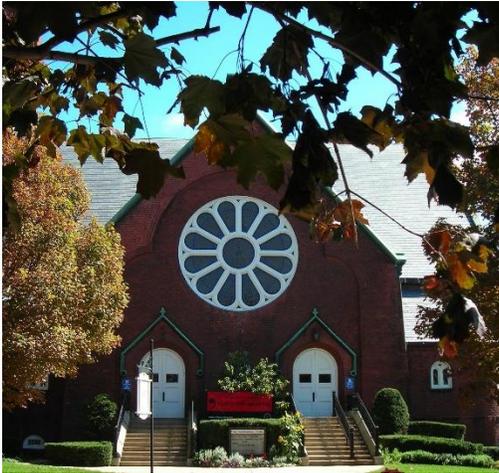




# *CHURCH AT THE CENTER* ;

**DECEMBER 2018**



## **FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH "CENTER CHURCH"**

United Church of Christ

One Church Street

South Hadley, Massachusetts 01075

**(413) 532-2262**

**email: [centerchurch@verizon.net](mailto:centerchurch@verizon.net)**

**website: [centerchurchsouthhadley.org](http://centerchurchsouthhadley.org)**

*ALL ARE WELCOME AT CENTER CHURCH ON THE COMMON,  
AN OPEN AND AFFIRMING UCC CONGREGATION,  
WHERE THE SPIRIT OF GOD STIRS US TO EMBRACE OUR DIVERSITY,  
DEEPEN OUR FAITH IN JESUS, SHARE OUR TEARS AND LAUGHTER,  
AND EXTEND GOD'S ABUNDANT LOVE AND JUSTICE INTO THE WORLD.*

How do you fare with waiting? Waiting at the Dentist office? Waiting in traffic? Waiting to receive grades from a class? Waiting for a loved one to call who doesn't, doesn't even text? Waiting for snow? Waiting for health tests or for your heart to feel fuller and less anxious?

Advent is all about waiting. Advent begins the first season of the liturgical year, representing a four week time period. We wait with expectation as to how Jesus' birth, life, death, and resurrection will transform us. During this period of waiting, it occurs to me we can look for the God Moments in nature, in a traffic line where you notice more kindness than impatience, or in the way you connected with someone or something.

May we wait together with hope,  
Lori



### **Bible Study at Loomis - Thursdays at 10:30 am - Nov. 29, Dec. 6 & 13**

November 29 <sup>th</sup>	Luke 1: 25 - 45	Carolyn Baston, host Apt. 223
December 6	Luke 2: 1 - 21	Betty Kelsey, host Apt. 225
December 13 <sup>th</sup>	Matthew 1 18-29	TBA



**Rev. Souder will be away  
December 26 - January 1.**  
The Church Office will be closed  
Dec. 14, 25 and 26. January 1 and 5.

Did you know you can purchase **Equal Exchange Organic Coffee** in the Church Office  
- only \$7.50 a bag - French Roast or Columbian.  
**2.8 oz. Chocolate bars** too! - only \$3.00 each.



So you want to sing Christmas Carols before Christmas?! **On Dec 16 we will have a mostly music Sunday including a hymn sing with your favorite Christmas Carols.** Jot down your favorite and drop them in the offering plate before Dec 16. And... **we invite you to wear your favorite Christmas pins, neck ties or sweaters,** especially ones with Christmas cats!



**Advent Candle Lighting**

Are you interested in lighting the candle during Advent worship or on Christmas Eve? The lighting symbolizes the coming of Jesus into our midst. To sign up means lighting a candle or candles and reading a few brief words. If you or your family members have not lit the candles in the last three years and want to light/read, let Lori know. We welcome both individuals and families.



**Christmas Eve Service**

December 24, 2018

**5:00 pm Candlelight Service**



*As is Center Church tradition our Christmas Eve offerings will be directed to Heifer Fund International.*

**The United Church of Christ writes this about Advent:** Advent (from Latin, adventus, meaning "coming towards") is a four-week season of preparation for Christmas. The First Sunday of Advent (November 30) marks the beginning of the church's year.



**ADVENT**

Advent and Christmas focus both on the past--the coming of Jesus as an infant born into poverty in Bethlehem, and the future--the coming of Christ in glory to fulfill God's loving purposes for humanity. This past and future orientation is reflected in the readings appointed in the church for each Sunday of Advent.

Advent this year comes at a time of anxiety and hope. Many of us are struggling and are afraid for our future. It's not easy to hope when times are bad. Mary, as she waited for the birth of her child into an uncertain world, knew how to live with hope--to believe the promises of God. So Advent is a time when we wait, with Mary, for the birth of new life into a world living in the shadows of death.



Thank you, Stewardship Team for being such great hosts during November coffee hours. You were really an "A+" team. Please know how appreciated it was! During the month of December the Usher Team will be our hosts. This team provides support for all church services, including weddings, memorial services and funerals. The members of this team are: Ken Bozek, Bill Giles, Barbara Hatch, Randy Hyvonen, Sharyn Kovalesky, Doug Smith, Joyce Tomlinson, and Theresa Waller.

## PLEASE KEEP THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE IN YOUR PRAYERS

### Continual:

Emily Bangs-Orsini (at Mt. St. Vincent)  
Chuck Blakney on Hospice  
Luke Bradley  
Marjorie Buschner  
Wayne Cowan  
Daniel Dempsey  
Tim Garrett's friends David Drummond &  
Sterling McAndrew  
Muriel Graham  
Lou Hamilton  
Jane Hazen  
Phyllis Lacoste  
Hector Reyes  
Anita Sarro's son Michael in need of a transplant  
Anna Sibley  
Ruth Thornton

*We keep those serving in the military  
in our prayers.*

### Situational:

Carol Ehman as she undergoes cancer treatment  
Shelly Granger  
Martha Guild's father, Curt Guild  
Audrey Heaphy  
Tom Hazen, home  
Eunice Howes' friend, Sarah Boynton  
Becky McArthur  
Lucio Perez, in Sanctuary in Amherst FCC  
Art Stanley  
Cayden, Barbara Blank's great grandson born  
premature



There will be a **Memorial Service for Betsy Bergen on Saturday December 8<sup>th</sup>** followed by a reception at MHC's Willits-Hallowell Center. Rides from the church to Willits will be available for Loomis Residents and anyone who does not have other transportation. Please let Lori or Bobbie know you will need a ride.



**Our next Front Lawn Vigil will be held on December 15<sup>th</sup> - the Theme will be Immigration.  
Please join us - signs provided or bring your own**



Center Church Activities Team was able to help out Bee's Bakery (St. Theresa's group that put on their fair in November) by loaning out the three Pastry Cabinets that we use at our Fairs. St. Theresa's had a note of thanks in their newsletter - "We wish to acknowledge the generosity of members of the Center Congregational Church for the loan of three pastry boxes. It made our display's attractive and gave us so much more area to showcase all the delicious pastries....". Karen Anderson and Al Duffy also received a hand-written notes of thanks from the group. So...**THANK YOU** to Randy Purinton for creating the cabinets - and for the generosity of the Activities Team for letting others benefit from their use.



to the Center Church folks who donated Turkeys, fixings and gift cards so that those in need could enjoy a *complete* Thanksgiving Dinner. We were able to offer this to several very grateful families

**Thank you for your generosity of spirit!!**

# CHILDREN'S CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

December is the best month in Sunday school with the excitement and anticipation of Jesus's birth and the lovely traditions that surround this highlight of the year. As we continue the unit on Creation, Promised Landers will also explore themes of Advent and prepare for a modified pageant. Calling all lambs and angels! We'll be busy making ornaments to share with the congregation and learning new songs about gratitude. It's going to be a great month in the Promised Land Sunday School where God's creation continues to grow and develop and faith formation is a delightful work in progress!

Martha Guild, CE Director



## Youth Group

November was a great month for the Youth Group. We had our biggest bonding event of the semester: the lock-in! Twelve Center Church youth and two friends attended, bringing the total to fourteen, very energetic youths. We played all their favorite games to the wee hours of the morning: GROG, Sardines, Charades, Capture the Flag, Mafia, and more! Luckily, we all fell asleep watching the movie "Parental Guidance" in the Sanctuary. Be sure to check out the Center Church Facebook or Instagram for photos. In Youth Group, we had some lessons on getting through tough issues happening in our world and how we are called on by God to help fix these problems. Claire and Emily will be on winter break sometime in the middle of December, so please keep your eyes on your emails for when the last day of Youth Group will be. We are looking forward to a fantastic end of the year! Warmly, Emily and Claire

## Safety Task Force

The Center Church Safety Task force will host an **AED/CPR training through the South Hadley Fire Department on December 16<sup>th</sup> at 11:30am following the worship service.**

All are invited to participate. You may opt to become certified (there is a \$16 fee for Certification) or take the class just to learn for free. **YOUTH GROUP** members are invited to join. Knowledge of how to perform these procedures can be invaluable - even if you think you do not want to take the responsibility of performing them on others. Please sign up by December 9<sup>th</sup> on the sheet in the Bock Crossway or in Fellowship Hall. Speak to Al Duffy for more information.

Do you have **tissue paper, or just plain paper** that came in a box with some item? Please save it and bring it to church. We'll have a box in Fellowship Hall to collect it. The cashiers at our Columbus Day Fair and Holiday Bazaar want to wrap the bought items in plain paper as opposed to newspaper. It's cleaner and it's easier to use. So we thought if we asked you now you'd have some left over from the holidays.....and we'll store it if you just bring it in. Thanks!

# News from the Trustees for December 2018

The trustees are continuing to work on the 2019 budget and are anxious to see what the Stewardship campaign has brought in. As you may know, we decided to shoot for a pledge income target of \$178,000. The stewardship folks will keep us all apprised about the progress on that. Watch the weekly bulletins! Coming back to current year figures, at the end of October, our 2018 budget should be at the 83% mark. Income stands at 87%, and we are most thankful for all of you who have contributed to that, and expenses are at 84.6% with two months of the heating season yet to be factored in. If you made a pledge for this current year back last fall, (and have already completed your pledge, **thank you**), by the time you read this, you will only have one month left to fulfill your pledge. Please do make sure that your final payment is in the church office by December 30. **Special thanks** to John Anz, Gretchen LaBonte, and Brian Lapis for their hard work – they may be a small team but they are definitely producing big results (with your help, of course!).

Other news: Fellowship Hall fans have been bought and installed, thanks to the Activities team for their help with this!!) – check them out on a Sunday; we are working on plans for updating parts of the FHall boiler; we are investigating a roof leak in the Crossway area; and plans are afoot to replace the lower level exterior door at the back of the Education building during the holidays. The safety task force has completed the evacuation/lockdown sheets for the Promised Land (and had an excellent fire drill in October) and they will be presented at the February annual meeting. They continue to work on the same type of plans for the sanctuary. Both the District 1 fire chief and the town police chief are very impressed with what we have done so far! We will spend more of our December meeting working on the budget for 2019, but will still have January to fine-tune it before our annual meeting.

As was noted in our November article, Center Church is blessed with a caring, dedicated staff who work tirelessly on all our behalf's. Lori and Thia work hard at keeping the church running smoothly with all that they do, seen and unseen. Bob keeps the church buildings clean. Martha, Claire, Emily, Chelsea, and Simone take very good care of our children and youth. And Larry, Cheryl and I work each week to provide meaningful and inspiring music to enhance our Sunday services. And all of you who volunteer on the various teams, task forces, and such, are immensely helpful. Thank you all!

## Notes from Church Council

The Council met on November 6. Anita Sarro, moderator pro-tem, chaired the meeting.

Team reports consisted of: Activities reported that their post Columbus Day Fair evaluation brought about some very positive and useful comments which will help with next year's fair. It was noted that there were 75 helpers! CE announced that the Christmas Pageant this year will be a "Center Church production" with lots of animal costumes and children handing out Promised Land ornaments! Deacons decided that there is to be a Hymn Sing on December 16. They also concluded that the *Lord's Prayer* during worship will remain in its designated spot. HR/Pastor/Congregation Relation Teams are reviewing Lori's and the congregation's role in the life of Center Church. Also, how the faith community participates. How do we recognize "God Moments?" Membership has been compiling an inactive members list. A future new members meeting is planned soon. Outreach the CROPWalk had nine participants from our church who raised \$329! We are part of 10 faith-groups pledging \$30,000 for a Habitat "build". Center Church is pledging \$1,500. Stewardship reported that the pledging budget goal is \$178,000. The Council discussed the possible need to simplify our church structure in terms of leadership and team participants. We have been without an elected Moderator and Assistant Moderator for two years. How is this impacting Center Church? Should we redefine and or modify our team structure? How do we motivate our members to participate in the various teams? How do we instill a sense of ownership/belonging through participation? How do we prevent burnout? Do we need more fellowship activities?

### Center Church in Transition

**Dismissed at own request:** September 30, Betty Jeanne Prouty.

David C. Morrell, clerk

# Outreach Partners of the Month

*"Hearts to Hands to Hope"*

Are your knitting needles flashing? 'Tis the season for the **Mitten Tree!** Once again, we are collecting new (homemade or store bought) and gently used mittens, gloves, hats, and scarves for our Mitten Tree. All of the items will be distributed to area families who need them through the Neighbors Helping Neighbors Food Pantry. We will also ask our Center Church teachers and nurses if they will take some mittens and hats for any children in their care who need them.



*Thank you in advance for supporting the Mitten Tree!*



For every house is built by someone, but God is the builder of everything." Heb 3:4 is the verse chosen by the outreach team to inspire our Habitat project participation. **The House that Faith Built, Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity's** moniker for the 3 faith group supported homes going up on Glendale Rd in Northampton is underway! The two modular homes are in place, ready for siding and interior work. The "stick" home is in process. Check out the display table in Fellowship Hall and add a "stick" to our home assist here by adding your 2 cents or more to our funding effort to help create affordable, energy efficient housing for a family working their way to a better life. While you're there, take a look at the floor plans, the newsletter and our board tracking our progress in giving to this community effort. Volunteers are needed and welcome for hands-on work and support. Please consider signing up to lend a hand or help purchase materials at the display table in Fellowship Hall. During this season when we remember there was no room for a little family at the inn, may we help present day families find a permanent home.

**The UCC Christmas Fund offering** (sometimes called Veterans of the Cross offering) is an expression of appreciation and caring to those who served as clergy (and certain lay employees) who are now retired or disabled and financially strained. During this holy time of year, the offering is a profound gift. It helps provide pension supplements, health premium subsidies, emergency assistance to active or retired clergy families, and Christmas gift checks to hundreds of retirees and to those who are disabled. Center Church will be taking a special collection for this much appreciated fund on Sunday, December 23. Envelopes will be available that day for your use.



THE CHRISTMAS FUND  
for the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund



## HEIFER INTERNATIONAL - Our Christmas Collection

The offering taken during the Christmas Eve service will go to Heifer International, an outreach partner Center Church has supported for many years. Heifer International is a sustainable development organization that works to end hunger and poverty and protect the earth. Through livestock, training and passing on the gift, Heifer has helped 30 million families in more than 125 countries improve their quality of life. At this holy season we have an opportunity to help people move toward greater self-reliance and the hope for a better future.



## Christmas Eve Service

December 24, 2018

5:00 pm Candlelight Service



*As is Center Church tradition our Christmas Eve offerings will be directed to Heifer Fund International.*

# Stewardship 2018

## From your Stewardship Team...

Since *Stewardship Sunday* so many in our community responded with their new pledged support for our church, for our congregation, and for God's world. Since that day, nearly \$150,000 in pledges has been raised. Have you made your critical pledge yet?

We still must raise close to another \$30,000 in pledges to meet our budget and to achieve our hopes and dreams for Center Church and our community in the coming year.

You can drop your pledge card in the offering plate on any Sunday. If you need a new one, extras can still be found at the entrances to the sanctuary and in the pew racks.

Great thanks again to those who have already brought us so far, and those who will still help get us where we need to go as a church and as people of God.

## What Shall We Bring?

Peace and Blessings,  
Your Stewardship Team ~ John Anz, Gretchen LaBonte & Brian Lapis



## Holiday Bazaar



December 1, 2018

9am – 3:30pm

**For your Christmas Shopping** - there will be gift bags, pantry delights, chocolate sauce, meat lasagna and Butternut squash lasagna (for take-out) and a HUGE selection of Christmas decorations (NONE were sold at the Columbus Day Fair) and a great selection of books.

Still time to HELP?? We'll have a Cookie Sale - which was VERY successful the last couple years - so PLEASE make a batch of Cookies and drop them off Friday or Saturday before the Bazaar opens. And be sure to come to the Bazaar on Saturday to shop.

# Getting to Know You December 2018

## Meet our three Mount Holyoke CE staffers - December 2018



**Claire Houston '19**, is a senior, with a self designed major in Disability Studies, a minor in Entrepreneurship, and a nexus in Data Science. She spent the spring semester at the University of Glasgow, Scotland in the School of Social Sciences but took a variety of other classes there too.. This past summer she worked in Washington DC as a Google Policy Fellow at the American Association of People with Disabilities, working on policy related to accessible self-driving cars, and ensuring equal access to the internet for people with disabilities. Not quite sure what's coming after graduation, hopefully moving to DC and continuing to do disability technology policy. Claire began working with our youth groups in the fall of 2015. Here's a little more about her: born and raised in Hopewell Junction, NY, took part in Hopewell Reformed Church's youth group (there wasn't one at her home church); was very active in her home church (First Reformed), helping teach Sunday School classes, helping out with children's choir, and giving occasional children's sermons. She has an older sister Elaine and a younger sister Joanna. Other little known facts about Claire: (1) she is a HUGE cemetery nerd (friends make fun of her as they all drive past cemeteries and she wants to stop and look at them); (2) she says she has an "unhealthy obsession" with LEGO's, robots, and Zebras; and finally (3) her MHC friends have nicknamed her "Most Like a Muppet," but she's not sure why.

**Emily Carle '21**, is a religion major. She was born and raised in CT and also in the United Church of Christ where she attended the Newington UCC and Tolland UCC churches. She has fond memories of singing in her church's youth choir and participating in Pilgrim Fellowship. Emily became a member at Center Church in October 2017 and is currently a member of the Outreach Team as well. She loves Center and its youth for the energy and passion they bring to all activities. Emily began working with our youth groups this spring, while Claire was away in Scotland. At Mount Holyoke, Emily is active in the English Handbell Ensemble, Interfaith Leadership Council, and Social Programming Board. She enjoys watching the Patriots, baking, skiing, and eating! Claire and Emily are both currently working with our youth groups.



**Simone Jacob '21**, is working with our "littles" group this year and because of that we rarely see her in the sanctuary. This is her first year on our staff. Simone came all the way across the country from San Francisco to South Hadley and Mount Holyoke. She intends to be a biology major and an education minor. She already has a good grasp of scientific instruments and how labs function before she even got here. Simone is a member of the MHC track and field and cross country teams, having participated in them at the high school level as well. She is also a peer health educator and cross country rep to the Student Athlete Advisory Committee. Welcome to the staff!

*Cindy Morrell*

# From the Church Historian

## THE NATIVITY

For those of you who are feeling a bit overwhelmed with the Christmas season and all its hype, I am feeling the same. Christmas for Christians is a conundrum. At one point, I was leafing through some older Sunday school books and discovered that back 50 years or more, the theme of the Nativity was taught to our children. The word itself comes from the Latin *nativitas* meaning BORN! It also is connected to birth, especially the place of birth, the conditions and or the circumstances. Nativity is also connected with astrology, so a horoscope was written at the time of one's birth.

Through art, the Nativity was represented in the 4<sup>th</sup> century and became an even more important subject by the early 5<sup>th</sup> century. The Nativity scene became the emblem of the early feast day celebrating the birth of Jesus, or as it later became known - Christmas. We have heard of the speculation as to when Christ was born. Before the 4<sup>th</sup> century it was widely believed that His birth occurred around May 20<sup>th</sup>. The 25<sup>th</sup> of December was later chosen to oppose the pagan celebration of "Sun of Righteousness" *natalis solis invicti* in Latin. [At one point in our religion, the baptism of Christ was the more important celebration.] As our religion evolved, the day became associated with joy and merry-making! This was very characteristic of the Roman festivities called *Saturnalia* and other pagan festivals that Christmas replaced. The festive holiday that we celebrate these days is attributed to England of the mid-eighteen hundreds. Queen Victoria's husband Prince Albert introduced German customs including the candle lit Christmas tree decorated with colorful ornaments! The influence of Charles Dickens and his classic novel *A Christmas Carol*, along with Christmas carols and secular tunes, have added to the overall spectacle of the season. Through an ingenious marketing ploy by the world renowned Macy's department store in New York City, Christmas became the commercial "giant" we are subjected to today.

This may be a good time to remind ourselves that the Nativity is **our** religious celebration. It is the story of Christ's birth and the essence of our Christian religion. Our sanctuary resonates with the joyous celebratory music and the meaningful scriptures and the greater warmth of own fellowship! Center Church is truly our "sanctuary" from the secular world's intrusion. Advent is our time to unwind and prepare for the Nativity. So, "come all ye faithful" and join us in song and the Word as we enjoy this time of the Nativity. Please take time to reflect on the words in John 3:16..."for God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son, that who so believeth in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life." Happy Nativity to all!



David C. Morrell, Church Historian



## December 1, 2018

### 9AM-3:30PM

### HUGE SELECTION OF GENTLY USED CHRISTMAS DÉCOR

### COOKIE SALE with over 30 varieties



## Tell Me the Stories - September 2018

As has happened occasionally, the options for hymns to write about from November were non-existent. I have written about all of them previously. So I have picked the three oldest writeups to “re-run”. Our first hymn is *A Mighty Fortress is Our God* (PH 363, NCH 439), a hymn that most of us know well. Martin Luther, who wrote both the words and the music, was born in Germany in an area known for its music. His mother sang, and he sang in a boys’ choir and played the flute (recorder). He attended the University Erfurt, became an Augustinian monk and taught theology and philosophy at the University of Wittenberg. His discovery that “God’s favor is a gift to be accepted, not a prize to be won” became the basis for his famous “justification solely by faith in God’s grace.” That conviction added to his anger that monks were trying to sell indulgences to his poor students. And so on October 31, 1517 he performed his most well-known act -- nailing his ninety-five theses to the church door of the cathedral, which launched the Protestant Reformation. One of the most important benefits of this movement, and his legacy to us, was the “rediscovery of congregational singing.” Luther “worked with skilled musicians to create new music for Christians, to be sung in the vernacular.” Sometimes he used popular secular melodies to accompany his hymns, which sometimes got him in trouble. Luther contended that “no man should preach or teach God’s people without a proper knowledge of the use and power of sacred song.” He also said that “next to the Word of God, the noble art of music is the greatest treasure in the world.” (He certainly would fit right into Center Church with that sentiment!) While he also wrote *Away in a Manger* and *From Heaven Above to Earth I Come* and a number of others, he is best known for *A Mighty Fortress* which is based on Psalm 46. It is regarded as “one of the noblest and most classic examples of Christian hymnody.” It has been translated into many languages and the English translation which we use was first done by Frederick H. Hedge, a professor at Harvard, with an adaptation appearing in the NCH, done in 1981 by Ruth Duck. Luther also wrote the hymn tune “Ein’ feste Burg.” Some say that he did “as much for the Reformation by his hymns as by his translation of the Bible,” allowing that “God might speak directly to them [his German compatriots] in His Word and that they might directly answer Him in their songs.” (CAC 11/06)

The second hymn, *Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise* (NCH 1, PH 7) is the second one this time that is included in both hymnals. This hymn actually has changes more to the third and fourth stanzas than to the opening ones, and those are mostly updating archaic language. The words were written by Walter Chalmers Smith, a Scot born in Aberdeen. After attending New College in Edinburgh, he was ordained in the Free Church of Scotland (Presbyterian) and served in a number of churches. He became an important leader in the Free Church of Scotland and at one point was elected its Moderator. He wrote numerous poems and several hymnals. The hymn text was first published in his 1867 [Hymns of Christ](#). The hymn tune “St. Denio” is based on a popular Welsh folk song. Many of the tunes were based on folk songs or ballads which were known to many folks at that time. These “adapted well to hymn texts”. This text/tune combination was first used in 1906’s [The English Hymnal](#). (CAC 11/07)

Our final hymn story is about one from the NCH - (576) *For the Healing of the Nations*, which we actually sang two successive Sundays this month. It was written by a pastor in 1965 for a Human Rights Day service at his church in Plymouth, England. Fred Kaan, born in The Netherlands, was a minister in the Congregational Church Union of England and Wales, which became the United Reformed Church, and he was serving the Plymouth church at that time. Of his over 200 hymns, this one is the most widely sung and it was used for the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the United Nations. A number of his hymns focus on ecumenism and concern for the powerless. The sentiments expressed in this hymn’s stanzas serve us well in these difficult times and ask for God’s help both in taking care of this earth which was given to us and all the people who live on it. Henry Purcell is a well-known Englishman, considered “one of England’s greatest composers,” who wrote this hymn tune as an anthem in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The tune was adapted by Sydney Nicholson who titled it “Westminster Abbey” because that is where Purcell served as an organist from 1679-1695. (CAC 10/07)

Cindy Morrell, associate in music

Resources used: Robert J. Morgan [Then Sings My Soul](#), (2003) [Then Sings My Soul Book 2](#) (2004); Kenneth W. Osbeck’s [101 Hymn Stories](#) (1982), [Amazing Grace](#) (1990); [The New Century Hymnal Companion](#), ed. Kristen Forman (1998); and Janet Stuart Smith and Betty Carlson, [Great Christian Hymn Writers](#) (1997).



# CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS

Once again our sanctuary will be decorated with poinsettias for Christmas.

The **deadline for placing your order will be Friday December 5<sup>th</sup>.**

**Number of plants** you wish to order      6 " pots      **\$ 10 each**

# \_\_\_\_\_ red      # \_\_\_\_\_ white

\_\_\_\_\_ **Total payment enclosed.** Please make checks payable to:  
"First Congregational Church" and note "Christmas Poinsettias" on the memo line.

Please forward your completed order and check to the church office **on or before December 5<sup>th</sup>**. Requests received after that date cannot be guaranteed.

**In Loving Memory of** \_\_\_\_\_

**In Honor of** \_\_\_\_\_

**GIVEN BY** \_\_\_\_\_



**Please check one of the following:**

\_\_\_\_\_ I will pick up after church on Christmas Eve for myself or to deliver to a shut in.

\_\_\_\_\_ I will not be taking my plant(s).

**NAME** \_\_\_\_\_



**Did you know you can purchase Equal Exchange Organic Coffee in the Church Office - only \$7.50 a bag - French Roast or Columbian. 2.8 oz. Chocolate bars too! - only \$3.00 each. Great Stocking Stuffers**



**On the first Sunday of each month, please bring any of the following items to worship:**



Canned vegetables

Canned fruits

Cereals

Soups

Dried Pastas

Rice

Canned beans

Tuna Fish

Peanut Butter    Jam/Jelly



Juices    Crackers

Spaghetti sauce

Meals in a can

The monthly offering is used for direct appeals to Center Church and for donation to local food pantries.

Our gifts are extended to the hungry and the poor - those who need them most!  
Food offerings may be left inside the Church Street entrance at other times.

**Thank you for your compassionate response!**



- 02 June Harris
- 05 Benjamin Sherry  
Kingsley Sherry
- 06 Brenda Mathieu
- 11 Leland Towne
- 14 Dan Sherry
- 17 Sarah Smith
- 18 Garnett Sherry
- 20 Jeanne (Morrell) Hough
- 22 Kate Jubinille
- 29 Meghan Moore



**Thank you** to Center Nursery School students and families for bringing in food for the Church food pantry. We provided several families with Thanksgiving dinner this year - using a lot of the items you donated to that cause - and will help more in the future with the wide variety of items you collected.

**THANK YOU!**

*Happy Holidays to you*



Rev. Souder will be away for the week following Christmas - returning to the office on January 2<sup>nd</sup>.

The Church Office will be closed **December 25 and 26** as well as **January 1<sup>st</sup>**.

May we all recognize our Blessings this Christmas Season and know Peace in the coming year!



**IMPORTANT REMINDER:**

PLEASE REMEMBER TO COMPLETE PAYMENT OF YOUR PLEDGE BY DECEMBER 31<sup>ST</sup> SO THAT WE CAN CREDIT THE OPERATING FUND FOR 2018.



**Know Your Town will be hosting a Reception to Honor Former State Rep. John Scibak** who recently retired from his position after 16 years in the Statehouse. The event will be held at Town Hall on December 7<sup>th</sup> from 6:30 - 8:30 pm and is free and open to the public. Refreshments will be served.

**THE MINISTRY AT CENTER CHURCH**



Ministers: All Church Members  
 Senior Minister: Rev. Lori J. Souder  
 Minister Emeritus: Rev. Charles P. Blakney

Christian Education Program

Children: Martha Guild, Simone Jacob  
 Chelsea Korzeniowski  
 Youth: Emily Carle, Claire Houston  
 Adult: Randy Purinton, Team Chair

Music

Organist: Larry Schipull  
 Choir Director: Cheryl Cobb  
 Associate in Music: Cynthia Morrell

Office Administrator: Cynthia Jubinville  
 Sexton: Robert Farman

**Daily Lectionary Scripture References**  
December 2018 (Year C)

**Sat., Dec. 1**  
Psalm 25:1-10  
Nehemiah 9:26-31  
Luke 21:20-24

**Sun., Dec. 2**  
*First Sunday of Advent*  
Jeremiah 33:14-16  
Psalm 25:1-10  
1 Thessalonians 3:9-13  
Romans 3:21-31  
Luke 21:25-36

**Mon., Dec. 3**  
Psalm 90  
Numbers 17:1-11  
2 Peter 3:1-18

**Tues., Dec. 4**  
Psalm 90  
2 Samuel 7:18-29  
Revelation 22:12-16

**Wed., Dec. 5**  
Psalm 90  
Isaiah 1:24-31  
Luke 11:29-32

**Thurs., Dec. 6**  
Luke 1:68-79  
Malachi 3:15-12  
Philippians 1:12-18a

**Fri., Dec. 7**  
Luke 1:68-79  
Malachi 3:13-18  
Philippians 1:18b-26

**Sat., Dec. 8**  
Luke 1:68-79  
Malachi 4:1-6  
Luke 9:1-6

**Sun., Dec. 9**  
*Second Sunday of Advent*  
Baruch 5:1-9 or Malachi 3:1-4  
Luke 1:68-79  
Philippians 1:3-11  
Luke 3:1-6

**Mon., Dec. 10**  
Psalm 126  
Isaiah 40:1-11  
Romans 8:22-25

**Tues., Dec. 11**  
Psalm 126  
Isaiah 19:18-25  
2 Peter 1:2-15

**Wed., Dec. 12**  
Psalm 126  
Isaiah 35:3-7  
Luke 7:18-30

**Thurs., Dec. 13**  
Isaiah 12:2-6  
Amos 6:1-8  
2 Corinthians 8:1-15

**Fri., Dec. 14**  
Isaiah 12:2-6  
Amos 8:4-12  
2 Corinthians 9:1-15

**Sat., Dec. 15**  
Isaiah 12:2-6  
Amos 9:8-15  
Luke 1:57-66

**Sun., Dec. 16**  
*Third Sunday of Advent*  
Zephaniah 3:14-20  
Isaiah 12:2-6  
Philippians 4:4-7  
Luke 3:7-18

**Mon., Dec. 17**  
Isaiah 11:1-9  
Numbers 16:1-19  
Hebrews 13:7-17

**Tues., Dec. 18**  
Isaiah 11:1-9  
Numbers 16:20-35  
Acts 28:23-31

**Wed., Dec. 19**  
Isaiah 11:1-9  
Micah 4:8-13  
Luke 7:31-35

**Thurs., Dec. 20**  
Psalm 80:1-7  
Jeremiah 31:31-34  
Hebrews 10:10-18

**Fri., Dec. 21**  
Psalm 80:1-7  
Isaiah 42:10-18  
Hebrews 10:32-39

**Sat., Dec. 22**  
Psalm 80:1-7  
Isaiah 66:7-11  
Luke 13:31-35

**Sun., Dec. 23**  
*Fourth Sunday of Advent*  
Micah 5:2-5a  
Luke 1:46b-55 or Psalm 80:1-7  
Hebrews 10:5-10  
Luke 1:39-45 [46-55]

**Mon., Dec. 24**  
*Christmas Eve*  
Isaiah 62:6-12  
Psalm 97  
Titus 3:4-7  
Luke 2:1-7] 8-20

**Tues., Dec. 25**  
*Christmas Day*  
Isaiah 9:2-7  
Psalm 96  
Titus 2:11-14  
Luke 2:1-14 [15-20]

**Wed., Dec. 26**  
Psalm 148  
2 Chronicles 24:17-24  
Acts 6:1-7; 7:51-60

**Thurs., Dec. 27**  
Psalm 148  
Proverbs 8:32-36  
John 21:19b-24

**Fri., Dec. 28**  
Psalm 148  
Isaiah 54:1-13  
Revelation 21:1-7

**Sat., Dec. 29**  
Psalm 147:12-20  
1 Chronicles 28:1-10  
1 Corinthians 3:10-17

**Sun., Dec. 30**  
1 Samuel 2:18-20, 26  
Psalm 148  
Colossians 3:12-17  
Luke 2:41-52

**Mon., Dec. 31**  
Ecclesiastes 3:1-13  
Psalm 8  
Revelation 21:1-6a  
Matthew 25:31-46

Lovesong Café presents

# BELLS & BELLES

*Bell Choirs and Women Singers  
Performing Festive Favorites  
To Ring in the Holiday Season*

Sunday, December 2<sup>nd</sup> at 3 pm

**Admission by donation**

**All proceeds to go to**

**Womanshelter / Compañeras**

Easthampton Congregational Church  
112 Main Street  
Easthampton, MA

Food and Beverage available for Purchase

For nearly 40 years, Womanshelter Compañeras has been helping individuals and families find support and refuge from domestic violence.

Womanshelter  
Compañeras



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## Christmas Concert

*West Mass Brass Band*  
...our 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary!

December 1, 2018, Saturday  
7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

at

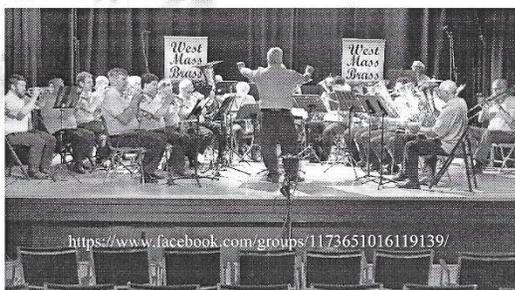
**The First Church of Monson**

<http://www.firstchurchmonson.org>

5 High Street  
Monson, MA 01057

Free concert, a free will collection will be taken to support the band.

Come at 5 PM for a benefit dinner-get \$20 tickets by calling 413-267-4818 or email [gailpelletier73@gmail.com](mailto:gailpelletier73@gmail.com). Bring the family.



<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1173651016119139/>



## Christmas Concert

*West Mass Brass Band*  
...our 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary!

December 8, 2018, Saturday  
2:30 p.m. to 4 p.m.

at

**Springfield Armory Historic Site**

<https://www.nps.gov/spar/index.htm>

One Armory Square  
Springfield, MA 01105

Free concert, bring the family! Refreshments after the concert.

Come early and view the museum.



<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1173651016119139/>

# Thank you to All

who have contributed this year to the  
programs and life of Center Church  
with their **Time, Talent**  
and **Financial Gifts.**

We are most grateful to and for,  
each of you and wish for all the  
**Blessings of the Holiday Season**  
and **Health, Happiness and**  
**PEACE** in the coming year.





we wish you a

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**MERRY**  
**CHRISTMAS**

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❖ —❖ and ❖ —❖

happy new year

