hoenicke, Nancy Kneiss, Bill McCarter, Keith Russell **Delegates:** Bill McCarter, Laurie Roby, Jena Roy

## SUSTAINING MINISTRIES

### Christian Faith Formation: Children & Youth

education@fcc-winchester.org

*Develops, implements and supervises educational programs for children from nursery through high school age, and fellowship programs for those in grades 7 and above.*

**Chairs:** Kate Carpini and Michele Stewart

**Members:** Gretchen Clarke, Wendy Procops, Ben Pulaski, Cindy Wankowicz

**Stepping Stones Shepherds:** Liz Copeland, Dina Pradel, Kim Farina, Kathy Kendall, Michelle Stewart, Patricia Brady, Carolyn Plosky, Kate Carpini, Maggie Keeler, Meg Trueb, Deirdre Giblin, Alex Rohall

**Rite 13 Teachers:** Gretchen Clarke, Cathy Crabtree, Anne Leiserson, Andy Richter

**J2A Teachers:** Doug Clarke, Debra Damren, Jodie Mullane, Janice Wilson

### Christian Faith Formation: Adults

adulted@fcc-winchester.org

*Seeks to deepen the spiritual journey of adults by drawing from Christ's teachings and assisting people in responding*

*to the issues of daily living, addressing congregational interests and current events.*

**Chair:** Jack Howland **Members:** Judy Arnold, Teresa Cader, Ken Orth

### Diaconate

deacons@fcc-winchester.org

*Assists the Ministry Team in the spiritual care of the Church, encourages lay ministry opportunities, greets and welcomes all with joy, supports weekly and special worship services, cares for the poor and needy, and assists in serving communion.*

**Head Deacon:** Lisa Loughlin **Deacons:** Teresa Cader, Maria Fernando, Andy Gallop, David Peretti, Wendy Procops, Tom Roche, Jena Roy, Jennifer Wilson, Rev. Will Burhans, Rev. Judy Arnold

### Facilities

facilities@fcc-winchester.org

*Oversees all matters of care and control of Church property.*

**Chair:** John Fiske **Members:** Bruce Alexander, Tom Church, Steve Cole, John Crabtree, Deb DePeter, Rick Forzese, Shannon Gilmour, Jan Koss, Sue Leathers, Bradley Ross

### Financial Resources

financialresources@fcc-winchester.org

*Develops policies and programs to enhance the financial well-being of the church; leads the annual stewardship effort, planned giving and capital campaigns; oversees the Church's endowment; cooperates with Treasurer, ministerial staff, and commission chairs to develop and secure congregational approval for annual operating budget.*

**Chair:** Michael Bailey **Members:** Rebecca Beltz, Douglas Clarke, David DuBard, Rich MacNeille, Tom Roche, Jena Roy, Jennifer Wilson

### Health & Wellness

healthministry@fcc-winchester.org

*Encourages members to enhance their faith by living the connection between wellness and spirituality, both personally and in ministry to others.*



**Chair:** Rotating **Members:** Christine Atkins, Pam Budner, Nancy Barker Church, Carrie Ehrbar, Steve Haggett, Branda Wilhoite, Frank Willwerth, Janice Wilson, Kathleen Zagata, Susan Rozmanith, Maria Fernando

### Outreach and Mission

outreach@fcc-winchester.org

*Promotes opportunities for outreach ministries and giving by all persons associated with the Church and oversees the church's mission giving.*

**Co Chairs:** Cindy Mahoney and Louise Ritenhouse

**Treasurer:** Ann-Marie Galli **Members:** Judy Arnold, Evander French, Lisa Loughlin, Bill McCarter, Jody Collins Skinner

### Personnel

personnel@fcc-winchester.org

*Oversees all matters of personnel policy*

**Chair:** Carol Weir, **Members:** Bob Lord, Sarah Stoddard Malcolm, Lynne Rahmeier, Liz Sayre, Christine Tresselt

### Purpose Forum

*Brainstorms solutions, provides resources and direction for new ideas, and facilitates communication among ministries.*

**Co-Facilitators:** Linda Alexander, Nick Wankowicz, Carol Weir

### Worship

*Supports the ministry team in exploring and experimenting with new and/or various forms of worship within the context of our traditions.*

**Chair:** Laurie Roby **Members:** Judy Arnold, Will Burhans, Jane Ring Frank, Sarah Gallop, Lisa Loughlin, Ben Pulaski, Liz Sayre, Taylor Tresselt, Lucy Willoughby, Julianne Zimmerman

## LIVING MINISTRIES

*We have many Living Ministries; a few of them are included below.*

### Library

library@fcc-winchester.org

*Maintains and updates our church library resources in the interest of supporting our congregation's theological understanding and spiritual growth.*

**Librarian:** Leslie French, *Ex Officio*

### Reno Garden

Pam Budner, Cathy Crabtree, Debra Damren

### Welcoming

*Implements programs and activities that welcome all with joy.*

**Members:** Laura Bailey, Fred Greene, Lynne Rahmeier, Liz Sayre, Christine Tresselt

### Signage

**Chair:** Alex Rohall **Members:** Anne Hoenicke, Keith Russell, Kathleen Zagata

### Outdoor Church

**Members:** Lisa Loughlin, Jena Roy

### Ruth Group

Joyce Mills

### Coffee Hour Ministry

Christine Tresselt



Everyone can be great because everyone can serve.  
You only need a heart full of grace.

—DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

## Opening the Invitations of Epiphany

What was your last epiphany? Was it frightening or energizing? Or perhaps a bit of each? The word “epiphany” means “manifestation, realization, or disclosure.” Usually it comes as a sudden perception or striking event revealing the essential nature or meaning of something. Spiritually it is about gaining a new perspective, recognizing a new awareness dawning. It may mean viewing what has been with us all along, but now from a different perspective, with a new consciousness.

In our Christian calendar, January 6 is Epiphany. The joyous twelve days of Christmas come to a close and usher in this season of the continuation of new light and new truth being revealed in our lives day by day. Will we open these invitations?

Sometimes these revelations of the Spirit are welcome and wonderful events. At other times, the revelations are difficult, inviting or demanding us to change some of the ways we have been living. New growth, new understanding, new consciousness often signals the end of old patterns of being, challenging us to let go of “comfort zones” which we cling to

even after they have finished their purpose in our lives and we are called to new ways of living, loving our neighbors, ourselves, and our God.

UCC minister Ruth Duck has written these words to a favorite Epiphany hymn:

*“Arise, your light is come! The Spirit’s call obey;*

*Show forth the glory of your God which shines on you today.*

*Arise, your light is come! Fling wide the prison door;*

*Proclaim the captive’s liberty, Good tidings to the poor.*

*Arise, your light is come! All you in sorrow born;*

*Bind up the broken-hearted ones and comfort all who mourn.*

*Arise, your light is come! The mountains burst in song!*

*Rise up like eagles on the wing; God’s power will make us strong!”*

May this Epiphany be a time when we allow ourselves to be present to the deepening mystery of our faith and the revelations of how to be present to others who have found “no room in the inn” this Christmas. May we

accompany them through times of illness, depression, grief, poverty and other realities that come upon us as human beings in our varieties of life’s circumstances. Our baptismal vows ask us to live out the reality that we are each “beloved creations of God”, and “one body with many members”, each an important part of the growth of the whole. No one is to be left out of the welcome at the table of God. God’s family expands.

God hovers over our times of chaos and apparent emptiness, ready to birth new possibilities in our lives and our world. Light dawns. Together we discover ways of treating each other and ourselves with compassion and gentleness, as we are reminded that God’s love is far more powerful than our greatest fears, that our spiritual truth reminds us that we are not alone in our search for meaning and hope. Together let us explore ways that God journeys with us no matter what our current conditions. May our thanks be always to God, bringing light into our shadowed lives.

—REV. DR. KEN ORTH, PASTORAL  
COUNSELING AND SPIRITUAL DIRECTION  
AFFILIATE



God hovers over our times of chaos and apparent emptiness, ready to birth new possibilities in our lives and our world.

## Our Amazing Youth

Another season of Advent has come and gone. With the warm December, it just did not feel quite the same on Christmas Day. Either way, we are on our way to another great month here at the church.

Stepping Stones, which is our Sunday School for prekin-dergarten through 5th grade, started a new curriculum in December. The teachers are loving it and so are the children. One of the teachers told me a story which I will share with you. "I was at home preparing for my lesson and my child came up and asked what I was doing. I told him that I was reading the story that he was going to learn on Sunday. He asked me to read it to him. I finished and he wanted me to read the next one!" During Midwinter Worship, we will be learning the same stories as the adults. We will not have class on January 17th because of it being MLK weekend. Starting in February Stepping Stones will begin a once a month Chapel Service. Please keep your eyes and ears posted for more information about these. Each week we have between 30-35 children, and it keeps growing!

The 6th grade class combined with Rite 13 to learn about poverty and create beaded jewelery out of homemade beads. They raised over \$200 for the Bead for Life project. Though their class is small, they have a great lesson that most weeks goes with what Stepping Stones is learning, but sometimes it is related to a current event.

Rite 13 raised over \$500 during our Cookie Walk. A huge thanks to all of you who helped out! They are currently learning about making life decisions in their classes. The lessons involve different types of media to help engage the students. On an average week we have around 10-12 youth!

J2A is on their last leg of the program and preparing for the pilgrimage happening in June. They are looking into doing the Hancock Stair Climb which raises money for MS Society. They had an eye-opening experience during a grocery store scavenger hunt when they realized how expensive food is to eat!



### **SAVE THE DATES**

#### **Youth Group Ski Trip**

**January 22-24**

#### **J2A Chili Sale and Souper Bowl of Caring**

**February 7**

We had our Youth Progressive Dinner in December where there were 24 youth that came and 4 adults. Without the support of the church, events like this would not happen!


Each Sunday night, the 9th-12th graders meet for Forum. The 14 teens that come on average look forward to this every week. I am looking for another adult or two to just assist me each week. If this is something that might interest you, please get into contact with me.

If you do not have any children or youth but would love to receive my weekly updates, just shoot me your email and I will add you to the list.

Keep Shining!

—BEN PULASKI, MINISTER OF CHRISTIAN FAITH FORMATION

# January 2016

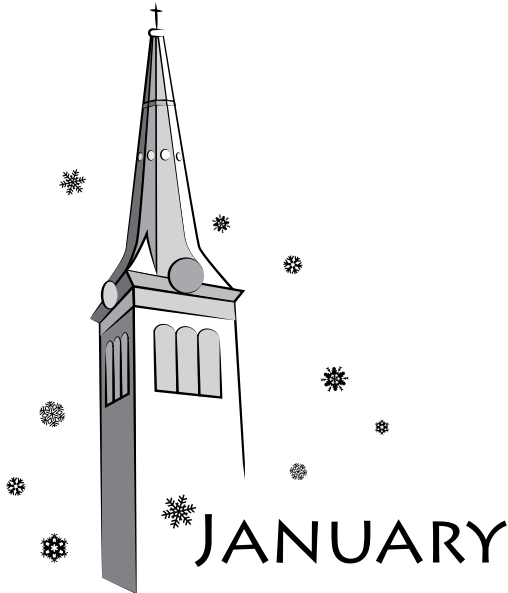
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>27</b> School Vacation 10:00 AM Worship: Carol Sing	<b>28</b> School Vacation 7:00 PM Carilloneers	<b>29</b> School Vacation	<b>30</b> School Vacation 8:30 AM Men's Coffee & Conversation 10:00 AM Ministry Team Meeting	<b>31</b> School Vacation 7:30 PM Choir Rehearsal	<b>1</b> <b>New Year's Day</b> Office Closed School Vacation	<b>2</b> School Vacation
<b>3</b> School Vacation 10:00 AM Worship 4:00 PM Girl Scouts 6:00 PM College Students - Meet Will/Share Communion 7:30 PM FORUM (High School) 7:30 PM Men's Group	<b>4</b> 7:00 PM Carilloneers	<b>5</b> 7:30 PM Boy Scouts	<b>6</b> <b>Epiphany</b> Office Closed Sarah at a conference 8:30 AM Men's Coffee & Conversation 10:00 AM FAN Toddler Playgroup 10:00 AM Ministry Team Meeting 7:30 PM Deacons	<b>7</b> 7:30 PM Choir Rehearsal	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b> 10:00 AM FAN Weekend Playgroup 2:00 PM Memorial Service for Chas Burr
<b>10</b> 9:20 AM J2A Class - 8th & 9th Grades 9:20 AM MWW Discussion Groups 9:20 AM Rite 13 Classes - 6th & 7th Grades 10:15 AM Stepping Stones (Church School) 10:20 AM MidWinter Worship & Baptism 4:00 PM Girl Scouts 7:30 PM FORUM (High School)	<b>11</b> 7:00 PM Carilloneers	<b>12</b> 7:30 PM Boy Scouts 7:30 PM Mission & Outreach Ministry	<b>13</b> 8:30 AM Men's Coffee & Conversation 10:00 AM FAN Toddler Playgroup 10:00 AM Ministry Team Meeting 6:30 PM Health Ministry 7:00 PM Bible Study 7:30 PM Facilities Ministry 7:30 PM Personnel Ministry	<b>14</b> 7:30 PM Choir Rehearsal	<b>15</b> <b>SPIRE DEADLINE</b>	<b>16</b> 5:00 PM The Dwelling Place
<b>17</b> 9:20 AM MWW Discussion Groups 10:20 AM MidWinter Worship 4:00 PM Girl Scouts	<b>18</b> Interfaith Martin Luther King Jr. Worship Service <b>Martin L. King, Jr. Day</b> Office Closed 7:00 PM Carilloneers	<b>19</b> 7:30 PM Boy Scouts	<b>20</b> 8:30 AM Men's Coffee & Conversation 10:00 AM FAN Toddler Playgroup 10:00 AM Ministry Team Meeting 7:30 PM Worship Committee	<b>21</b> 7:30 PM Choir Rehearsal	<b>22</b> Youth Ski Weekend	<b>23</b> Youth Ski Weekend
<b>24</b> Youth Ski Weekend 9:20 AM MWW Discussion Groups 10:15 AM Stepping Stones (Church School) 10:20 AM MidWinter Worship 11:30 AM Leadership Team Meeting 2:00 PM HM Afternoon Program 4:00 PM Girl Scouts 7:00 PM Ruth Group	<b>25</b> 7:00 PM Carilloneers	<b>26</b> 7:30 PM Boy Scouts	<b>27</b> 8:30 AM Men's Coffee & Conversation 10:00 AM FAN Toddler Playgroup 10:00 AM Ministry Team Meeting 7:30 PM Purpose Forum	<b>28</b> 7:30 PM Choir Rehearsal	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>  9:00 AM Red Cross & Masons Blood Drive
<b>31</b> 9:20 AM MWW Discussion Groups 10:00 AM J2A Class - 9th & 10th Grades 10:00 AM Rite 13 Classes - 7th & 8th Grades 10:15 AM Stepping Stones (Church School) 10:20 AM MidWinter Worship 11:30 AM Budget Q&A Session 11:30 AM Flower Committee Project 11:30 AM Outdoor Church 4:00 PM Girl Scouts 7:30 PM FORUM (High School)	<b>1</b> 7:00 PM Carilloneers	<b>2</b> 7:30 PM Boy Scouts	<b>3</b> 8:30 AM Men's Coffee & Conversation 10:00 AM FAN Toddler Playgroup 10:00 AM Ministry Team Meeting 7:30 PM Deacons	<b>4</b> 7:30 PM Choir Rehearsal	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b> Centering Prayer Workshop

# The Spire

THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH IN WINCHESTER  
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## We Need You!

Do you have an hour, an evening, or a weekend to give? Here are a few opportunities to serve your church and community.

### Blood Drive

Saturday, January 30, 2016, 9 AM - 2 PM

Please consider donating much-needed blood for those in need of it at the Blood Drive, sponsored by the Masons held at our church on January 30.

### Pledges

The Stewardship Drive is going strong, but we need your help! If you haven't returned your pledge card yet, please take a moment to fill one out and send it to the Church. For more info please see the article on the cover.

### Purpose Forum

Come to the Purpose Forum on January 27 to help brainstorm solutions or propose your own idea for a project, large or small. All are welcome!

### Budget Q& A Session

Sunday, January 31, 11:30 AM

Curious about the church budget for 2016? Join us for an information session after church in the Palmer Room.



In seed-time learn, in harvest teach, in winter enjoy.

—WILLIAM BLAKE