

# *Shalom*

The Quarterly Newsletter of the South Newbury Union Church

P.O. Box 37; Newbury, NH 03255 [www.southnewburyunionchurch.org](http://www.southnewburyunionchurch.org)

Winter 2020



## **Winter is Coming!**

**\*Food Pantry** open by appointment only.  
Call 938-5369 for any needs.

## **Upcoming Events:**

### **December 5<sup>th</sup>: Breakfast by Santa**

From 9am-12pm there will be 3 fluffy pancakes, 3 sausage, orange juice, maple syrup and a Christmas cookie for \$8. Take out only! Call 938-5369 to reserve your breakfast by Santa.

**Also, Santa's special red mailbox will be located outside for the kids to get their letters to Santa!**

## **WORSHIP RETURNS TO LIVESTREAM ONLY**

The numbers of people testing positive for COVID-19 have recently increased exponentially, both in the nation and in New Hampshire. Consequently, we have decided, with regret, to discontinue in-person worship and Sunday School.

We acknowledge that we made the best of the season during which the impact of the virus was relatively low. We opened for in-person worship June 28, and continued it through the second week of November. We recently restarted in-person Sunday School and enjoyed reasonably good attendance. Most of our meetings included people present physically and online. We retooled our social and fundraising events to enable social distancing. All this was thanks to good planning as well as excellent cooperation from people who attended in person.

But given the significant spike in affected people, and the colder weather driving us back indoors, it is time to be more

cautious. Our church's leadership will consider guidance from the New Hampshire Conference of the UCC as well as public health guidance as we continue to maintain a balance between our collective safety and the great value of being physically present.

## **CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP LIKE IT'S NEVER BEEN**

Our Christmas Eve service has consistently been a worship event which blesses many people in the Newbury area. The attendance it has received in recent years is far more than can enable us to employ safe social distancing. So, we've decided to present what promises to be an outstanding online only Christmas Eve service. It will feature a live nativity and a very special candlelight service, as well as a chance to sing our favorite carols. The plan as it stands now is to record various pieces of the service and edit them together. One of those pieces will be an outdoor candlelight and carol sing, which is scheduled for December 13 at 4 PM. All are welcome to attend. We will light "luminaries" and set them around our parking lot, then gather outside the circle of light to sing carols. The event will be recorded and presented as the candlelight portion of our Christmas Eve service.

The recorded service will be available for everyone's Christmas Eve worship any time after the morning of December 24.

## **WORSHIP AS OF NOW**

### **AT SOUTH NEWBURY UNION CHURCH**

The Executive Board was meeting in person for most of the fall, including the Diaconate in October. The two boards are working on

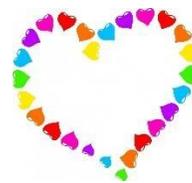
being an effective church during the times of COVID 19 for the members and the community.

We have approved two AA groups to meet at the Friendship House. The board is agreeing to continue paying down on the line of credit for the Church building. The Executive Board sent a full delegation to the NH Conference's Annual Meeting held via Zoom in October. A decision has been made to restart our second phase of the Capital Campaign for the Friendship House.

There are plenty of items that we are continuing to work on, such as updating Bylaws, reviewing and delegating jobs that David has been doing.

If you want to worship with the South Newbury Union Church but haven't, let us help you find your way. Call Pat Oakes, senior Deacon, at 340-4384. Find worship details on our web site. Or check in at 9:30 on our Facebook page.

Mary Smith, Chair of Executive Board



## **Stewardship is Heart Work**

Our stewardship campaign was a great success. The focus of the stewardship this year was our hearts. The campaign asked you to think about your giving through your heart. We heard stories from our church members about what the church means to them. It was a very heartwarming few weeks. Pledges can be turned in at any time. If you need a new pledge form let

Heather know. If your is filled out please  
send it to:  
South Newbury Union Church  
PO Box 37  
Newbury, NH 03255

Your pledges make it possible for us to “be  
the church” in these extraordinary times, so  
thank you!

### **End of the Year Giving**

This year has definitely been a wild and  
crazy ride, but as we get closer to the end of  
year, we want to especially thank everyone  
for their continued support throughout this  
difficult and strange year. We could not  
have continued our church services, our  
food pantry, and our fundraisers without  
the amazing support of all of you! We know  
times have been challenging and how and  
what we give may have changed over the  
course of this year. Please reach out to the  
Financial Secretary, Heather Weir, by calling  
938 5369, if you have any questions about  
your giving.



### **COVID IS PUTTING THE BRAKES ON DINNERS and FUNDRAISERS**

Our dinners have gone pretty well this Fall.  
The spaghetti dinner was a little slow but  
the Ham and Bean and the Turkey dinner  
kept us hopping. We did very well with  
both of them and everyone worked  
incredibly hard to pull them off.

Our only food fundraiser, as of now, is on

**December 5<sup>th</sup> 9am-12pm**  
**Breakfast by Santa**

### **A Note From The Editor:**

What a few months this has been! I have  
changed my mind several times about what  
I wanted to write to you, but since the  
Holiday season is here, I thought what a  
better time to think about being Thankful. I  
have spent the last few months really  
struggling to find any happiness with the  
world around me. The election took so  
much out of me and I learned so much  
about people and how politics can destroy  
friendships. Politics aside, I have been  
looking to the world around me for  
inspiration and hope. I have found it almost  
every day since I started looking. Many of  
you know I am a bus driver, so I have seen  
beautiful sunrises every day on my travels.  
Each day I have seen something different,  
like a new piece of God’s artwork.  
Stunning, beautiful and made for the world  
to enjoy. The sad part is that so many just  
drive on auto pilot and miss it! Even on the  
really cold, snowy mornings, I have found  
beauty. I have seen wild animals in their  
beautiful natural habitat all over the place.  
I have just really tried to embrace what is  
around me. The more I look, the more I  
find. So, if this season has you down in the  
dumps, I am asking you to look around you.  
There is God’s beauty all around us and it  
really does help lift the soul. You see God  
knows our hearts are hurting and we all  
want to go back to “normal”. Normal just  
isn’t a thing right now, so amidst the  
craziness in the world is God’s beauty. Take  
a look around, don’t drive on auto pilot,  
really look at the world around you and find  
the beauty that will make you smile. The  
beauty that God gives us is his way of giving

us a hug and a smile. The world won't be like this forever, so let's stop and find the beauty that is all around us and thank God for it! Have a wonderfully safe Holiday season!

Yours in Christian Fellowship,  
Heather Weir

## **GRANT ENABLES UPGRADE TO LIVESTREAMING**

A \$2000 grant from the Kendrick Foundation is making it possible for the Deacons to purchase equipment and technical support which will make permanent our live streaming of worship and events. We are working with a consultant who is guiding us as we purchase equipment and make arrangements for a substantially improve our online worship experience.

Since we began live streaming in March, we have relied on a borrowed cell phone camera and microphone as the sources for transmitting our worship. The upgrade will utilize a real camera and a direct feed from our existing audio system. It also will enable us to connect the live streaming equipment to our internet router with a cable instead of Wi-Fi. Relax & Company, who oversaw the renovation of the church building, is donating the material and labor to install that cable.

The total cost of this upgrade is anticipated to be about \$3000. You can help! Make a donation to "SNUC Deacons" with "livestream" in the memo line. Some of the equipment has already been purchased, but is backordered. We hope to have the system fully operational by late December.

## **Update on "Shining the Light" Capital Campaign**

### **CAPITAL CAMPAIGN PREPARES TO RESTART**

It's hard to believe that our "Shining the Light" campaign began nearly four years ago. We are deeply grateful for the support we already received, which enabled the renovation of our church building. But The campaign's vision has been to be a center for healthy community life in Newbury. Realizing that vision involves the renovation and expansion of the Friendship House. So, the Campaign Committee has been reactivated and is organizing toward an early 2021 appeal for support focusing on inviting people in the Newbury community to support the effort. The work on the Friendship House can be accomplished in phases. This means we can move forward with some improvements as soon as funds become available.

Even without the renovation, community organizations have been using the Friendship House. Many planned events were cancelled because of the pandemic. But the building serves as Newbury's food pantry, and now holds AA meetings six mornings a week. We also hosted a flu clinic and a blood drive. While these events were well supported, they also revealed the weaknesses of our existing facility, notably the rest room and the fact that we only have one meeting room. Stay tuned! We are excited to be moving forward with this effort!

## **Holiday Baskets Become Holiday Gift Cards**

The Diaconate has been busy this season. Because Market Basket was unable to

assure us that they would be able to completely fill our orders for holiday baskets this year, it was decided to give out gift cards to Market Basket in place of the baskets.

There were 40 needy families and 22 children included in the Newbury Giving Tree at Newbury Town Offices this year.

A concern to the deacons was the seniors living at Newbury Commons. In the past, it was obvious that these baskets meant a lot to them. The seniors enjoyed the special attention at this time of the year. It was decided to make cranberry/orange bread and deliver it to those seniors. It did not take long for calls to start coming in from these seniors thanking us for thinking about them. A great effort was made by all ensuring a good holiday for all our neighbors.

### **Open and Affirming (ONA)**

A committee was formed a couple of months ago and were asked to look into the possibility of SNUC becoming an Open and Affirming Church. Being open and affirming means that we welcome everyone, especially people of all sexual orientations and gender identities.

In scripture, Jesus engaged everyone with whom he ministered with a sense of God's grace. Each person is a beloved child of God. Jesus call the church that bears his name to practice extravagant welcome and inclusive love.

Church members have been sent a letter explaining the process for Open and Affirming. We have had three programs dealing with Open and Affirming and have

included a form seeking your input. Everyone's thoughts and feelings are welcome, respected and will be confidential. For more information, please contact Roberta Daw, Keira Rand or Gail Bostic. Or check out the ONA website, [www.openandaffirming.org](http://www.openandaffirming.org).

### **JOE'S SOCKS FOR HOMELESS VETERANS**

This mission was established in Dec. 1989 by Joe Harris, a Vietnam veteran. It became apparent to him that there was a severe shortage of socks for our veterans in hospitals and shelters. At this time of the year, we think of those deserving veterans and ask for donations of white socks (one size fits all). We ask that you arrange your donation of socks in groups of three and wrap them in Christmas paper by Dec. 12<sup>th</sup>.

These wrapped packages will be addressed "To a Veteran, Merry Christmas from someone who remembers you."

These packages will be delivered to White River Junction Veterans home... so every veteran will have a package to open on Christmas.

A special thank you to Joyce and Nancy who have delivered these gifts for the last few years, and have agreed to deliver them again this year.

### **UCC Christmas Fund**

United Church of Christ Christmas Fund gives back to retired, active ministers in need.

In previous years, the fund provided nearly

1.5 million dollars of assistance to 900 clergy facing overwhelming financial demands in the form of Christmas thank-you checks, monthly pension supplementation, quarterly health premium supplementation and emergency grants. This ministry has been carried out by the Pension Boards for 111 years. The fund is received each year the Sunday before Christmas.

Here's an example of what our gifts make possible: The Rev. Jim Rapp and his ex-wife the Rev. Alicia Spring, who have both served various UCC congregations in Florida benefitted from a Christmas Fund emergency grant after their son, Evan had a kidney transplant. While insurance paid for surgery, both Evan and Jim, who was the kidney donor needed to stay near the hospital for several weeks for follow-up appointments. The emergency grant enabled them to cover the costs of housing and meals during their recovery period. Jim is now pastor of a UCC church in Indian Rocks, Florida and hopes to see his congregation become the highest giver per capita to the Christmas Fund this year.

You will find an offering envelope for this Christmas Fund attached to this newsletter. Please give as you are able, and mail your gift to SNUC PO Box 37, Newbury NH 03255.



**2020 UKAMA  
PARTNERSHIP APPEAL**  
Food Security for our  
Hama in Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe News

The situation in Zimbabwe is extremely

concerning. Food insecurity is rampant. In early November I heard from Josephine Mhlanga, Chair of the UKAMA partnership in Ivene. She stated they are thinking of us and praying for us for good health and peaceful elections. The Ivene Church also prays that through the grace of God, 2021 will be a "normal" year.

I pray that we join the blessings from our UKAMA partnership. The love is vast and truly blessed. Blessings, Roberta Daw



As I write this, a few weeks before you are reading it, the election is over but the results are disputed. The cases of COVID-19 are spiking around the country and in New Hampshire. That's two major crises. Two other major crises – renewed calls for racial justice, and the terrible evidence, in the form of enormous wildfires and a record hurricane season that the earth's climate is rapidly changing, have moved away from the forefront but certainly have not gone away.

It is easy, almost inevitable, to be deeply affected by the sheer weight of four existential crises happening simultaneously. That is, unless we choose not to pay attention, which I personally think is what no one, and certainly not Christians, should do.

So then, how do we respond to these crises in ways that don't just depress and paralyze us? In particular, how do we as people of faith, as followers of the Prince of Peace, respond to the mess the world is in?

Answer: With hope grounded in the sovereign rule of God. With love that finds ways to be shared that doesn't rely on buying stuff. With Gospel. Now, more than any other time in my life, the vast resources of faith need to be accessed and applied to the great issues of our day.

We need to hold fast to the conviction that God's rule triumphs over chaos. We need to recall that our spiritual ancestors perceived God using disruption and disaster to open a way to a more righteous and rightly ordered world. We need to allow ourselves to be deeply affected by the experience of people affected by wildfires and hurricanes and civil unrest and racially motivated injustice without succumbing to despair.

This starts with being connected, both as locally and as widely as possible, with other faith-driven people. Worshiping via Facebook Live and meeting via Zoom may not feel real enough, but these platforms do keep us connected. These connection tools benefit us with others affiliated with our church, but they also are portals through which we connect with wider circles of Christians.

During the pandemic, I have benefitted personally and spiritually from online conversations with clergy colleagues and with our friends in Zimbabwe. I have learned about some amazing things that people of faith are doing to help people in need, to share the good news, and to advance the cause of justice and peace. My connections with the wider church in turn inform and equip the ministry of our local church. Likewise, laypersons in our congregation are using those wider

connections to guide and support us as we navigate these sometimes frightening and always uncharted challenges of our time.

Yes indeed, these are overwhelming times. Yes indeed, Jesus wants his followers to engage with the suffering and chaos which so many people are experiencing. Yes indeed, we can find new ways to be blessed and to be a blessing that don't rely on buying more stuff. We are all in this together, in a 'together' which includes Jesus himself, challenging us to Be the Church which trusts the sovereign grace and power of God to heal the world.

### **OUR COVENANT**

*Our ancestors were called together to be God's people. Grateful for their faithful witness and this heritage, relying on God's everlasting grace, we the South Newbury Union Church family covenant together to be God's people in this place and in our time. We dedicate ourselves to the worship and service of Almighty God as it is revealed by Holy Scripture and the life and ministry of Jesus Christ.*

*We covenant to walk together in all God's ways, with all God's people; to honor and respect one another as a caring family; to welcome all who enter our sanctuary and to live in our love and charity with our families and our neighbors. We further covenant to be stewards of the gifts of nature that God has given to us; to be faithful in the worship, action and support of this church, freely giving our time, treasure and talents. We expect the continuing work of the Holy Spirit in our midst.*



***Sundays at 9:30 AM  
Join Us!!***



**South Newbury Union Church  
PO Box 37  
Newbury, NH 03255**