

THE CENTER HARBOR LIGHT

Special Offering this Month: Hunger Action

Pastor's Message

At this point in the year our lives have settled down from the Christmas season. We are back in the routine of school and work with the added routine of snow removal and making sure we are prepared for a power outage. And then, halfway through the month, the fast of Lent begins. Will this season disrupt our routines like the Advent and Christmas seasons do? Not likely. So far, businesses and corporations have not found a lucrative way to capitalize on a Lenten fast. Ashes and sackcloth don't sell like toys and chocolate. Which, I think, is a relief. We are able to recognize the season in a more authentic way.

Lent kind of gets a bad rap. It's associated with guilt for experiencing pleasure and fear of our own mortality. But I don't think it has to be. Maybe you need permission to lament without the pressure of "looking on the bright side" just yet. Lent is good for that. Maybe you need a nudge toward self-reflection or away from your comfort zone. Lent is a manageable season with a beginning and an end to focus on those tough conversations, to sit with discomfort, to dismantle that which we find wasn't so healthy or helpful after all. The feast of Easter will come, and the Easter season lasts longer than Lent, but it is not here yet.

In the meantime, we are invited to remember that we are no more than ashes, and we are no less than stardust. We are connected to everything on Earth, everything in the universe, because we are all made of the same stuff. As astrophysicist Neil deGrasse Tyson wrote in his book, Astrophysics for People in a Hurry, "We are stardust brought to life." As one of our young people said during a children's message, "The same water we drink is the same water that dinosaurs peed in." Beloveds, this Lenten season may we be both empowered and humbled as we remember that we are made both of stardust and dinosaur...water. May we remember that matter is neither created nor destroyed but can always be transformed. May the fasts that God chooses for us now produce good fruit for the future.

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Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
An Open and Affirming Congregation
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Office Hours:
Tuesday 7:30 AM - 12 PM
Wednesday 7:30 AM - 3 PM



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Sunday School - Back in Session

After a nice long break for the Christmas holidays, Sunday school was back in session in January. In one lesson, the children shared their own experiences about fishing, then listened to the story of Matthew 4: 17-25: "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will send you out to fish for people." At once they left their nets and followed Jesus.

The students then shared ways they can be fishers of people by casting nets of help and caring for those who need a friend at lunch or recess and by working together to solve problems.

Sunday school will meet February 1st, 8th, and 15th. There will be no Sunday school on February 22nd or March 1st due to the school winter holidays.



Bell Choir Prepares for Spring

The bell choir kicked off their spring season with a class about the structure of music. They will rehearse most Sundays after worship in preparation for Easter and a concert with Tre Voce that will feature dance music.



Church Life



This Month's Events



CHCC Serves at Soup Kitchen

February 24th

Be on the lookout for more information about helping to cook, serve, or deliver food.



Thursday Bible Study

With Pastor Alison

February 5, 12, 19, and 26

9 AM by Zoom

Check weekly e-mail for Zoom link!



Books & Bites

Come share what you've been reading!

February 17th at 1:30 PM in parlor

Contact: Jill Morton

(ladymort17@gmail.com or Diane

Crawford (onies54@gmail.com



BLOOM WHERE YOU ARE PLANTED
A MESSAGE FROM YOUR CABINET

Looking Ahead: Growth, Discernment, and Our Shared Future

Dear Church Family,

Our Cabinet is looking forward to working together in the coming year. It will be a year of change, and we hope, a year of growth as we continue to discern more clearly who we are called to be as a church.

As part of this discernment, we are researching Nickerson Coaching (www.nickersoncoaching.com).

Paul Nickerson is dedicated to helping churches grow in vitality, reach new people, and make a difference in their communities. We are exploring the possibility of working with Paul to help guide us as we move forward and take positive, intentional steps toward growth and renewed vitality.

Each Board Director will be working closely with their committee members to identify goals and priorities for the coming year. We recognize that we can no longer do “business as usual” or make decisions simply because “we have always done it that way.” Instead, we are called to thoughtfully and prayerfully consider new paths forward.

Our hope is to engage in meaningful conversations about what our church might look like in another year or two. The key to these conversations is communication - communication within the Cabinet, between our members, and with our Pastor. As a church community, we commit to listening to all ideas in a loving and kind way. Members should feel free to share thoughts and perspectives without fear of judgment, and once decisions are made, we will move forward together in unity.

This is our church, one we all love deeply. As Pastor Alison reminds us, we are invited to use our “power within” to stop, reevaluate, and, when necessary, take another road. Let us work together to make positive changes so our church may thrive and faithfully move into the future.

Grace and Peace,
Janet Gulezian
Cindy Thompson
Your Co-Moderators



SOUPER BOWL OF CARING

On February 8th, Super Bowl Sunday, many friends and families gather to watch the “big game”. We are generally surrounded by LOTS of special “goodies” to feed our enthusiastic cheering. But, there are MANY who don’t have those extra-nice foods... or maybe not even a can of soup during gametime.

The “Souper Bowl of Caring” began years ago by a youth group to gather CANS OF SOUP to donate to a local food pantry. Millions of cans are collected each year on Super Bowl Sunday to offer a small bit of comfort to those in need.

You are invited by our children and youth to donate (at least) one can of soup or one dollar to fill the big kitchen pots at the front of our sanctuary on February 8th. This collection is part of our donations of canned goods and non-perishable food items during the month of February.



News from the Board of Missions

ISAIAH 61Café

The Isaiah 61 Café in Laconia is a homeless outreach center helping people in need through a variety of ways. Since 2018, this nonprofit provides a place for people to eat hot meals, as well as a place to shower, do laundry and store their belongings. This café is like home to those in need and everyone who enters is considered a friend.

In the past, CHCC has helped fill a large box with plastic eating utensils, paper plates and bowls, and paper towels to be used at their daily meals. Again, the box in Gilpatrick Hall is waiting to be filled with these useful items... all working together to serve those who are facing hunger at this time.

FEBRUARY MISSION OF THE MONTH HUNGER

In addition to our Souper Bowl donations, on February 8th, on other Sundays in February we will collect all kinds of **canned goods and non-perishable food items, personal hygiene products, diapers, and other paper goods**. These items will be divided to re-stock our own Little Food Pantry box and to supply the Food Pantries in Moultonboro and Meredith.

You are invited to bring these items and stack them on the chancel area at the front of the church. Our goal is to create an OBSTACLE COURSE for Pastor Alison, making it difficult for her and liturgists to navigate the pulpit area.

PLEASE BE GENEROUS AS WE PILE UP THESE NEEDED ITEMS TO SHARE DURING FEBRUARY!!

Indoor Spring Cleaning

Friday, March 6th

10 AM to 2 PM

Lunch Provided

Time to give the inside of our building some TLC. Depending on the number of volunteers, we will focus on the two kitchen areas and downstairs windows. We will have jobs for all ability levels.

Sign-Up on clipboard after worship or contact Louisa CHCCsecretary@chccucc.org

May ALL our donated items collected during February be delivered with our love and care for those who hunger physically and spiritually.

Treasurer's Report on 2025 Results

CHCC's operating results for 2025 were better than budgeted by \$17,769. As a result, we withdrew 6.8% from our investments to balance the budget vs. the 10.1% we budgeted.

Excluding investment withdrawals, total revenues were \$1,466 above budget, primarily due to fundraising and interest income. Total contributions to the church (pledges + regular giving + plate offerings) were \$8,528 below budget and \$2,371 below the prior year. That's a trend that should give us concern. Pledge payments were 94% of 2025 pledge commitments. Total revenues consisted of the following main categories:

Contributed income	\$93,868	62%
Withdrawals from investments	\$37,041	24%
Fundraisers	\$8,959	6%
Use of church	\$5,380	4%
Interest & other income	\$2,816	2%
Ministry of Space	\$4,098	3%
Total Revenue	\$152,162	100%

Ministry of Space collections were \$1,589, including \$788 in matching funds. CHCC sent an additional \$14,883 to missions beyond the Church, including \$8,083 in contributions and \$6,800 in matching funds from the Gertrude Matthes Mission Matching Fund.

Outside groups using church space contributed the following to CHCC in 2025:

AA	\$1,140	Center Harbor Inn	\$500
Al-Anon	\$140	Soup Kitchen	\$0
Canoe	\$3,600		

Church Boards and Committees, particularly the Property Group, did an excellent job of expense control. Total operating expenses were 10% below budget at \$152,165.

The Village Preschool had a net deficit of \$6,783 in 2025, which was fully covered by a grant received in 2024 that was required to be spent in full by September, 2025.

Security investments totaled \$23,233 in 2025, which will be reimbursed in full by the federal security grant administered by the state.

Despite withdrawing 6.8% from our Church, Endowment, and McCracken funds, ending balances in those funds grew 7% due to positive market returns. We can't count on that in the future, so we should continue to work toward balancing our operating budget without requiring investment withdrawals.

NHUCC's Prepared to Serve - February 28, 2026

Pembroke Academy, 8 AM - 4 PM

Complete workshop catalog and registration materials available in church office or through NHUCC website: <https://nhucc.regfox.com/2026-prepared-to-serve-attendee-registration>

CHCC Property Budget & Spending 2025	12/1/2025 Budget	Actual	Surplus/Short	2025 Property Report
5310 Grounds/Mosquito/Rodent Control	\$3,000	\$2,212	\$788	
JP Pest		1146		
Mosquito Squad		1066		
Tree Stumps		0		
5320 Equipment/Building Repair/Misc	\$5,300	\$6,970	\$1,670	
Old computers Hard Disk removal*		\$100		
CO detectors (3)		\$207		
Bathroom fans & toilet parts		\$459		
Carillon???		\$910		
Canopy (replacement)		\$205		
Ramp repair (not budgeted)*		\$1,730		
Dishwasher repair (not budgeted)*		\$230		
Furnace inspection (State req. every 2 yrs)		\$100		
Preschool lockset Tractor fan belts		\$30		
Parking lot signs		\$90		
		\$209		
Emergency lighting (completed Dec, Bill Jan)*		\$2,700		
		\$6,328		
5330 Cleaning Service, Supplies, & Trash Srvc	\$5,500	\$371	\$828	
Dishwasher Chemicals (not Budgeted)		\$5,050		
Cleaning service (Kathy)		\$584		
Casella		\$323		
Supplies		\$3,515		
5340 Fullerton Snow plowing	\$2,400	\$580	\$1,115	
5350 Stafford Furnace Service	\$600	\$2,683	\$20	
5370 Security service	\$4,000	\$750	\$1,317	
Cintas Fire Extinguisher service		\$186		
Freedom Fire Protection Stove Hood inspection		\$350		
Mango annual monitoring service		\$1,397		
Mango system inspection		\$22,288		
Total	\$20,800		\$1,488	2.8% Over budget

NOTE: Budget includes additional monies approved by the Congregation or Cabinet since the beginning of the year

The congregation approved about \$6000 additional for inspections and repairs that were raised as concerns by Property

NOTE: Emergency lighting was budgeted/completed in 2025 so is included although the bill was paid in 2026

NOTE: Old computer hard disk removal/Carillon repair were charged to another account but managed by Property

Donations

Canopy	\$205
Emergency lighting (received in Jan for Dec work done)*	\$400
Ramp	\$700
Carillon	\$450
Total Donations	\$1,755
OVER BUDGET	\$1,488
2025 Budget Surplus after donations	\$267

Significant savings

No tree stump removal required

No surprise repairs of Security system, no service calls

Budgeted Equipment Expenses were lower than budget (excludes ramp - not budgeted)

Significant Extra costs

Plowing over budget	\$1,115
Ramp repair unbudgeted	\$1,730
Dishwashing repair/chemicals unbudgeted	\$601
Emergency lighting over approved budget	\$400

Happy Birthday

2/02 Braelynne Morrow

2/11 Maris Thatcher-Forgues

2/12 Margee Doscher

2/14 Jeff Johnson

2/20 John Merrill

2/22 Pete Crosby

2/23 Matt Forgues

2/25 Meg Greenbaum

2/28 Barbara Edwards



2/03 Cindy and Chris Thompson



WE'RE ON FACEBOOK!

Every morning at 8am, enjoy your coffee with a message to start your day. Missed worship on Sunday? Watch the highlights posted later that day. And don't forget to LIKE and SHARE our posts with your family and friends. You'll be spreading the Good News from CHCC!

www.facebook.com/CenterHarborCongregationalChurch

Opportunities in Our Community

Nichols Memorial Library Now Offering TWO Sessions of Chair Yoga

Thursdays 9:30 or 11 AM

No cost to attend, but please pre-register as space is limited. Call the library at (603)253-6950 or email us at: centerharborlibrary@gmail.com

Class fee is by donation - give whatever you can afford.

Take Your Child to the Library Day

Saturday, February 7th from 10 AM to 2 PM.

Show your Library some love, and hear some sweet Valentine's Day stories. You can also craft a Valentine's Day card to share with someone you love. It's going to be so much fun. Don't miss it! Call the library at (603) 253-6950 or email us at: centerharborlibrary@gmail.com

Winter Blahs Puzzle Swap

February 23-28 - Nichols Library

It's another blustery February day. Want to bust those winter blahs? We have an idea: Bring your old puzzles (must have all pieces!) to the library and swap 'em! For every puzzle you bring in, you may take one in return. Plus, the library's own puzzle board will be out. Sit a spell, chat with library staff, check out what's new at the library. We'd love to visit with you.

MICHAELS

SNOW SHOVELING

MEREDITH AREA



(603) 581-4149

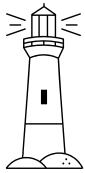


WEEKENDS MY SPECIALITY

Heart February Heart

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 -10 AM Worship -11:30 AM Bell Choir Rehearsal	2	3 -4:30 PM Soup Kitchen	4 -5 PM Missions Meeting, by Zoom	5 -9 AM Bible Study, by Zoom	6 -8 PM AA (opening meeting)	7
8 -10 AM Worship -11:30 AM Bell Choir Rehearsal	9	10 -4:30 PM Soup Kitchen	11	12 -9 AM Bible Study, by Zoom -4:30 PM Deacons Meeting, by Zoom	13 -8 PM AA (opening meeting)	14
15 -10 AM Worship -11:30 AM Bell Choir Rehearsal	16	17 -1:30 PM Books and Bites, Parlor -4:30 PM Soup Kitchen -7 PM Cabinet Mtg, Parlor	18 -12 PM Ash Wednesday Service	19 -9 AM Bible Study, by Zoom	20 -8 PM AA (opening meeting)	21
22 -10 AM Worship No Sunday School -11:30 AM Bell Choir Rehearsal	23	24 -4:30 PM Soup Kitchen (CHCC Serves)	25	26 -9 AM Bible Study, by Zoom	27 -8 PM AA (opening meeting)	28





We are a church whose members love and value each other. Our faith community is a force for caring and sharing God's love in local and wider communities. As members, we learn, grow, and serve together to do God's work with faith, compassion, respect.

All Are Welcome!

The Snowdrop

by Alfred, Lord Tennyson

Many, many welcomes,
February fair-maid,
Ever as of old time,
Solitary firstling,
Coming in the cold time,
Prophet of the gay time,
Prophet of the May time,
Prophet of the roses,
Many, many welcomes,
February fair-maid!

This poem is in the public domain.



American Winter Scenes: Morning by France Flora Bond Palmer, 1845. Courtesy National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC