

# The Courier

Charlotte Congregational Church, United Church of Christ • December 2014

#### **ADVENT VISITOR**

It matters little what is happening inside the house, whether meals are being fixed, or TV watched, someone laughing still or crying more, we are brought up by the knock on the door.

So placing down the fork, or rising from the couch, we pause a moment and know uneasiness, know fear, though there should be none, know we are not looking our best, know we have been caught at rest.

And so less than we had hoped we'd be we go to greet this guest, this intruder, this stranger in our kingdom.

Advent comes like a stranger, a hollow knock on the door. We have been eating turkey and thinking Christmas We are a bustle with demands or sorrows, We have no time for something more.
Into a house beset by mess and preparation, filled with illness or laughter--or maybe both--comes this stranger to sit at the kitchen table. What can we do for you? We ask. Why are you here? Impatient, we want this over with. But Advent has come to stay a while, to sit in the kitchen and simply be. What do you want from me? we ask confused. What can I do for you? Why are you here? When will you go?

Perhaps the answer lies in Advent's silence and in our questions, in our wondering what is going on and what is asked of us.
Holy God, grant us patience with this uninvited guest. May we learn hospitality
May we see who you would have us be; may we hear our questions as invitations.
Help us to be still with this silent one, quiet in the chaos.
Perhaps we will draw up a kitchen chair and sit a while as well.
Maybe the strange peace will fill even us.
Maybe, just maybe, we will be so at peace that when the knock comes again at our door.

that when the knock comes again at our door in the middle of the night some weeks from now, we will with full and ready hearts welcome in The Prince of Peace.

The Reverend Susan Cooke Kittredge

#### THE CHRISTMAS GIVING TREE

Our annual Giving Tree will be set up in the sanctuary on November 30th. The ornaments represent wishes of those we help through the Charlotte Food Shelf and Lund.

Gifts may be turned in December 14th (this gives you two weeks to shop, wrap, and return gifts).

Please select an ornament from the tree November 30 through December 7th and write your name on the clipboard opposite your ornament number. If the ornament you select has more than one item listed, just indicate on the ornament what item or items are in the package by crossing out items not in the package, and attach the ornament to the package. If your gift is a gift card, please enclose it in an envelope or small box with the person's name on it in addition to the numbered tag.

The wishes for gift certificates from local supermarkets or stores will allow families to enjoy items not available through our food shelf. If you are unable to purchase a specific item on the list, a grocery or gas card will be a welcome substitution.

THANK YOU in advance for helping to brighten the wonderful season of Advent. For questions: Katherine Kjelleren 482-2745 or 770-0870 kjcla@gmavt.net



# **CCC YOUTH GROUPS**

#### KIDS COOK!

We will meet at Charlie and Susan's house in Shelburne at 3 PM ON SUNDAY DECEMBER 14 to prepare a meal for our Wednesday Free Soup Supper which will be on DECEMBER 17TH. All children and youth age 6 and older are welcome. For more information please contact Rev. Susan: scookekitt@mac.com

### **2015 PLEDGE CAMPAIGN**

Please consider a generous pledge to assist the Church with its great work on behalf of our members, regular visitors, guests and our wider community. Your pledge directly supports the wonderful addition of Rev. Susan Cooke Kittredge to our Church for her second year, our many important ministries, programs, staff and facilities. Please give generously! With gratitude,

Ginny Rowland, V.P. Financial Stewardship

To receive a copy of the 2015 Narrative Budget and a pledge card, you can read and download a copy from our web site @ www.charlotteucc.org or call Kim Findlay in the Church office at 425-3176 to have a copy mailed to you.

# **Charlotte Congregational Church**

**United Church of Christ** 

P.O. Box 12 • Charlotte, VT 05445

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www.charlotteucc.org



#### Our mission statement:

Embraced by the healing love of Jesus Christ and inspired by his teachings, we commit ourselves to prayerful, compassionate, and courageous action in the world.



Rev. Will Burhans, Senior Pastor

Rev. Susan Cooke Kittredge, Associate Pastor

Julia Blocksma, Music Director

Kim Findlay, Office Manager

Karen Speidel, Bookkeeper



The Courier is published monthly, except for the summer months when June, July, and August are combined into a Summer edition.

To subscribe by either email or snail mail, please contact us at charlotteucc@gmavt.net or call 802-425-3176.

### **CHRISTIAN ED**

#### **PAGEANT REHEARSALS CONTINUE**

**DECEMBER 7, 14, AND 21** 

Calling all angels, sheep, shepherds and wise people! We will continue to explore the nativity story, finish the crèche figures and rehearse for the pageant.

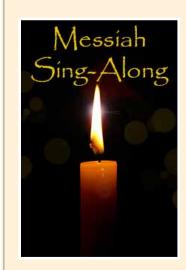
**DECEMBER 7TH:** Story of the "Wise Men", making figure of baby Jesus and practicing

**DECEMBER 14TH:** Dress rehearsal during Sunday School - come directly to the vestry to begin rehearsal

**DECEMBER 21ST:** Dress rehearsal at 8:30, Pageant at 10 AM

Kay Jostrand is organizing this, so you can e-mail her for any details she might want to add (kjostrand@gmail.com)





# MESSIAH SING-ALONG

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 7TH, 2014 • 4-5 PM

Tickets: \$12 each, \$40 for 4 • Available at the door and on our website!

Featuring:
Anne Decker, conductor
Julia Bloksma, continuo
Deborah Massell, soprano
Linda Patterson, mezzo
Adam Hall, tenor

Erik Kroncke, bass

Jane Kittredge, violin
Letitia Quante, violin
Paul Reynolds, viola
Dieuwke Davydov, cello
Evan Premo, bass
Jason Whitcomb, trumpet
Jeremy Levine, timpani

## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

#### ADVENT HOURS OF SANCTUARY

Remember that during the busy season of Advent we are opening our sanctuary doors, lighting candles, and warming the space for 2 hours on Monday nights from 5-7 PM so that anyone and everyone may come and be in prayer and quiet. Take some time for yourself amidst the rush and reconnect with the God of your life. Invite your friends to do the same!

#### WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

The Brunch Bunch will meet on SUNDAY, DECEMBER 7TH at 11:45 AM at the Dutch Mill in Shelburne. Please let Ann know if you would like to be included in the reservation (985-9884).

The Breakfast Bunch gathers WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 17TH at 10 AM at Diane Dolliver's home for a Christmas potluck breakfast. Call Diane Dolliver (425-2239) if you are planning to go and to find out what to bring.

#### **CENTERING PRAYER**

It's not too late to join our on-going centering prayer group practice on Tuesday evenings from 7:15-8:15 PM. We are currently listening to presentations by Father Thomas Keating,

a Cistercian monk who is the founder of the Centering Prayer Movement, sharing about our individual daily practices, and praying together. Please see Rev. Will if you are interested and he (or someone else from the group) can share with you the particularities of this practice.

#### **SOUP SUPPER AND SPACE FOR GRACE**

This month's Soup Supper and Space for Grace will be held on Wednesday night, **DECEMBER 17TH** at 5 PM. Please join us in the vestry for a casual meal at 5 and a brief worship service to follow at 5:30.



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# **DECEMBER 2014 CALENDAR**



1

• ADVENT HOURS OF SANCTUARY, 5-7 PM

7

• CENTERING PRAYER, 7:15 PM

4

• BOOK GROUP, 10 AM

•NEW MEMBER MTG, 5:15 PM

• CHOIR PRACTICE, 7-8 PM

sunday 7

• WORSHIP, 10 AM

BRUNCH BUNCH, 11:45 AM

• MESSIAH SING-ALONG, 4 PM

8

• ADVENT HOURS OF SANCTUARY, 5-7 PM

9

• CENTERING PRAYER, 7:15 PM

10

• CABINET MTG, 7 PM

11

• BOOK GROUP, 10 AM

• CHOIR PRACTICE, 7-8 PM

sunday 14

• WORSHIP, 10 AM

• KIDS COOK!, 3 PM

15

• ADVENT HOURS OF SANCTUARY, 5-7 PM

- -

• CENTERING PRAYER, 7:15 PM

17

• BREAKFAST BUNCH, 10 AM

• SPACE FOR GRACE, 5 PM

18

• BOOK GROUP, 10 AM

• CHOIR PRACTICE, 7-8 PM

sunday 21

• WORSHIP, 10 AM

• CHRISTMAS PAGEANT!

22

• ADVENT HOURS OF SANCTUARY, 5-7 PM

23

• CENTERING PRAYER, 7:15 PM

25

**CHRISTMAS EVE** 

• FAMILY SERVICE, 4:30 PM

• CANDLELIGHT SERVICE, 7 PM

25

**MERRY CHRISTMAS!** 

sunday 28

• WORSHIP, 10 AM

monday 29

• DEACON'S MTG, 5:15 PM





# The Christmas Pageant S



• Sunday, December 21st at 10 AM •

Oh come, all ye faithful! Join the joyful throngs in celebration of Jesus' birth.! Our children and youth will lead us in worship unfolding the wonder of the nativity before our eyes. Based loosely on a lessons and carols service, this year's pageant has plenty of opportunity to sing your favorite carols. There is something for children of all ages. Joy to the World!

## OTHER NEWS

# VERMONT INTERFAITH ACTION - MOVEMENT TOWARDS A MORAL ECONOMY

Do you believe that all Vermonters who work deserve to be treated with dignity, including being paid a fair wage? The VIA Clergy Caucus does! The VIA Clergy Caucus includes Catholics, Episcopalians, Jews, Muslims, Presbyterians, United Church of Christ, and Unitarian Universalists. Although they come from different teachings and faith traditions, they looked at a broad economic framework and arrived at five tenets that will help Vermont move towards a Moral Economy: a just economy that respects the dignity of every human being.

One of the tenets is to pay fair wages that provide an adequate standard of living for a worker and her dependents. An adequate standard of living includes: food; clothing; shelter; physical safety; food security; and basic health, preventative, and mental health care. To work toward this, the clergy recommends: time off for family care; protection from exploitation by employers; policies that invest in housing, transportation, and the long-term well-being of all Vermonters; and tax policies that shift more of the burden from the middle class to the wealthiest.

This Moral Economy framework was introduced throughout Vermont from November 17 to 20. There was a series of gatherings in Burlington, East Arlington, Middlebury, White River Junction, Danville, Rutland, Brattleboro, and Montpelier. These gatherings were attended by 240 people, 52 of whom were legislators, as well as by the current Secretary of Administration (who prepares the state budget) and by the Conference Minister of the United Church of Christ and the Bishop of the Vermont Episcopal Diocese. Interested? You can read all five tenets and supporting verses from the Hebrew Scriptures, New Testament and Quran, along with policy recommendations regarding Collection and Allocation of Resources and Wages and Benefits in their document, Movement towards a Moral Economy, www.viavt.org/admin/resources\_list/files/0008.pdf.

# SUN-POWERED BUILDINGS, GOD-POWERED LIVES!

Our church has just applied for a grant for solar panels! Along with the potential \$20,000 grant there has also been a generous \$10,000 offer from a congregant for a matching grant to raise the remainder of the funds if in fact we receive the grant and move forward with this project. If you'd like to know more about this please see Jeanie MacDonough, David Speidel, David Pricer, Lane Morrison, or Rev. Burhans. We will know on December 12th whether we've received the grant or not. Just another way we are seeking to "commit ourselves to prayerful, compassionate, and courageous action in the world."

#### CENTER FOR PROGRESSIVE RENEWAL

Our church has been selected by our Vermont Conference UCC as one of four churches to work with a consultant from the Center for Progressive Renewal over the next few years. We are what they call a "Next Level" church, which means we are vital and strong and looking to take our ministry and mission to the next level of engagement. The pastors and leadership of the church have already begun to work with the consultant, Mike Piazza, and currently we are considering a few areas for focus: 1. Evangelism (otherwise known as marketing and outreach), and the use of technology for that purpose; 2. Streamlining the governance structure so that we can be more flexibly about encouraging ministries rather than serving on committees; and 3. Facilities renewal involving a possible solar panel project and interior sanctuary facelift among other things. All of these efforts are for the expressed purpose of more effectively living out our mission: "embraced by the healing love of Jesus Christ and inspired by his teachings, we commit ourselves to prayerful, compassionate, and courageous action in the world." If anyone has ideas and energy for engaging these areas of focus please let one of the pastors or the Deacons know!





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