

*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, 2023 newsletter**  
**Steeple View**  
**West Parish Congregational Church**  
**United Church of Christ**



## **Pastor's Perspective**

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! May the light of Christmas burn bright for you and may you continue to experience hope, peace, joy, and love into 2023!

We had a wonderful, festive Christmas Eve service with a full church (the first time that has happened in several years) and a small (but still festive) gathering on Christmas day.

This is just a quick note to highlight a couple of January happenings here at West Parish UCC. First, there will be a special worship event on Sunday,

January 8th. The Deacons will be providing a pancake breakfast and then we will have worship around the tables following the breakfast. Worship will include Communion. The breakfast will begin at the usual worship time—10 AM—and then we will move into worship immediately following the breakfast. It will be a fun, casual way to celebrate Epiphany as we combine fellowship and worship. It's also a great Sunday to invite a friend or family member to come to church!

Second, the Annual Meeting of the church will take place on Sunday, January 22nd following worship. There will be more details to come but please plan to attend this important all-church meeting when we vote on the 2023 budget and the slate of officers and committee members. Also, if you are an officer or committee/group chair, please send your annual report to Kathy by Monday, January 9th.

Also on the calendar are two Middle School youth group meetings—on January 13th and 27th from 5-7 PM—and an all-church Potluck supper on January 20th from 6-7:30 PM. See Patricia's article for more info and watch for updates on these and all events! Kathy McMahan, our new administrative assistant, is updating the church website ([bethelcongregationalchurch.org](http://bethelcongregationalchurch.org)) and Facebook page so I encourage you to check them regularly. Blessings and peace to you and your family and see you in the new year!

Tim

## CHRISTIAN EDUCATION NEWS

Christian Education had a wonderful Fall and early Winter season. We've had several meaningful events these past few months:

**We had a Youth Group gathering at the church in early November** where, among other things, we sewed some Christmas ornaments with Melinda Remington. **The Lantern Walk was in the middle of November**, where we had the walk, shared delicious food and warm fellowship, and singing by the bonfire. **We had a Youth Group gathering in early December** to prepare for the Advent Spiral - the following

evening we had our **Advent Spiral Walk**, which was meaningful and contemplative. The youth led much of the event, including doing readings and inviting people into the walk itself.



It was nice to see a few families light Advent Candles during worship throughout the month of December.

In January, we are hoping to have local elementary school teacher Heidi Bullen, author of [A Dog and His Boy](#), attend either a youth Group gathering or a church potluck. We will also be focusing on the **theme of Epiphany** for the month. **Deb Lewis is hoping to begin working with clay** with young people at church, and we are **considering having a Game Night**.

Jim Chandler and/or I will be available each Sunday to spend time with **any children under the age of five, during worship**. This may occasionally require the assistance of another adult from the pews who is interested in assisting us in this ministry of welcome.

Please feel free to contact Jim Chandler or myself with any ideas, questions, or concerns.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to you all,  
Patricia and the CE Committee

## **Maine Conference News**

The Maine Conference sends out a weekly update if you would like to know more about what is happening in Augusta and around the state.

New England Women's Conference is back after a hiatus with pandemic precautions. The workshops sound very exciting. It is in Manchester, NH, March 17-19, 2023.

Deb Lewis is on the committee planning the exciting time for women to gather. Registration is now open. [women's conference](#)

## **Book Group to meet in February**

Book group will meet in person Tuesday, Feb. 7, at 7 PM at the church.

We will read and discuss *Lessons in Chemistry* by Bonnie Garmus. A small group met in person in December and had a great time visiting and sharing Christmas stories. After much discussion we agreed to continue to meet and discuss interesting books. We also agreed to skip January as it is difficult to find much spare reading time around the Christmas holiday.

For your information, Grace Note Inn in conjunction with the Bethel Library has started a community book group. The next meeting is January 17 at 2 PM. They have chosen books for the next four months.

January - *Lessons in Chemistry* by Bonnie Garmus

February - *The Lincoln Highway* by Amor Towles

March - *The Stranger in the Woods* by Michael Finkel  
April - *Behold the Dreamers* by Imbolo Mbue

### **Coffee lovers, time to order more**

I am taking coffee and chocolate orders again. I order every two months and it is due January 8th.

The coffee comes from Equal Exchange and supports local coffee growers around the world. Each cup we drink is a cup of justice.

We also order chocolate during the winter months. <https://shop.equalexchange.coop/>  
You can go to their site to see the flavors available and let Jane know. Then I will let you know the price.

*Happy New Year 2023*



## **January Calendar of Events**

**Sunday, January 1** - Happy New Year! Worship at 10 AM (in chapel),

also streaming live on YouTube Live

**Tuesday, January 3** - Prayer Group at 8:45 AM at church and on ZOOM

**Wednesday, January 4** - Men's Breakfast at 8 AM at church and on ZOOM

**Friday, January 6** - Epiphany Sunday

**January 8** - Breakfast and Worship with Communion at 10 AM in Dining room, also streaming live on YouTube Live

**Monday, January 9** - Annual reports due to Kathy M.

**Tuesday, January 10** - Prayer Group at 8:45 AM at church and on ZOOM; Trustees at 6:30 PM on ZOOM

**Wednesday, January 11** - Music Committee at 7 PM on ZOOM

**Friday, January 13** - Middle School Youth Group, 5-7 PM

**Sunday, January 15** - Worship at 10 AM at church and streaming on YouTube Live

**Monday, January 16** - Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

**Tuesday, January 17** - Prayer Group at 8:45 AM at church and on ZOOM; Deacons at 10:30 AM at church and on ZOOM

**Wednesday, January 18** - World Service Committee at 3 PM at church and on ZOOM; Church Council at 6:45 PM on ZOOM

**Friday, January 20** - All Church Potluck, 6-7:30 PM

**Sunday, January 22** - Worship at 10 AM/Annual Meeting, at church and streaming on YouTube Live

**Tuesday, January 24** - Prayer Group at 8:45 AM at church and on ZOOM

**Friday, January 27** - Middle School Youth Group, 5-7 PM

**Sunday, January 29** - Worship at 10 AM at church and streaming on  
YouTube Live