

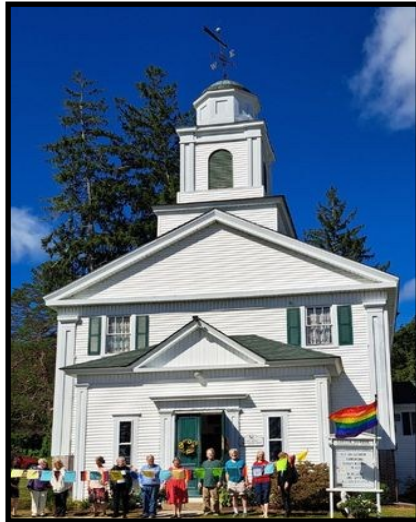
# THE CENTER HARBOR LIGHT



Volume 47 No. 3

Special offering this month: *One Great Hour of Sharing*

March 2025



**Center Harbor  
Congregational Church**  
*United Church of Christ*  
*An Open and Affirming Congregation*

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**Office Hours:**

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Wed. 8:30 am - 2:30 pm  
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**a**  
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**Deacon:**  
Cindy Thompson

**The Village Preschool**  
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## To Lent or Not to Lent?

You probably know that Lent is the season leading up to Easter – 40 days from Ash Wednesday to Easter Saturday. Sundays don't count, because every Sunday is a "little Easter," a reminder of the joy of resurrection. In the very earliest church, Lent was a time for new Christians to prepare for baptism on Easter morning, a time of learning about the Christian faith. Sometime after the Council of Nicaea in 325 CE, Lent also became a time of penance and fasting for all Christians, to prepare for the observance of Christ's passion and resurrection. Christians were not allowed to eat meat or eggs or cheese or fats or sweets during Lent, which was handy because (in the days before canning and freezers) by springtime, not much of that was left from the previous year's harvest anyway. So, Christians ate a lot of unbuttered bread and salted fish and prayed for Easter to arrive.

I grew up in a Presbyterian church in Texas that did not observe Lent at all – or Advent either, for that matter. As a child, I was taught to view these penitential seasons as something for Catholics, not something that applied to Protestants like us. We didn't prepare for Easter with solemn Lenten services focused on the coming Crucifixion, and we also didn't have a Maundy Thursday or Good Friday service. So, we could whiz right past the Crucifixion, hardly noticing that it was there at all. Easter seemed to be the happy ending to a story that was missing its central drama.

Sometime in my middle adult years, mainline Protestant churches like ours began to see the value of liturgical seasons. We started to use colored paraments (banners and pulpit drapes) and vestments (the pastor's stoles) to signal the changes in the church calendar. This connected us to the wider church and it brought a richness to worship that appealed to the physical senses. Churches from the Reformed tradition, like ours, usually did not go so far as to require – or even encourage – fasting and other penance, but Lent nevertheless became a thing for us, too.

Today, I find that I am a little torn about Lent. In the period leading up to Easter, I want each Sunday to continue to be the joyful celebration of the Living God. But I do find it meaningful to pause on Ash Wednesday to be reminded that I am mortal. I don't fast during Lent, and I have to admit that this is because I am in the privileged position of having a refrigerator and a grocery store and enough money to get what appeals to me. Others are not so fortunate. I prefer to put off the heavy contemplation of the Cross until Holy Week, but I don't want us to skip it then. I want us all to come to the Maundy Thursday service and face that part of our story together. So, I have chosen to tiptoe into Lent. I don't wear it heavily, but I wear it nonetheless.

Continued on pg. 2

Continued from pg. 1

As Christians in the Reformed tradition, we each have the authority and the responsibility to make these choices for ourselves. We can ignore Lent altogether, and we would have historical and theological justification for that choice. We can go all-in, and be deeply connected to another strand of Christian history. Or we can put a toe in the water, taking the parts that are meaningful for us and leaving the rest. Any of these choices is appropriate, so long as we make it thoughtfully, prayerfully. How do you approach Lent? Does Lent mean anything to you at all? Do you give something up for Lent or volunteer for additional service in Jesus' name during this time? I would love to hear your answers!

*Pastor Cathy*

## Church Life

### Ideas Shared at Church Retreat

On February 1st, members of our congregation met for a retreat to discuss what we have accomplished and what we might like to do next. With nearly two dozen attendees, lots of ideas were shared!

After a bit of a delayed start due to snow, Pastor Cathy walked the group through what we have accomplished in the last five years, including getting through the pandemic, increasing average attendance at worship, more than doubling enrollment in Sunday school, increasing pledged giving, and engaging with a larger community through our church's Facebook page. The group then looked at each area of the 2019 Long-Range plan to review and comment on how the congregation did on meeting these goals. The goals from that long-range plan were expand faith formation, continue and improve Holy Hospitality, expand outreach and community service, communicate more effectively, increase member involvement, and increase giving.

The group then moved on to what we might like to accomplish in the next five years. Led by Moderator Fred Doscher, attendees were split into small brainstorming groups to propose ideas for what we might want to do over the next five years in six different categories (Mission and Outreach, Property, Deficit, Worship, Christian Education, and Hospitality). At the end of the day, participants were given stickers to vote for just ONE idea per category to help narrow down what is most important to the congregation. The next day, these lists were displayed in Gilpatric Hall for anyone who was not at the retreat for the voting to pick their choices. A number of people were able to include their input in this way.

A summary of the retreat with all the ideas along with vote counts was submitted by the Self Study Committee to the Cabinet (this summary is available in the church office). From here, the cabinet and

individual boards will consider the results and work towards formulating a new long-range plan. Thank you for everyone who participated in this first stage of the long-range planning process.

### Hunger Action Collection

Throughout the month of February we collected food to donate to the Moultonborough Food Pantry as part of our Hunger Action Mission of the Month. Because of all the snow cancellations in February, the Hunger Action collection has been extended to March 9th. Please continue to add to our collection of food in the next weeks! After March 9th, the food will be distributed to the food pantry.

Little Free Pantry  
WINTER  
CHECKLIST

<p style="text-align: center; margin: 0;"><b>Meals</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Boxed/bagged grains/beans</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Dry pasta, sauce in plastic</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Boxed/bagged pasta meals</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Hormel Completes</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Campbell's Ready Meals</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Tuna pouches</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Peanut butter/jelly in plastic</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Hot/cold cereals</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center; margin: 0;"><b>Personal Care</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Shampoo/conditioner</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Soap</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Toothpaste/toothbrushes</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Deodorant</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Feminine hygiene products</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Diapers/wipes</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Hats/gloves/scarves</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center; margin: 0;"><b>Snacks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Peanut butter snack crackers</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Applesauce/fruit squeezes</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Dried fruit</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Granola/breakfast bars</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Beef jerky</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Nuts</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Milk boxes</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center; margin: 0;"><b>Paper Products</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Paper towels</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Toilet paper</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Kleenex</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Trash bags</li> </ul>

## Notes from the February Cabinet Meeting

Actions taken at our Tuesday, 2/18 Meeting:

- Received the Treasurer's report of budget to actuals through 1/31/25;
- Noted revised budget to go to the congregation on 2/23/25;
- Planned for the retreat notes to be sent to cabinet members (others are welcomed to them as well);
- Scheduled the Craft Fair for 7/12/25;
- Approved extending Cathy's relationship with a member for career advising purposes only;
- Planned for each church group to review retreat notes that relate to their area;
- Reviewed initial plans for filling the pulpit after Cathy's retirement;
- Asked the Nominating Committee to provide a list of names to be considered for the Pastoral Search Committee;
- Approved making a request to the Conference for assistance in finding a Transitional Pastor.

Thanks to the Cabinet for a good meeting together on a chilly night!  
Fred Doscher, Moderator

The next meeting of the Cabinet will be March 18th at 7 PM by Zoom.

### An Invitation from the Cabinet:

You are invited to host a fun church family event! A game night is already in the works. What ideas do you have? Here are some to get you thinking. Watch for a sign-up sheet in Gilpatric Hall in the next month! Let's have fun and get to know each other better!

- Plan an intergenerational game evening
- Participate in the summer ice cream socials
- Host an end-of-summer church picnic
- Provide a lesson in drawing or painting
- Host a dinner for 5-8 church members—one of those invited will host the next time and so on
- Organize a group to go bowling at Funspot
- Organize a talent show
- Host a themed potluck—all soups, all vegan, all green
- Lead a lesson in line dancing
- Teach us how to juggle
- Hold a Bible trivia night
- Lead a game of charades
- Organize a scavenger hunt
- Host a campfire evening—toast marshmallows
- Your idea!



Past CHCC Fun Nights

### Lenten Study: "This I Believe"

You are invited to join in a study/discussion/sharing adventure during the season of Lent: March 12<sup>th</sup> through April 16<sup>th</sup>. We will explore our ways of "building" a personal belief system: WHAT we believe, HOW it might grow and change, HOW we share our beliefs etc. Our beliefs are not only our images of God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit and other faith issues, but also our personal values and ideals. We will use a variety of activities, written materials, and personal stories to shape our times together.

It seems like an in-person gathering at the church on Wednesday mornings might work for participants. We will gather for a short meeting on Wednesday, March 5<sup>th</sup> at 11:30AM (before the Ash Wednesday service at noon) to make decisions together about that day and time... and to clarify study contents a little.

If you have questions or concerns, please talk with Carol Asher.

### ***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, March 18th at 1:30 pm**

Contact Jill Morton ([ladymort17@gmail.com](mailto:ladymort17@gmail.com)) or

Diane Crawford ([onie54@gmail.com](mailto:onie54@gmail.com))

# News from the Board of Missions

## ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING...YOU ARE THE LIGHT!

Our March Mission of the Month is the One Great Hour of Sharing. As some of you may remember, OGHS was started as an ecumenical offering to respond to the great need for help of so many people after WW II. It was probably the first time that people of different faiths came together to respond as one to the tragedies that had befallen so many people.

75+ years later, we continue to join with other Christians to respond to the pain and hunger caused by wars, floods and fires. This year's theme is "You are the light," and that we are! Following Jesus's words from Matthew—"You are the light of the world"—the offering this year will shine brightly for people caught in tragedies beyond our imagination. Imagine being in desperate need and seeing a truck bringing food because someone cared in the US. We are not able to respond to each challenge that comes up, but we can shine a light into the darkness that overcomes so many people's lives. We are reminded in the Gospel of John: "Our light can shine in the darkness, and the darkness will not overcome it."

We have been in the top 50 UCC churches in per capita giving to the One Great Hour of Sharing. Let's hold our place as we shed a powerful light of hope!

### 2025 Contributions to Missions (as of February 26th)

Backpacks	\$30	OCWM	\$457
Christmas Fund Veterans of Cross	\$427	OGHS	\$55
Interlakes Community Caregivers	\$30	Strengthen the Church	\$30
Habitat for Humanity	\$30	Deacon's Fund	\$150
Horton Center	\$30		
Hunger Action	\$180		
Ministry of Space	\$30		
Neighbors in Need	\$30		
New Beginnings	\$30		Total: \$1,509

## Property News March 2025

We have been reviewing things that need to be done before our March Fire Department inspection for our occupancy permit. Because we are a public building, we require an annual occupancy permit to use the building. As a public building, we are also subject to requirements beyond that of a private residence. Thus, we have a fire detection system, safety items like fire extinguishers and emergency lights, and a fire suppression system for our kitchen stove. And, just as you must have your car inspected annually, we are required to have these various systems inspected as well. In reviewing all the systems, we have discovered that we have not been diligent in doing some of this, so we are playing "catch up" in some areas. Also, there are certain aspects of our systems that are functional but out of date and we may be better served with some improvements, so we are also getting suggestions for those updates as the inspections are being done. We will then get quotes for that work for consideration.

As the group reviews all this information, I am capturing it along with contact information and scheduling plans so that it is readily available for future years. We have also been working with Fred, as Moderator, to bring some of the critical pieces and costs before the Cabinet and Congregation for approval.

Plan for the CHCC Spring cleanup – Saturday, April 12th, 9 am (Easter is April 20<sup>th</sup>). We need lots of hands to shovel and rake then put sand and debris into buckets and trash cans. Please bring rakes, shovels, and gloves. We will have trash cans and buckets available. We will also rake out the front garden as we are able and work on the plants by the front of the church. We should wrap up by around 1 pm.

-Jeff Koniszewski, Property Group Manager

## Sunday School



## Village Preschool

### Youth Sunday—March 16th

Students in our Sunday school have been hard at work planning for Youth Sunday on March 16th. The children are planning and leading the entire worship service including serving as greeters, ushers, candle lighters, musicians, liturgists, and preachers.

Please join us in supporting the children's efforts by attending the service on Youth Sunday.

### Planning for Youth Group

There has been some discussion amongst the Sunday school and at the church retreat in February about trying to start a youth group for our older children. The group would be for middle school age kids, and the idea would be to offer programs that could also include youth from other area churches and that our own children could invite their friends to.

The older Sunday school class will be meeting after the Youth Service on March 16th. At that meeting the Board of Christian Education would like to hear from the children about if they are interested in a Youth Group, what their thoughts are in how they would like it to run, and when and how often to meet.

BOCE hopes this could prove an exciting opportunity for our congregation to expand our youth programming and reach out into the larger community.

### Preschool Happenings

In March we will be learning all about the process of Maple Sugaring, all things green, St Patrick's Day and Rainbows. Be sure to watch out for tricks Greenie the Leprechaun does around our room!

March means it is time to begin our enrollment process for the fall. At this time, we only have two spots available for the 2025-2026 school year.

Although our preschoolers really enjoy the snow, we're hoping that it doesn't affect our school day anymore. We had to miss a few days in February, which we hope to make up in the late spring when there's not as much of a chance for delays and cancellations.



Preschool students enjoying the snow in the meadow.

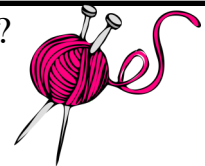
Join Us for a  
**Celtic Concert**  
Presented by  
Tre Voce Piano Trio  
& CHCC Handbells

Sunday, March 16th at 2pm  
Center Harbor Congregational Church  
52 Main Street

**FREE!**  
Open to the public

A note from Laura Curran:  
Dear members of the congregation,  
Thank you for the generous Christmas gift and thoughtful card. It is a blessing to be part of this church family that is so supportive of our little preschool.

Cabin Fever Got You Restless?  
Pick up some yarn and knit or  
crochet for the Holly Fair!



Our knit goods table sold out last year, so we are in need of knitted and crocheted items to sell at this year's Holly Fair. If you are a yarn artist, please consider sharing your talents by making a few items. Contact Cindi Pelczar with questions: [cpelczar35@gmail.com](mailto:cpelczar35@gmail.com)



- 03/01 Margaret Cooper
- 03/03 Sally Lyon
- 03/07 Martha Johnson
- 03/10 Lauren O'Hearn
- 03/13 Don Edwards
- 03/20 Jane Hilder
- 03/27 Ruth Costello
- 03/28 Brian Knight
- 03/28 Cathy Turrentine
- 03/30 Betsy Vazifdar

## Inclement Weather Policy

The church will use WMUR to announce weather-related closures and cancellations. If there is snow or ice, please make a safe decision about travel for yourself, and then consult WMUR (on television or online) to check whether the church will be open. During the work week, the office follows the Inter-Lakes School District for weather delays and closures

### OUR CHURCH HAS OVER 100

Facebook followers from our community and around the world!

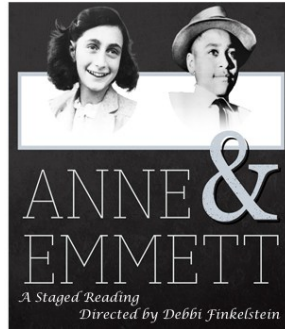
LIKE us! Watch for our daily posts of our church family doing God's work!

[www.facebook.com/CenterHarborCongregationalChurch](http://www.facebook.com/CenterHarborCongregationalChurch)

Need assistance opening or managing your account?  
Reach out to Cindy Thompson  
[ccthompson1978@gmail.com](mailto:ccthompson1978@gmail.com)

## Opportunities In Our Community

**CASTING CALL for "Anne & Emmett"**  
A One-Act Play By Janet Langhart Cohen  
Tuesday, March 11, 2025, 5:00 to 8:00 pm  
Location: Congregational Church of Laconia,  
UCC, 18 Veteran's Square, Laconia



No need to register to audition—Drop in between 5-8 pm on March 11

Actors should prepare a 1-minute monologue from a published play and may be asked to read sides from "Anne & Emmett".  
(More information available on flyer in church office)

Performance Date—Thursday, April 24, 2025 5:30 pm  
Congregational Church of Laconia, UCC

Inter-Faith Passover Seder  
Saturday, March 29, 2025  
11:45 am—2 pm  
Temple B'nai Israel  
210 Court Street, Laconia  
A light lunch will be served.

Temple B'nai Israel invites interested congregants to join them in celebrating Passover. The seder is a festive meal that uses prayers, food, and rituals to celebrate freedom and redemption. The event is free, but registration is required. We will register anyone interested in going from our congregation as a group, so please contact the church office if you would like to attend the Passover Sedar.

Horton Center  
Souper Saturday Winter Gathering  
March 29th, 12 PM—3PM  
Tad's Place (Havenwood Heritage Heights)  
Concord, NH



Join the Horton Center for a delicious lunch and get a dose of camp! The event is FREE but registration is required.

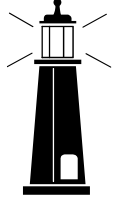
RSVP: [tinyurl.com/soupersaturday2025](http://tinyurl.com/soupersaturday2025)

# Center Harbor Congregational Church, UCC

## March 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>This month's mission:</b> <b>One Great Hour of Sharing</b> <b>Boldface = Church-sponsored events</b>						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
<b>10 am Worship</b> <b>(No Sunday School)</b>  <b>11 am Handbell Rehearsal</b>		4:30 pm Soup Kitchen	<b>11:30 am Lenten Study Meeting, Parlor</b>  <b>12 pm Ash Wednesday Service</b>  <b>5 pm Missions Mtg., Zoom</b>	<b>9 am Bible Study, Zoom</b>	8 pm AA (open meeting)	
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
<b>10 am Worship</b> <b>11 am Handbell Rehearsal</b>  Spring Forward! 		<b>4:30 pm Deacons Mtg., Zoom</b>  4:30 pm Soup Kitchen		<b>9 am Bible Study, Zoom</b>	8 pm AA (open meeting)	
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
<b>10 am Worship</b> <b>Youth Sunday</b>  <b>11 am Youth Group Planning Meeting</b>  <b>2 pm Celtic Music Concert, Sanctuary</b>		<b>1:30 pm Books &amp; Bites, Parlor</b>  4:30 pm Soup Kitchen  <b>7 pm Cabinet Mtg., Zoom</b>		<b>9 am Bible Study, Zoom</b>	8 pm AA (open meeting)	
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
<b>10 am Worship</b>  <b>11 am Handbell Rehearsal</b>		4:30 pm Soup Kitchen		<b>9 am Bible Study, Zoom</b>	8 pm AA (open meeting)	12- 3 PM Horton Center Winter Gathering, Concord
30	31					
<b>10 am Worship</b>  <b>11 am Handbell Rehearsal</b>						

THE  
CENTER HARBOR  
LIGHT



March 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

## Immortal

By Mark Van Doren (1894-1972)

The last thin acre of stalks that stood  
Was never the end of the wheat.  
Always something fled to the wood,  
As if the field had feet.

In front of the sickle something rose—  
Mouse, or weasel, or hare;  
We struck and struck, but our worst blows  
Dangled in the air.

Nothing could touch the little soul  
Of the grain. It ran to cover,  
And nobody knew in what warm hole  
It slept till the winter was over,

And early seeds lay cold in the ground.  
Then—but nobody saw—  
It burrowed back with never a sound,  
And awoke the thaw.

This poem is in the public domain



*Spring Landscape, 1890s* by Robert S. Redfield. Platinum print. Purchased as the Gift of the Richard King Mellon Foundation. *Courtesy National Gallery of Art, Washington.*