



NEW CASTLE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

Monthly Newsletter

December 2023

Box 395, New Castle NH 03854

The Parson's Post

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.
John 1:5

The season of Advent is a time of preparation and waiting, a time when all of creation holds its breath in hushed anticipation of the God who comes. Outside my window, I can see that the trees have already dropped their leafy defenses. Their limbs now reach toward heaven in naked adoration. How will you prepare your own heart to receive the tender love of God anew?

Our Advent-to-Go Bags are ready. This year, we're celebrating the Light of the World by creating our own Nativity Lamp. I hope the scriptures and the images speak peace to your soul.

Please note that we will have... ONE WORSHIP SERVICE on CHRISTMAS EVE at 5pm. There will NOT be a morning service on Sunday, Dec. 24! The church will be open for meditation however on Sunday morning.

I hope you will invite friend or neighbor to our Christmas Eve Candlelight Service. It will be a glorious celebration, with special music by soloist Petra Pacaric, trumpeter Robert Stibler, our own amazing Charlie Blood, and the heartwarming harmony of our wonderful Occasional Choir.

Here's a link to send to those who may Zoom: <https://zoom.us/j/95800146946?pwd=RVN3Rm9adDlXc1d4di9OZGdVTUF4Zz09>

Meeting ID: 958 0014 6946
Passcode: 620339

May the hope, peace, joy, and love of the holy season fill your hearts and homes, Meg



Worshiping Together Sunday Mornings

9:45-10:45 am

Rev. Meg (407) 324-6478
revmeg@yahoo.com

Interfaith Dialogue

Wednesday December 6, 1-2pm in the parish hall

Interfaith Dialogue Online

Wednesday November 6, 4pm on zoom only

Christmas Tree Lighting!

Thursday Dec. 7, 5pm



Contemplative Hour

Friday December 29, noon to 1pm on Zoom





NEW CASTLE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

Guild News

Christmas Fair Dec. 2, 8am – 1:30pm! Made possible by the work of so many, thank you.

At our Dec. 11, 9:30am meeting we will celebrate the season with a party atmosphere! Our members will donate new hats, gloves, heavy socks, and scarves to the Families First Van which provides medical care to our underhoused neighbors in the greater Seacoast area. Also, we will vote to give the proceeds of our year-long fund-raising projects to many local non-profit organizations, as well as to support the NCCC.

The Church Trustees will provide a brunch in thanks to the Guild's supportive outreach throughout the Seacoast. The meeting will include a time of fun and levity for all – a BOOK YANKEE SWAP!! Wrap a book you have enjoyed to be shared with us. Nothing to buy, just choose one of your books – fiction, travel, art, a cookbook, even a child's book – for this fun-filled swap. Then, imagine a quiet, snowy evening when you can snuggle under a blanket with some hot chocolate and relax with a well-loved book!



Join us at the Knitting Group at the New Castle Library on Tuesdays 3-5pm. We will knit and crochet warm mittens and scarves and more...

These items will be given to Gather in January and to Families First in February. This is a heart-warming project for us as we keep our neighbors warm.

Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays to all – so many ways to celebrate this season!

Deb Schulte, Co-President

NCCC Guild Pie Sale

The Guild held the popular Thanksgiving Pie Sale on Nov. 22. A huge thank you to all who contributed to the success, including these two apple choppers!



Trustee Toolbox



Oscar, assistant Construction Manager, hopes to have information on our Preservation Project Schedule for 2024 this month. Stay tuned!

2024 Ops Budget work is underway, please remember your annual pledge for 2024. Our Preservation Project is funded but operations are ongoing and essential. Thanks!

Bell Ring Dec. 14 & 15

Join us as we ring our bell at 5pm on Dec. 14 and 15. We are commemorating the famous raid on Fort William and Mary, New Castle in 1775. Come to church front doors at 5 minutes before 5pm and be part of history! Bring the kiddos!





NEW CASTLE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

Moment for Missions

The war between Israel and Hamas has created a situation in Gaza that has cost thousands of children their lives. As a direct result of this tragedy, the Missions Committee has chosen Save the Children as our mission for the month of December.

This organization was started in 1919 by an English woman, Eglantyne Jebb, in response to famine in Austria-Hungary and Germany after the end of the First World War. In 1921 she chartered a cargo ship filled with 600 tons of food and medical supplies to feed and care for children in Russia. She presented her Declaration of the Rights of the Child to world leaders at the 1924 League of Nations convention in Geneva. In 1932, a group of Americans who were inspired by Eglantine established Save the Children in the US. They helped struggling families in Appalachia during the Great Depression, bringing them clothes, food, books, and shoes.

Save the Children has been helping the Palestinian people since 1953 and has served in Gaza since 1973. Charity Navigator gives the organization their highest rating for financial, health and accountability and transparency. You will be interested to know that the organization continues to provide help to children in the United States to this day.

If you are interested in joining us in supporting Save the Children this month, send your check to NCCC, P.O. Box 395, New Castle, NH 03854. Please write "Missions" in the memo line.

Our Mission's thought for the month comes from Save the Children who note that "every child deserves a future." How can we help? How can we not help?

Douglas Aykroyd, Co-Chair

Deacons Workbench

Alleluia, the heavenly angels sing. It is the birthday of our King!

November 26 marks the beginning of a four-week season in the Church calendar which is dedicated to anticipating the arrival, or "advent", of Jesus of Nazareth, the long awaited Messiah and King. These are no longer 'ordinary times', but a period filled with great excitement and joy!

November's Interfaith Dialog allowed us to learn more about Islam. In December, please join us for a dialog on Judaism and their Festival of Hanukkah – the miracle of one day's pure oil allowing the Menorah to shine for 8 days.

The Deacons continue to appreciate the generosity of the congregation in support of the Deacons Fund. Please take a moment to read some of the Thank You notes we have received, posted on the bulletin board in the parish hall.

And we hope the Gratitude Stones you received at our Celebration of Gifts and Gratitude on Sunday November 19, are still present as a reminder of all the Blessings we have received and given to others. May the Joy, Wonder and Excitement of this Advent season be with each of you!

For unto us a child is born, Unto us a Son is Given. Alleluia! Isaiah 9:6

As always, you may contact any Deacon if you have any questions or concerns. Blessings, Deacons Mark Ankarberg, Ellen Bryan, Glenn Hammond, Dawn Lake, Margaret Mahoney, Marie Moisan and Deb Schulte.





The Heart of our Community

NEW CASTLE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
Musical Notes

We are delighted to welcome several guest musicians.

- **Sunday, December 3**, flutist Peggy Vagts will be our guest soloist.



- **Sunday, December 10**, we welcome soprano, Angelynne Hinson.
- **Sunday, December 17**, Violinist Dacha Thurber, will be our guest musician.
- **Sunday, December 31**, our guest musician will be pianist Joseph Stevens.

The Occasional Choir will be singing at our Christmas Eve service. Rehearsals are conveniently held in the church sanctuary prior to our regular Sunday morning worship service. Our first rehearsal is on Sunday, December 3 from 9 - 9:30am with additional rehearsals scheduled on Sundays December 10 and 17.

All are welcome to sing...no experience necessary!



Historical Notes by Elizabeth Aykroyd

We are all familiar with the parsonage behind the church. However, when the Congregational Society was founded in 1827, there was no house for a minister. Throughout the nineteenth century there was apparently no housing for a minister, although we assume that some arrangements must have been made for those ministers who remained for more than a short time. The Society records are silent on this subject.

In 1896 Fanny Lear donated half of her house in New Castle for the “use and occupation of the minister of the Congregational Church in New Castle.” After her death the same property was to be used for a parsonage or to be sold, with the profits dedicated to a parsonage elsewhere in the town. Fanny died in March of 1900. This may have been what prompted the first efforts to build a permanent parsonage, and in 1902 the wardens of the Church requested the help of the King’s Daughters, a women’s organization which had been the most important financial support of the Church since the 1850s.

In 1904 a contract was let to N.A. McKenney and Co. of Portsmouth to build a parsonage on land purchased for that purpose. The Church took out a \$2000 mortgage after building had begun, but the rest of the \$4700 cost was from money raised from neighbors and friends. Some of the gifts were as small as \$2, which was to be expected in the small and relatively poor town. The largest donor was, not surprisingly, the King’s Daughters.

By 1911 the mortgage was paid off, again with the help of the women, and a grand celebration was held in the parsonage. It is worth noting that the parsonage faces to the east and not toward the present driveway because the original road to the house was via a driveway from Wentworth Road which was shared with a neighbor. In 1928 the neighbor, a Dr. Souter, announced that he planned to block the access road to the parsonage, making necessary the current driveway from Main Street. The Society records indicate that, once again, the King’s Daughters were “to attend”.

See parsonage picture to the right