

THE CENTER HARBOR LIGHT

Special Offering this Month: Christmas Fund Veterans of the Cross

Pastor's Message

Usually in our neck of the woods, even if we don't have a white Christmas, we'll have an acceptable layer of snow in January. This is great news for those who have been waiting for winter activities all year – the skiers, both Nordic and downhill, the snowboarders, the snowshoers. And for some it can be an isolating time. The cold and ice make it harder to get outside for simple exercising; the early darkness and constant threat of more snow results in more challenging driving conditions, and it's hard to make and keep plans. And of course, everyone experiences the whole spectrum of delights and frustrations to some extent.

The month of January is also covered by our liturgical season of Epiphany. This is the season when we remember the ways that Jesus' divinity was revealed to various people. The Christmas story that we just celebrated means nothing if Jesus is not, in fact, God. AND the Christmas story that we just celebrated means nothing if God does not, in fact, live among us as fully human. It is Eurocentric to think that Jesus was born "in the bleak midwinter when snow had fallen snow on snow." Jesus was born in a hotter climate with olive trees instead of fir trees. So no, he was not a snowboarder, and he didn't have to worry about driving in icy conditions. Okay, maybe the 2,000 years between us is also why he was not a snowboarder or driver. But even across the world, even through time, he did experience exhilaration and fear, contentment and frustration just we do. As my mom put it when I was a child: "Jesus knows what it's like to stub your toe."

Beloveds, my hope for you this month is that you may embrace the wacky mystery that Jesus is no less human, even in this season of Epiphany, and that that understanding may bring you a sense of comfort and affirmation. For those who saw the vulnerable baby or the toddler at the peak of his terrible twos, the challenge was to see a heavenly king. For us 2,000 years later, it may be to see Jesus' full humanness. But in our times of trial he does not just empathize with us, he sympathizes, because he has felt temptation and anger too. When we celebrate, he celebrates with us because he knows what joy and inner peace feel like. Through Jesus' baffling identity as fully human and fully divine, God can never

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Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
An Open and Affirming Congregation
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Center Harbor, NH 03226
Tel: (603) 253-7698
Website: www.chccucc.org

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



S Pastor Alison Thatcher
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Pastor's Message

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be separate from us. Beloveds, next time you are riding down the mountain, know that God takes delight in your joy. Next time you are shut inside and feeling lonely, know that Emmanuel never leaves your side. And when you stub your toe, don't feel bad about what comes out of your mouth. Jesus probably had something to say about it when it happened to him too.

Blessed be,
Pastor Alison

Holly Fair Update

With just a couple of Silent Auction items to be picked up and paid for, the final profit from the 2025 Holly Fair is, approximately, \$4,800! Thank you, again, to all who, in numerous ways, contributed to the success of this all-church fundraiser!

Church Life

Caroling

On December 21st members of our congregation visited several area assisted living facilities to share the joy of Christmas through song. The group spread holiday cheer to the residents and even ran into some familiar faces. We are excited to have this tradition back after several years hiatus.



Carolers with church member John Merrill (sitting) at Forestview Manor from L to R: Maris Thatcher-Forgues, Jasmine Smith, Margaret Cooper, Pastor Alison Thatcher, Sally Lyon, Don Edwards, Barb Edwards, Natalie Smith, and Hettie Buck. Not pictured Ann Koniszewski

Christmas Eve



Our Christmas Eve services were well attended with more than 60 people at each service. Once again the deacons provided luminaries to lead the way to the church and the indoor service featured music from our bell choir and choir. Thank you to all of the volunteer readers and everyone who made these special worship services happen.



This Month's Events



Book Discussion Group

With Carol Asher
January 6, 13, and 20
10 AM in Parlor
Discussion of *An Eavesdropper's Guide to Christmas*



Thursday Bible Study

With Pastor Alison
January 8, 15, 22, and 29
9 AM by Zoom
Check weekly e-mail for Zoom link!



Books & Bites

Come share what you've been reading!
January 20th at 1:30 PM in parlor
Contact: Jill Morton
(ladymort17@gmail.com or Diane Crawford (onie54@gmail.com)



Sunday School Christmas Program

On December 21st the Sunday school classes presented the Christmas story in front of the congregation. This year's program combined the telling of the story of Jesus' birth with carols and had participation from the entire congregation. By the end, the children and audience members had created a beautiful tableau of the nativity scene.

Thank you to all the children and Sunday school teachers for this wonderful presentation. And thank you for congregants who bravely volunteered to play shepherds, animals, and townspeople.

There will be no Sunday school during school break. Classes will resume Sunday, January 7th.



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!

News from the Board of Missions



January Mission of the Month: Christmas Fund

Veterans of the Cross

It may seem strange to have “The Christmas Fund” as our January mission of the month. It’s because the money we offer NOW is used during the whole year and also to wish retired clergy a “Merry Christmas” NEXT year. This year’s theme is: “...When they saw the star, they were filled with joy...” (Matthew 2:10).

The Christmas Fund is one of the national UCC’s four special mission offerings. The Christmas Fund has been caring for active and retired clergy and lay employees of the United Church of Christ for over 100 years. It provides emergency grants, supplements small annuities and health premiums, and sends Christmas “Thank You” gift checks each December to our lower-income retirees.

UCC congregations and members have blessed the Christmas Fund with their generosity for many years. This year, your care and compassion will be especially appreciated by those servants of the church who are facing a time of need. This offering is managed by the Pension Boards.

Please think of a favorite pastor or minister who has been important in your faith journey... and give to The Christmas Fund offering in honor of that special person.

Property Corner: A Hodgepodge

January is a relatively quiet month for the Property group, mostly keeping things shoveled out and thinking forward to inspections and Spring cleanups.

That doesn’t mean some odds and ends don’t pop up. A weather strip came off the front door at the end of last winter, and we finally got around to replacing it. A caster came off the coat rack outside the sanctuary and had to be repaired. The sand barrels have been upgraded to larger containers, new scoops, and LOTS of sand in each. In addition, there is a new sand barrel along the back walkway.

Our plan to rebuild the ramp behind Gilpatric Hall was put on hold when winter rushed in with snow and bitter cold. We have all the materials we need and are now waiting for Spring weather to get the job done. I would like to reassure people that the ramp is structurally sound. We rolled the 500-pound piano and 6 men across it with no

problem and jumping on it does not bounce or give. The surface of the decking is damaged, but it is solid. We placed a mat over it for the winter.

The emergency lighting in the church and parlor, which was substandard when inspected, has been upgraded to new LED modules with 10-year rechargeable batteries. In addition, the panels at the back of the sanctuary now have lighted EXIT signs.

There have been questions about our arrangement with the plowing company. I had a great conversation with Ben Fullerton, whose company does the plowing. I am sure that few people in the church know how great a deal we are getting. Ben strongly believes in supporting nonprofit and religious organizations and is only charging HALF of the normal commercial rate. They are also shoveling all of the walks, when they can, FOR NO ADDITIONAL CHARGE. However,

that can depend on how busy they are. Because many of our members are not up to shoveling, I asked Ben how much additional cost would be incurred to formalize the shoveling part of the cleanup. This may be something we might consider since it would get the job done at the time they plow and relieve us from scrambling to clean up when we get to the church. He is getting back to me with a quote. Consider Ben’s landscaping company for plowing and landscaping work as well as Cook Country Property Management, who has been cleaning up our garden area for no charge and did a great job blowing the sand out of the parking lots last year. We should support the merchants that support us.

Jeff Koniszewski, Property Manager

Happy Birthday

1/08 Carol Asher
1/09 Chris Thompson
1/12 Cindy Thompson
1/13 Patrick Curran (son)
1/24 Isadora Cartier
1/27 Carrie Crosby



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.

Felted Animal Workshop

Saturday, January 10 from 10 am to 12 pm.
Come and create an adorable felted animal to give as a gift or keep for yourself. No experience necessary; we'll show you how! Choose from a variety of sweet critters; chipmunk, fox, owl, sloth or hedge. There will be lots of fun and laughter as we create together, guaranteed!
Cost of materials: \$10. Please pre-register by Thursday, Jan. 8th. Space is limited so reserve your spot today. Call the library at (603) 253-6950 or email us at: centerharborlibrary@gmail.com



MICHAELS

SNOW SHOVELING

MEREDITH AREA

(603) 581-4149

WEEKENDS MY SPECIALITY

January 2026

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--|--------|--|--|---|------------------------------------|----------|
| | | | | 1 | 2 8 PM AA (opening meeting) | 3 |
| 4 10 AM Worship 11:30 AM Bell Choir Rehearsal No Sunday School | 5 | 6 10 AM Book Discussion Group, Parlor 4:30 PM Soup Kitchen | 7 5 PM Missions Meeting, by Zoom | 8 9 AM Bible Study, by Zoom 4:30 PM Deacons Meeting, by Zoom | 9 8 PM AA (opening meeting) | 10 |
| 11 10 AM Worship 11:30 AM Bell Choir Rehearsal | 12 | 13 10 AM Book Group, Parlor 4:30 PM Soup Kitchen 7 PM Finance Committee Mtg, by Zoom | 14 | 15 9 AM Bible Study, by Zoom | 16 8 PM AA (opening meeting) | 17 |
| 18 10 AM Worship 11:30 AM Bell Choir Rehearsal No Sunday School | 19 | 20 10 AM Book Group, Parlor 1:30 PM Books and Bites, Parlor 4:30 PM Soup Kitchen 7 PM Cabinet Mtg, by Zoom | 21 | 22 9 AM Bible Study, by Zoom | 23 8 PM AA (opening meeting) | 24 |
| 25 10 AM Worship 11:30 AM Bell Choir Rehearsall | 26 | 27 4:30 PM Soup Kitchen | 28 | 29 9 AM Bible Study, by Zoom | 30 8 PM AA (opening meeting) | 31 |