

THE CENTER HARBOR LIGHT



Volume 47 No. 12

Special offering this month: *Alternative Gifts*

December 2025



**Center Harbor
Congregational Church**
United Church of Christ

An Open and Affirming Congregation

PO Box 229, 52 Main Street
Center Harbor, NH 03226
Tel: (603) 253-7698
Website: www.chccucc.org

Office Hours:

Tuesday and Wednesday
8:30 AM - 2:30 PM

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Pastor Alison Thatcher
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Deacon:

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A Liturgical Season for All of Life's Seasons

Perhaps this is your favorite time of year. Christmas music has been the soundtrack to your world since Thanksgiving (maybe even before). You've got your Christmas movie-viewing all cued up. You are in your element surrounded by fir boughs, red ribbons, and glittering ornaments. *Or* perhaps this is a painful time of year. Maybe memories of lost loved ones or broken traditions cast a shadow in your life that twinkling Christmas lights are no match for. For myriad reasons, the constant cheery music is a constant reminder of how far away your emotional or mental state is from that of those around you. You feel hopelessly isolated. Perhaps you're somewhere in between. If you're on the silver and gold side of the spectrum, I smile imagining your joy. If you are closer to the blue Christmas side, know that you are not alone, and there is nothing wrong with feeling that way.

Wherever you land on that spectrum, or if you fluctuate widely on it throughout the season, I believe Advent could be right for you. If you are ecstatically busy wrapping presents and baking cookies, Advent is a reminder to take a meditative break, so you don't get burned out. If you are already sick of all the hollies and jollies, Advent is an affirmation that we wait for joy and don't always feel it in the moment. Each Sunday in Advent is like the eye of a storm, a respite from the excitement swirling around us. My hope for you in this season of our liturgical calendar is that you find a meaningful way to connect with it, no matter your season of life. After all, Advent is the beginning of our Christian year. Our new year is not heralded with a burst of energy. It begins with a pregnant pause, with contemplative anticipation, with the promise of unimaginable possibilities and new life.

Blessed be, Pastor Alison



Church Life

Holly Fair

The 2025 Holly Fair was a huge success for the church. The preliminary earnings as of the morning after the fair were \$4,255. Thank you to everyone for the many contributions of time and talent. This truly was an all church fun/fundraiser!

As you catch your breath, please jot down any take-aways from the fair and pass your comments on to Ann.



Invitation to Caroling

The Board of Deacons invites everyone to a caroling event after church on December 21st. We will gather in Gilpatric Hall after fellowship hour and carpool to area nursing homes to spread the cheer of the season. After caroling, the group will return to Gilpatric Hall to enjoy cookies and cocoa.

Please join us for this outreach event!



Financial Update on Current Church Operations through October 31, 2025

With 2 months remaining in our fiscal year, the church has been doing a great job in managing our expenses, but we're behind budget by \$8,173 in pledge, regular giving, and loose plate collections. To close this gap, please make your remaining pledge and regular giving contributions for 2025 by 12/28. The better we do in covering our current year expenses, the less we must withdraw from our investment funds for current operations. This ensures the future of the church and our continuing ability to offer worship, music, faith formation, pastoral care, Christian outreach, and mission support to our community and beyond.

Celebrating the Life of Kent Warner

Kent Field Warner, a member of our church, passed on September 17, 2025, having lived a full, engaged, and loving life for almost 100 years. He built an impressive business, was deeply involved with family, contributed in significant and lasting ways to social justice and community, and was an avid tennis player and sailor well into his 80s.

Kent was born in 1926 and raised in Douglaston Manor, Queens. He served in the Navy during WWII, received a BS in Mechanical Engineering from Princeton, and raised 4 children in New York with his wife Mary Alice all while diving into various community projects.

Retiring to Center Harbor, NH in 1993, Kent and Mary Alice joined Center Harbor Congregational Church, in the pew every Sunday, taking on a range of leadership roles. And once again they threw themselves into community involvement, famously running against each other in the NH State Representative race. (Neither won.)

But the crowning achievement of Kent and Mary Alice's shared partnership came after they left New Hampshire for Rye, NY, and in 2014, founded the Portchester nonprofit that became known as 5 Steps to Five.

Kent and Mary Alice moved to The Osborn in Rye in 2022, where they found camaraderie and loving care.

Donations can be made in Kent's memory to 5 Steps of Five, e-mail info@5stepstofive.org, and/or to The Osborn Foundation to benefit the employees, e-mail clevy@theosborn.org.

A memorial service will be held via Zoom on January 3rd at 6 PM. Please contact Louisa if you would like the link.

Excerpted from obituary submitted by Susan Warner—full obituary available in Gilpatric Hall or from the church office.

End of Year Accounting

We are approaching the end of the church's budget year, so please be sure that your pledged giving is up-to-date. In addition, if you have any 2025 in-kind donation receipts still to submit, please submit them to the office by the end of the year in order to receive a record of your donations in time for taxes.

ALL Contributions to the Missions or Deacon's Fund need to be in by Sunday, December 14th in order to be credited to 2025. Any donations that come after that date will be held until January.

Thank you for all the ways you support God's work through the ministries of this church.

Notes from the November Cabinet Meeting

Actions taken at our Tuesday, 11/18 Meeting:

- Had a discussion related to the Village Preschool;
- Approved minutes of Cabinet meeting of October 21st and the Annual meeting of October 26th with thanks to the Clerk;
- Approved the Treasurer's Report with thanks to the Treasurer;
- Received updates from the Deacons, Property Coordinator, Board of Christian Education and the Mission Board;
- Voted to approve recommendation from the Property Coordinator to spend an additional \$1300 beyond budget for the update of the emergency lighting system;
- Planned for the Cabinet to take a December meeting break;
- Thanked the Moderator for 18 months of service.

Thanks to the Cabinet for a time of work well done!

No Cabinet Meeting in December

Getting Ready for Winter & Christmas -> Shovels, Sand, Plowing, Bears, and Advent

As Winter approaches, we need to get ready for handling snow. Shovels are put out by all the doors, sand barrels are unlocked and positioned (Note: they are strapped closed in the Spring to keep people from throwing garbage and dog poop bags in them.) Spare sand is kept in the garage. Then we put in marker stakes around all the parking lots to help the plow drivers not tear up the grass or hit curbs. We also spray all the door locks with WD40 to displace any water because on really cold winter days, the locks can all freeze up.

While we have a plowing company for the parking lots and the front walkway who are aware of the Preschool days and Sunday worship and try to get to us in a timely manner, **keeping the church accessible is EVERYONE'S job.** Sometimes we can get melting in the day that freezes overnight or additional snow fall after plowing that isn't obvious to the plow company. Wind can also fill walkways and other spots. Since no one lives at the church, we don't know what the conditions are until someone arrives. Louisa, Laura and Alison are "first responders" since they are often the first people at the church. They can alert others to a problem situation, call the plow company, and even do a little cleanup shoveling or put out some sand. On Sunday, the first people at the church are the choir members, and some of them do the same things. If YOU come to the church and notice some attention is needed, if you are able, consider shoveling out a bit, or let the property manager or a staff member know. Once we know a problem exists, we can act.

Also, did you know that bears like our garbage? That is why the Casella bin is kept in the garage during the summer. In December, bears enter hibernation and plow piles around the garage make keeping the Casella bin in there impractical, so we

Eavesdrop on Christmas

You are invited to eavesdrop on Christmas during Advent (and continuing through the Epiphany season.)

Through the voices of many characters during this advent time, Carol Asher imagined what each might be thinking. She inserted herself into the scriptural story, hoping that it would lead her, as well as those who read the book, to a better understanding of what had taken place. A shepherd, the innkeeper, angels, Herod. Caesar, Augustus, to name a few, along with Mary and Joseph... and of course Jesus, relive and reflect on this story that has survived the test of time.

Carol invites you to gather to reflect on the people and events... in the church parlor on Tuesday mornings, December 2nd, 9th, and 16th to begin this "Advent-ure". Books are available at the church (for \$12) or by contacting Carol (clsasher2@aol.com).

Property Continued

move it to the back of Gilpatric Hall until the Spring.

While Advent decorations are not strictly the responsibility of the Property Group, there is stuff that needs to be collected, readied, and assembled and a little property organization helps make things flow a LOT smoother. Outside, the creche and figurines need to be collected from the garage and brought to the front of the church, the creche assembled, and sometimes repaired a bit. An electric cord needs to be run from the side of the church. On the inside, there are wreaths and measuring poles, door greenery, window greenery & candles & electric cords, candles for the front windows (some assembly required), banners, ladders, and measuring tape. Adding in a sprinkling of volunteers and it all comes together in an hour.

News from the Board of Missions

Thank You for Your Generosity

As we look back at the generous giving from CHCC members and friends during this past year, we are grateful for the response to our various "Missions of the Month" and to Our Church's Wider Mission. The total of our offerings is outstanding!

At the end of each year, all our giving is augmented by our church's **Mission Matching Fund**. The interest accrued from this fund is divided proportionately and added to each of the monthly offerings, increasing our support to the various organizations and UCC national offerings.

December Mission of the Month is ALTERNATIVE GIVING

This month, we are challenged to give to any of many organizations needing assistance... and to offer an "honor gift" to family and friends instead (or in addition to) an actual gift.

This year... perhaps more than ever before... many organizations are facing rising requests for services and less support from government agencies. A great solution to the conundrum of choosing the "right gift" is to "give" an alternative gift to a family member or friend... that is, sending a donation to an organization in honor of that person.

The possibilities are endless! It might be an international organization working all around the world... or it may be a local organization that interests the recipient. When you give, many such organizations offer a card to give to the "honoree"; also, there are cards available here at CHCC that can be filled in to indicate that a gift has been sent to a certain place, thus remembering a loved one with an "alternative gift". It's easier than trying to figure out what to give people who have lots to begin with... most meaningful to spread the real purpose of exchanging Christmas presents.

Need some ideas? You might give an extra contribution to one of the local offerings our church supported during the year:

New Beginnings www.newbeginningsnh.org PO Box 622 Laconia NH 03247

Interlakes Community Caregivers www.interlakescares.org PO Box 78 Center Harbor NH 03226

Pemi Valley Habitat for Humanity www.pemivalleyhabitat.org PO Box 238 Plymouth NH 03264

You might pick an organization working with specific focus that matches the interests and concerns of your "honoree"

Animal Rescue in Laconia www.nhhumane.org

New Hampshire Food Bank www.nhfoodbank.org 700 Industrial Park Drive Manchester NH 03109

David's House Children's Hospital at Dartmouth (CHaD) www.children'sdartmouth-health.org

Alzheimer's Association www.alz.org (or others working against specific diseases)

You might like to (virtually) "buy" an animal, a small-business loan to women, a bicycle, clean water, or health benefit to one of these organizations working nationally and internationally (all with good reputations of using donations well). Go to their website to search a gift catalog.

Heifer International www.heifer.org click on gift catalog for information and choices

World Vision www.worldvisiobn.org scroll down to gift catalog

Doctors Without Borders www.docotrswithoutbroders.org scroll to find ways to give a "donor gift"

St Jude Research Hospital www.stjude.org

Collection of Soft Plastics

Thank you for collecting your soft plastics to keep them out of landfills. You may have noticed that the bins in the church hallway are overflowing. The Unitarian Universalist church in Laconia has been unable to serve as a transfer point for the last several months and will not be able to do so during the winter.

Please continue to collect those clean, soft plastics and put them into the large barrels at Wal-Mart or Hannaford.

YOUR PURCHASE OF HANNAFORD GROCERY CARDS TO SHOP WITH IS MAKING A DIFFERENCE FOR OUR CHURCH!

Hannaford is funding a program for churches to earn money.
Purchase \$100 grocery cards during Fellowship Hour on Sundays and Hannaford will donate \$5 to the church for each card sold!

Cash or check accepted!
Use the cards in any Hannaford store!
You can still earn and spend your rewards!
If you spend \$50 one week, the credit remains on the card for future use.
The grocery cards NEVER expire!

Talk it up with family and friends!
Purchase their cards on Sundays too!
EASY EARNINGS FOR CHCC, THANKS TO HANNAFORD!

2025 Contributions to Missions (as of November 25th)

Backpacks	\$360	Medical Debt Relief	\$235.34
Camp Resilience	\$212	Ministry of Space	\$810
Christmas Fund Veterans of Cross	\$447	Neighbors in Need	\$460
Interlakes Community Caregivers	\$405	New Beginnings	\$729
Habitat for Humanity	\$1,041	OCWM	\$1,981
Horton Center	\$749	OGHS	\$554
Hunger Action	\$205	Strengthen the Church	\$254
Deacons Fund	\$2,527	Total:	\$10,969.34

Sunday School



Village Preschool

News

Children's Christmas Program

December 21st is the date set for our Annual Christmas program. This year it will be an all church event, and we need YOU!!!! The older children will have speaking parts while the younger ones create some parts of the Christmas story. However, we will need our congregation's participation as well. The story just doesn't happen without people who can help tell the events of that wondrous night so long ago...townspeople, animals, angels, shepherds, etc. Our teaching team hopes that all who attend on the 21st will participate to bring the Christmas story alive.

Lessons in Waiting for Baby Jesus

Our preschoolers look forward to the month of December for so many reasons, one of which is visiting the Nativity Scene in front of the church. The children check to see if baby Jesus has arrived yet, and we discuss how we have to wait until Christmas Eve to see Baby Jesus. This leads to conversations about patience and taking care of one another.

Did you know that members of the congregation are a vital part of our church preschool? Patty Finn comes in each week to teach music, Linda Verge does a story hour, and Lory Weekes volunteers as a substitute teacher in our classroom.

If you have a talent or a special interest that you'd like to share with us, please let Laura know.

Sunday School December Schedule

December—7th, 14th, and 21st

(No Sunday School December 28th)

Preschool Vacation

December 24th to January 4th

Books 'n Bites

Did you just finish an amazing book and need to tell someone about it? Have you been reading a bunch of duds and need a recommendation?



Come and share what you've been reading!

Tuesday, December 2 at 1:30 pm

Contact Jill Morton (ladymort17@gmail.com) or

Diane Crawford (onie54@gmail.com)

Christmas Poinsettias

Help us decorate the chancel for Christmas by purchasing a poinsettia. The flowers are \$18 a piece and purchasers can take their poinsettias home after the Christmas Eve services if they wish. Unclaimed poinsettias will be delivered to homebound parishioners.



Please sign up on the clipboard after worship services. Contact Diane Crawford at 603-801-5565 or onie54@gmail.com for more information.



12/08 Barb Dwyer
 12/10 Cindi Pelczar
 12/10 Ed O'Hearn
 12/12 Hettie Buck
 12/16 Dolores Slaton
 12/18 Nicholas Curran
 12/25 JESUS CHRIST
 12/26 Earle Jenkins



Anniversaries

12/03 Pam and Joe Hulkow
 12/24 Steve and Barb Dwyer



If Sunday worship is cancelled due to weather, it will be posted on WMUR and on our Facebook page. During the work week, the office follows the InterLakes School District for weather delays and closures, also posted on WMUR and on our Facebook page.

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



Chase Away the Winter Blues

What a great time to cross something off your bucket list! Learn to play an instrument or reconnect with one from your past.

Nancy & I would love to help you discover the joy of playing.

Nancy - piano & organ
 Patty - piano, flute & guitar

Friday AA Group Welcomes Church Members to Their Annual Holiday Party

Any interested church members are invited to join the Friday AA group for their annual holiday party held in Gilpatric Hall on

Friday, December 12th

From 5—9:30 PM

If interested, see Louisa for more information

Nichols Memorial Library 2nd Annual Holiday Cookie Exchange

It's b-a-a-a-c-k! We love hosting this event! No need to register, just participate! Drop off a dozen or more cookies any time on Thursday, December 18 from 10 am to 4 pm. On Friday, December 19, the swap begins all day from 10 am to 4 pm! Come back to the library that day and bring home a delicious assortment of cookies to grace your holiday table.



Drop off: 12/18 10 to 4
Pick up: 12/19 10 to 4

Questions? Call the library at (603)253-6950 or email us at: centerharborlibrary@gmail.com

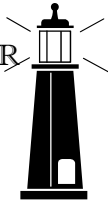
Center Harbor Congregational Church, UCC

December 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Boldface = Church- sponsored events	1	2 10 am Book Discussion, Parlor 1:30 pm Books & Bites, Parlor 4:30 pm Soup Kitchen	3 5 pm Missions Mtg., Zoom	4 9 am Bible Study, Zoom	5 8 pm AA, Gilpatric	6
7 10 am Worship	8	9 10 am Book Discussion, Parlor 4:30 pm Soup Kitchen	10	11 9 am Bible Study, Zoom 4:30 pm Dea- cons Mtg., Zoom 5:30 pm Hum- ble Grunt Work, Gilpatric	12 5-9:30 pm AA Holiday Party (All Are Welcome!)	13
14 10 am Worship	15	16 10 am Book Discussion, Parlor 4:30 pm Soup Kitchen	17	18 9 am Bible Study, Zoom	19 8 pm AA, Gilpatric	20
21 10 am Worship (Children's Christmas Program) Christmas Caroling (After Fellowship Hour)	22	23 4:30 pm Soup Kitchen	24 OFFICE CLOSED 5 pm Outdoor Christmas Eve Service 7 pm Indoor Christmas Eve Service	25 	26 8 pm AA, Gilpatric	27
28 10 am Worship (No Sunday School)	29	30 OFFICE CLOSED 4:30 pm Soup Kitchen	31	Office/Sanctuary Hours: Tues. & Wed. 8:30 am - 2:30 pm Closed December 24th and 30th Pastor Hours: See Weekly E-mail		

THE
CENTER HARBOR
LIGHT

December 2025



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 and respect.

All are Welcome

Christmastide

By Christina Rossetti (1830-1894)

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.



The Adoration of the Magi by Sandro Botticelli (c. 1478/1482).
Image courtesy of the National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC