

Our Mission

***By God's Grace, West Parish Congregational Church, United Church of Christ,
is committed to Nurturing and Celebrating God's Love in our lives, in the
Church Family, in the Community and in the world***

January 2022 newsletter

Steeple View

West Parish Congregational Church

United Church of Christ



Pastor's Perspective

January, 2022

I write this, we are in that strange time between Christmas and New Year's Day, a very quiet time when we are experiencing two things at once: the continued celebration of Christmas joy and looking ahead to the new year in hope and anticipation. This year, however, feels different. The celebrations are more muted, more tinged with a feeling of "here we go again" as we plan for another winter of pandemic precautions and restrictions. We have to hold fast to the signs of hope that we see and hear. For, as we read in John 1:5, "the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it."



Walking the Dingle Way in Ireland with Mary was, for me, the highlight of our trip and one of the best experiences of my life. Going into the walk, I didn't know how my body would respond to walking 12-15 miles a day over diverse terrain. I didn't know what the accommodations would be like, or the weather, or if we had the right equipment. We had booked the trip through an organization called Wilderness Ireland and they booked the accommodations and provided luggage transport from one inn to the next each day. I have to admit, I had some doubts about my preparedness and my ability to walk 80-100 miles in the course of 9 days.



What I discovered was the joy of just taking each day as it came. We would wake each morning, have a great homemade breakfast made by the B & B proprietor that day, get our backpacks ready with the food, clothing, and water we would need for the day...and just set out walking. Walking through the countryside, on pasture paths, over rolling hills alongside vast numbers of sheep and cows, along beaches and country roads, through small villages and larger towns, we lived completely in the moment. There is nothing like walking and experiencing all of the sights and sounds (and smells) to put one in touch with the earth, God's creation, and other people. Just putting one foot in front of the other and living each moment, enjoying one another's company and all of the new things waiting for us around the next bend. I can't describe to you how energizing and renewing this walk was to my spirit and soul. And one of the best incentives was that we had a destination each day: the next inn where we knew there would be a great pub where we could have dinner and a pint, relax, and prepare for the next day's walk.

As I look back on that experience, my hope is that I can bring that feeling of living completely in the moment, that sense of connection to the earth and other people, to my day-to-day living. For me, so much of it involves movement. The act of walking—of pilgrimage—is essential. I too easily get stuck in one place (often in my head), worrying about COVID, or politics, climate change, or my own health. It's easy for me to get paralyzed by those feelings of helplessness, overwhelmed by doubt and feelings of dread about the future. What I have discovered is that I find hope and joy in the movement itself, in putting one foot in front of the other, in breathing deeply and setting out. My hope for all of us in 2022 is that we, too, may be pilgrim people, "people on a journey," setting out to find deeper connection to God, the earth, and other people in this new and strange time. May we know and be confident of God's presence in all things. God, who is close to us as our breathing and as vast as the night sky, holds us close.

As we enter 2022, may you know this and may it sustain you in all that the new year brings,
Tim

Christian Education

Christian Education families had a great time caroling just before the snowfall to older members of our congregation. CE and WPCC School sponsored an all church Advent Spiral Walk in the chapel, with candles lighting the way in the darkness.

The CE committee plans skating at the new ice rink at Ethel Bisbee and sledding, both are outdoor activities that are safe for the children to gather.



The committee will continue to share the weekly Bible children's message using the Celebrate Wonder materials. They focus on Jesus' early years and start of his teachings. The weekly video also takes these passages from Luke and looks at our journey as we grow in faith. This includes the importance of children in our church, sharing our questions, how we help each other to grow, how to respond to temptations, and trusting where God is leading you. Some of the spiritual practices we can learn to help our journey through faith includes journaling and sharing our questions of faith with each other in our family and in church, looking for thing in our surroundings and in our life that remind us about God. We can also look at the rituals of the church such as Baptism and examine how they help connect us to God. In times of decision making and temptation we are reminded to stop, breath, think (especially what God's teachings show us about our decision, and then decide. We are also encouraged to consider what God is calling us to do and think about what messages we would like to share with others.

Even though the children's message is focused on children and youth they contain messages that applies to all in the church, no matter your age. Packets are sent to each church family with more information from the curriculum.

WPCC School

Well, December went by quickly!

In a short period of time, Lucy and Will worked as eager elves to create beautiful gifts for their family members. Included were beeswax candles, hand sewn lavender sachets and painted coffee mug coasters. We spent a great deal of time discussing the waiting period of advent and how we can prepare spiritually in this time. The children reflected on important relationships while creating their hand made gifts.

Lucy is reading "Heidi" and will complete a storyboard project on her reading after the holidays. This is one of a favorite past reads of Will... he and Lucy have lively discussions on the characters and setting. Will admitted to daydreaming of being a goat farmer in the Swiss Alps...Will is enjoying reading "Early Thunder" in preparation for studies on the American Revolution.

Both of the kiddos will be starting a Saxon Math program in addition to MIT developed Beast Academy math. Both students are very mathematical and deserve the extra attention. Thankfully we have Mrs. Deb Picirillo to guide us on our math journey!

Science for Lucy is about nutrition and Will is studying the environment. We are making sure to feed our worm compost bin (neatly tucked away near the boiler) with hopes to use the worm tea and castings for the church gardens this spring.

French class taught us some fun Christmas vocabulary in December. We also spent quite a bit of time outdoors. Speaking of which...we are on winter semester and our focus is on outdoor activity. We will be doing morning lessons and then hitting the slopes, sledding hill or skating rink.



Exciting news:

We were the recipients of a Vela microschool grant!

Our inter generational approach with our ties to nature and faith gave us this opportunity. We look forward to discussing with the congregation how to best use our funding.

We send warm and healthy wishes and prayers for a happy new year!

Jenn Doyle



PILGRIM LODGE Summer 2022



June 3 - June 5
WOMEN'S SPRING WEEKEND

June 26 - July 2
ELEMENTARY /ARTS FOR ALL
Grades 4 - 6 7 - 9 10 - Post Grad



July 3 - July 5
GRANDPARENTS CAMP I
July 3 - July 6
"EXPEDITION EVERYONE"



July 10 - July 16
CAMP PRIDE & ISLAND CAMP
Grades 9 - Post Grad Grades 7 - 9



July 13 - July 16
FIRST TIME CAMPERS
Grades 3 - 5



July 17 - July 23
MIDLERS & SENIOR HIGH
Grades 7 - 9 Grades 10 - Post Grad



July 24 - July 30
HOGWARTS & COBBEECON
Grades 4 - 10



Aug 3 - Aug 6
ADULTS' WEEKEND

Sept 2 - Sept 5
FAMILY CAMP

Aug 21 - Aug 23
GRANDPARENTS CAMP II

Sept 16 - Sept 18
WOMEN'S FALL WEEKEND

Pilgrim Lodge

Pilgrim Lodge, the UCC summer camp in Gardiner, Maine, will be open this summer. This is a great opportunity for all ages to come and experience a Christian camp. Grandparents to seniors to youngsters grades 4 to 12 are welcome.

Please check out the schedule. For any questions, check with Patricia Boyle-Wight. The Women's Fellowship offers scholarships to the camp.

Flower List

Thank you, Susan, for organizing the list of people to place the flowers in the sanctuary each Sunday, helping to beautify our church. You have helped all of us see the beauty shared by others. There are more opportunities to sign up for other weeks. Please let Susan Herlihy know if you would like to share something for the sanctuary.

January 2 is communion Sunday

January 9 - Peggy Wight in memory of the Kubachs

January 16 - Susan Herlihy

January 23 - Andee Alford in honor of her father

January 30 - Sharon Lyon

Calendar for January

January 1 Happy New Year!

Sunday, January 2 Worship with Communion at 10 AM at church and on YouTube Live

Monday, January 3 - Congo Craftsmen at 9 AM at Bob Iles' house

Tuesday, January 4 - Prayer Group at 8:45 AM at church and on ZOOM
Book Group at 7 PM at church and on ZOOM

Wednesday, January 5 Men's Breakfast at 8 AM at church and on ZOOM

Thursday, January 6 - Epiphany - Church Council 6:45 PM via ZOOM

Sunday, January 9 - Worship at 10 AM at church and on YouTube Live
Coffee order due Sunday

Monday, January 10 - Congo Craftsmen at 9 AM at Bob Iles' house

Tuesday, January 11 - Prayer group at 8:45 AM at church and on ZOOM;
Trustees at 6:30 PM on ZOOM

Wednesday, January 12 - Christian Education at 12 PM on ZOOM;
Church Council at 6:45 PM on ZOOM

Thursday, January 13 - Music Committee at 3 PM on ZOOM;
World Service Committee at 3 PM at church and on ZOOM

Sunday, January 16 - Worship at 10 AM at church and on YouTube Live

Monday, January 17 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day;
Congo Craftsmen at 9 AM at Bob Iles' House

Tuesday, January 18 - Prayer Group at 8:45 AM at church and on ZOOM

Sunday, January 23 Worship at 10 AM at church and on YouTube Live;

Annual Meeting following worship

Monday, January 24 - Congo Craftsmen at 9 AM at Bob Iles' house
Tuesday, January 25 - Prayer group at 8:45 AM at church and on ZOOM
Sunday, January 30 - Worship at 10 AM at church and on YouTube Live
Monday, January 31 - Congo Craftsmen at 9 AM at Bob Iles' house

Birthdays and Anniversaries

Take a moment to wish happy birthday or anniversary to these people on their special day.

January

January 2 – Jeremy Dunham	January 20 – Jan Whitworth
January 6 – Ella Blair	January 20 – Linda McDonough
January 6 – Mary Isham	January 24 – Diane York
January 7, 1935 – Marilyn Sahlberg	January 26 – Kaitlyn Brown
January 10, 1950 – Jane Chandler	January 26 – Eileen Opie
January 13, 1949 – Sharon Lyon	January 29 – Neil Scanlon
January 19, 1998 – Carla Boyle-Wight	January 30 – Bob Elliott and Linda McDonough

Love Bowl

Love Bowl for January is for Grace Street Ministry.

Their comment, when asked about their church, is this. “When we stop to talk to someone on the street or in the shelters, we introduce ourselves as street pastors. Usually, they ask, “So, where’s your church?” We explain that we are a walking ministry and that, “the church is right here with all of you.” We make sure they know that we’re not there to tell them what to believe or how to worship. We’re there to sit with them wherever they are in their journey, whether in sorrow or in triumph. That is our church.”

At one of the coldest months of the year, it is time to reflect on the homeless people, walking the streets of Portland. Each of their stories is personal and individual. We can support the efforts to help them financially and in our prayers. Rev. Bob Ross worked with this ministry for many years, being present as a huge gift to the homeless people.

MeSOM

Maine School of Ministry has two classes this spring that might be of interest to anyone, not just those pursuing ministry. Check with the Maine Conference on details of each class and registration information.

Ministry, Mental Health and the Church

Spiritual Leadership for a Climate Changed World, a collaboration with Bangor Theological Seminary Center.

Coffee Order due

Jane is taking orders for Equal Exchange Coffee, chocolate, cocoa, and tea this month. The order is due Sunday, January 9. Send her an email with the type of coffee you want and she will send you a price. Jane.h.chandler@gmail.com.



Book Group this Tuesday

Book Group will meet Tuesday, January 4, 7 p.m. to discuss *The Hidden Life of Trees: What They Feel, How They Communicate—Discoveries from A Secret World* by Peter Wohlleben. The group will meet in person and via ZOOM for this lively discussion of how trees communicate with each other, how they support each other.

Next month, February 1, the group will discuss the book *Caste: The Origins of our Discontent* by Isabel Wilkerson. This is a provocative book comparing the culture of the country of India and our culture and treatment of black people, historically and to the present. Any are welcome to this monthly book discussions. Contact Jane Chandler for a ZOOM link.