



The
Heart of our
Community

NEW CASTLE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

Monthly Newsletter

February 2024

Box 395, New Castle NH 03854

The Parson's Post

*Your word is a lamp to my feet
and a light to my path.*
Psalms 119:105

Friends,

We made the leap! We have temporarily moved our worship services from the sanctuary to the parish hall. It may be several months before the preservation work in the sanctuary is completed and we can return to enjoy the freshly renovated sanctuary. In the meantime, what a blessing it is to have such a lovely and convenient space to gather in while the work is being done.

As if by design, this season of restoration and renewal in the life of our church coincides with Lent, the holy season of spiritual restoration and renewal. Just as we leave behind our familiar Sunday morning routine, we are asked to embark on a forty-day journey with Jesus.

This year, Ash Wednesday falls on Valentine's Day, February 14. I hope you can come to the church between 11am and noon on that day. I'll be out front offering Ashes-to-Go.

PS: I've been busy making candles for our Lent-to-Go bags! Watch for those to be ready soon.



With you on the journey!
Meg

Worshiping Together Sunday Mornings and on Zoom

9:45-10:45 am

Rev. Meg (407) 324-6478

revmeg@yahoo.com

Interfaith Dialogue

Wednesday Feb. 7, 1-2pm in the parish hall

Interfaith Dialogue Online

Wednesday Feb. 7, 4pm on zoom only

Contemplative Hour

Friday February 23, noon to 1pm on Zoom



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Annual Appreciation Award 2023...

Goes to...**DEB SCHULTE!!!** Hooray and well deserved. Deacon Glenn Hammond and Trustee Ludwig Bstieler bestowed the honors on January 28. The award recognizes a church member or neighbor who provides extraordinary service to our community. According to Glenn, "Deb has served as the Guild President for 175 years..."! Her enthusiasm, friendly outreach, organizational skills and crafty creativity have served our seacoast with much distinction. **Well done!**



Annual Appreciation Award

2023 Deb Schulte, Church Member
Amazing Guild President

Guild News

The New Castle Congregational Church Guild held its first meeting of the new year on Monday, January 15, 2024. Refreshments were provided by the 2023 Guild officers.

New Guild officers are Adele Pulitzer and Ellen Bryan, co-presidents, Nicole Pappaioanou, secretary, and Pat Wood, corresponding secretary. Joan Hammond and Anne Miller will continue as co-treasurers.

More Guild News....

A current Guild project is Knitting for a Cause. Hand knit hats, mittens and scarves will be donated to Gather on January 15, 2024. There is a large container of yarn that can be used to create some of these items. Guild members, church members, and community members are encouraged to use some of it!

The focus of our meeting was finding volunteers to fill the many positions that we have for doing the important work of fund raising, providing hospitality, and staffing the funeral committee. We also updated our Guild manual and address book.

Adele Pulitzer, Co Chairman

Musical Notes

Sunday Feb. 15, **Elaine Thoma, flutist, will be our quest musician.** She is celebrating her 31st year as a teaching artist at Neighborhood Music School in New Haven, CT where she maintains a flute studio of over 35 students. She graduated from Syracuse University with a dual degree in Music performance/education, has participated in master classes under Jean-Pierre Rampal and James Galway. **Welcome back Elaine!**



Meet Ron Richards, our Organ Tech, doing his annual maintenance in January. Who knew what was behind that fabric panel?





NEW CASTLE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

The Deacons' Work Bench

Let it snow, let it snow let it snow – and it did.



Considering the safety and well-being of our congregation, a decision was made to conduct church services exclusively through zoom on Sunday, January 7. Reverend Meg was away but planned to be on zoom. Our service was led by Reverend Terry Brace, a retired UCC Pastor living in Winthrop, Massachusetts close to Boston. She is a friend of Reverend Meg.

On January 14, Portsmouth ProMusica, Sweet Grass Quartet, were musical guests, offering up two great selections, “Will the Circle be Unbroken” and “An Unclouded Day”. During the service we picked our star word for the year out of a basket. The floral arrangements in church were beautiful. Thank you, Barclay.

Lent is the Christian season of spiritual preparation before Easter. It begins on Ash Wednesday and concludes on Holy Saturday. It is a time of reflection, preparation, prayer, fasting, and giving. The name Lent comes from the old English word for Springtime or lengthening of the day.

As always, you may contact any Deacon if you have any questions or concerns.

Blessings,

Deacons Mark Ankarberg, Ellen Bryan, Dawn Lake, Margaret Mahoney, Marie Moisan, Deb Schulte, and Glenn Hammond.



Moment for Missions

The Missions Committee has selected Gift of Warmth as our mission for February. This program works through both the Rockingham Community Action and the Community Action Partnership of Strafford County. Both groups are well known for their fuel assistance programs. Over the past 17 years, the Gift of Warmth campaign has raised over \$800,000 to help individuals and families in need in Rockingham and Strafford counties stay warm each winter.

If you are interested in joining us in supporting Gift of Warmth this month, send your check to NCCC, P.O. Box 395, New Castle, NH 03854. Please write “Missions” in the memo line.

The month of December saw the completion of our Missions Program for the year 2023. The Missions Committee is very proud of the Congregation’s accomplishments. We had 12 monthly missions as part of a year-long plan. We were flexible enough to be able to support unplanned emergencies in Alabama, California, and Hawaii. Additionally, we supported the medical crisis in the Ukraine and Gaza. We kept the Congregation informed about our evolving plans and gave them opportunities to contribute as a part of a church effort.

While we are proud that New Castle Congregational Church made such a large commitment (\$5,250) to our Missions Program, and we are ecstatic to report that members and friends of the church donated over twice that amount with a total of \$10,566 in gifts. This validates our desire to have a program which individuals and families will feel comfortable using. Charity is very personal, and please understand that we have no expectations concerning anyone’s participation.

If you have any comments or questions about the Missions Committee and its work, please contact any of our members: Douglas Aykroyd, Marie Moisan, Glenn Hammond, or Leonard Seagren.

Our Missions' thought for the month comes from the Robert Ingersoll (1833 – 1899), a lawyer and Civil War veteran who wrote, “We rise by lifting others.”

*Douglas Aykroyd
Co-Chair Missions Committee*



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Preservation Project

Pictures can tell you more than words at times. Mike Effenberger of the Portsmouth Musical Arts Center (PMAC) helped us move our audio, camera and zoom equipment into the parish hall on January 26. We do appreciate everyone's patience as we work through a few issues lately. Happily Sunday January 28 was a winner!



The sanctuary is now turned over totally to the Preservation Team, under the construction management of Steve Bedard, Bedard Preservation and Restoration, Gilmanton NH.

Who did all that clean out- move out work? Glenn, Etoile, Adele, Deb, Dick, Dave and others helped to remove the fragile and/or historical items from the sanctuary. The Building Committee will help with removal of our bronze plaques, pew racks and other important items. Thanks to Dick White's effort, we have a storage pod to fill up, now at our back door!

We are making history!

Phyllis Stibler

Trustees' Toolbox

Thank you to our members who reviewed the 2024 operations budget and voted to accept it on January 28.

And more pictures...it took three big, brave men from Cormier Movers to transport our baby grand piano from the sanctuary to the parish hall on January 24. The supervisor Ken looked around and said "I remember this place" - he had installed our piano in our sanctuary many, many years ago! And he'll be back in a few months to complete this round trip.



Trustees; Ludwig Bstieler, Heidi Maddock, Phyllis Stibler, Ken Walker, Richard White

Historical Quiz – any guesses?



The answer next month...

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