



Conway Village Congregational Church  
*"The Brown Church"*

# The Good News

December 2024

Volume 13 Issue 12



Conway Village Congregational Church 132 Main Street, P.O. Box 333 Conway NH 03818  
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 Pastor: Rev. John Hughes



## Waiting on the Fig Tree

<sup>29</sup> He told them this parable:  
 "Look at the fig tree and all the trees.  
<sup>30</sup> When they sprout leaves,  
 you can see for yourselves  
 and know that summer is near.  
<sup>31</sup> Even so, when you see these things happening,  
 you know that the kingdom of God is near."  
 Luke 21:29-31

The Near East was a crossroads of trade and knowledge. Shortly after Jesus' death a Greek Philosopher Epictetus (55-135 CE) clearly had patience in mind when turned to the fig and fig tree as the illustration saying, "***No great thing is created suddenly, any more than a bunch of grapes or a fig. If you tell me that you desire a fig, I answer you that there must be time. Let it first blossom, then bear fruit, then ripen.***" It is a direct reference to Jesus asking his disciples to patient while waiting for the Advent of the Kingdom of God.

Constantly people are asking questions, "***Will we be back in the Brown Church in time for Christmas?***" The answer is "***the time is near***", as we see "***signs***" developing of our return but we must be patient. As Epictetus said, "***No great thing is created suddenly***", it develops or matures in its own time. We cannot know the time, with certainty; we can prepare our return in a meaningful way. Whether we are in the theater or the church, we will celebrate a meaningful Advent season.

Robert Louis Stevenson wrote a Christmas Prayer which asks for special things to be realized as we approach Christmas. It reads:

***Loving Father, help us remember  
 the birth of Jesus that we may  
 share in songs of the angels,  
 in the gladness of the shepherds,  
 and the wisdom of the wise men.***

***Close the door of hate and open  
 the door of love all over the world.  
 Let kindness come with every gift  
 and good desires with every greeting.***

***Deliver us from evil by the blessing  
 of Jesus Christ, and teach us to  
 be merry with clean hearts.***

***May Christmas morning  
 make us happy to be your children,  
 and the Christmas evening bring us  
 to our beds with thankful thoughts,  
 forgiving and forgiven,  
 for Jesus' sake. Amen.***

**Special Advent Event: Saturday, December 7<sup>th</sup> 4:30 pm**  
**Christmas Tree Lighting**  
 (Carols, Hot Chocolate & Cookies)

**Conway Village Church Community**

# **Tree Lighting & Carol Sing**

**December 7th 4:30 PM**

**Tree Lighting**

**Carol Sing-a-long**

**Hot Cocoa**

**& Cookies**



Conway Village Church \* 132 Main St \* Conway NH

## **A Christmas Wish**

There seems a magic in the very name of Christmas. Petty jealousies and discords are forgotten, social feelings, awakened, in bosoms to which they have long been strangers. Kindly hearts that have yearned toward each other, but have been withheld by false notions of pride and self-dignity, are again reunited, and all is kindness and benevolence! Would that Christmas lasted the whole year through (as it ought), and that the prejudices and passions which deform our better nature, were never called into action among those to whom they should ever be strangers!

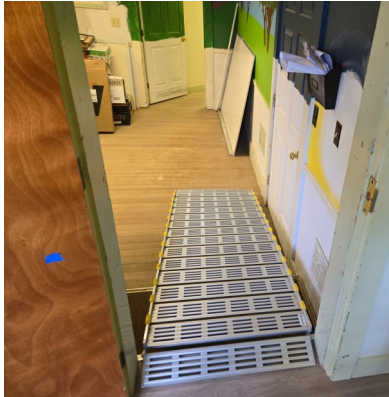
Charles Dickens



# CHURCH TRUSTEES

The boilers arrived and are being installed. We are hoping we have heat by the first week of December. This will heat two-thirds of the building. We are still working with Bergeron Technical Service on design for the heat and AC for the Sanctuary.

The pantry volunteers met with the Welds and are working on a transition plan. The Food Bank has to inspect the pantry before opening, it has to be ready to go to be inspected. The church received a grant from the Ham Foundation to help the pantry and Dinner Bell start back up.



Both are working on their lists of equipment and supplies to purchase. A removable ramp has been installed between the hallway and the Henderson room to help with the moving of food to and from the pantry.



By now all members should have received the Stewardship Letter and pledge card. We hope you will take some time to think about your pledge for 2025. We will be working on the new budget soon, and it will be a challenge. Our expenses were down for the last year, due to the flood and minimal utility bills. Once we are back in the building, the heating costs, electricity, cleaning and plowing costs will resume. We do hope that the new propane system will be much more efficient. We are still working with FEMA, but need to plan to have to pay flood insurance this year. Your pledges for the year help us with the planning. If you did not receive a letter and pledge card and would like one, please call the office.

It is hoped that church services might resume at the church soon, but they will be held in Fellowship Hall. Due to the heavy oil smell over the winter, the carpets in the Sanctuary need to be replaced. Once they are pulled up, the floor should be refinished. The flooring and carpet can be done after heat is back in the Sanctuary. We are hoping this will be done in January. As work continues, we are still fundraising for Flood Recovery, the GOFUNDME page is still active.

The Annual Meeting will be on January 26th, please plan to attend. Between now and then we will be working on the Annual Report, and the 2025 Budget. We will also be looking at which boards and committees will be needing more help. Many members have worked a lot years and are ready to come off. Board turnover is not a bad thing, but we do need volunteers to replace them. If anyone is interested, please let us know, we can tell you what the board or committee does. Your help is needed!

## Trustee Board

Anne Getchell, John Edgerton,  
Duddie Andrews, Nancy Irving,  
Nancy Divine & Tom Workman,  
ex officio member, Treasurer

The Trustees want to wish everyone a Merry Christmas!

**CHRISTMAS**  
*The true spirit of Christmas lies within your heart*





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## The Conway Village Congregational Church

United Church of Christ  
Reverend John G Hughes, II

### NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING

TO: All Members and Friends of the Conway Village Congregational Church

The Annual Meeting of the Membership of the Conway Village Congregational Church will be held on Sunday, January 26, 2025, at approximately 11:00 am at the of the Conway Village Congregational Church after worship. The meeting will be held in person and via Zoom platform. Voting will be done via roll call method. Please email [cvccwebteam@gmail.com](mailto:cvccwebteam@gmail.com) or call the office for the phone in information.

The purpose of this Annual Meeting will be:

1. To hear reports of the officers, board and standing committees for the preceding year.
2. To approve a Budget for 2025.
3. To discuss the Council plan.
4. To elect officers, board and standing committee members for 2025.
5. To conduct any other business that may come to the floor of the meeting.

Dated at: Conway, New Hampshire, on the 26<sup>th</sup> of November 2024.

Anne Getchell, Trustee

## End of an Era



On Sunday, November 10<sup>th</sup>, the North Country Association of the United Church of Christ, meeting at the Jackson Community Church and having established a quorum, voted to end a relationship which existed for 191 years. Requiring a simple majority vote, the clergy and delegates present ended the North Country Association, which was organized on February 19, 1833, at the Lancaster Congregational Church. The original purpose of Church Associations was to give local congregations a broader view of the works of Christ (*national and international missions*), act as an educational resource to support local ministries, and serve as a clearing house for prospective ministers and congregations looking for new pastoral opportunities. The vote to dissolve the Association was with the understanding that its functions will now be assumed by the New Hampshire Conference of the United Church of Christ. It was a unanimous vote with one abstention. The communication I received about the Association gathering was to discuss what a study committee was recommending. When a vote was called, I was uncomfortable voting for something without fully reviewing it with our leadership and congregation, so I abstained.

The churches which made up the North Country Association have changed in the last 7 years. The Congregational Church of Errol withdrew its membership in the Association when they determined that the Association no longer represented its views of theology and polity, reducing membership to 12 churches. The remaining churches were Barlett Congregational, Chatham Congregational, Monadnock Congregational (Colebrook), First Church of Christ, Congregational (North Conway), Conway Village Congregational Church, Congregational Church of Dalton, Community Church of Christ (Franconia), Gorham Congregational Church, Jackson Community Church, Lancaster Congregational, First Congregational Church, Littleton, and the Pemi Valley Church (Woodstock).

Members of the Brown Church will remember offering a program by Rev. G. Jeffrey MacDonald in the Spring of 2018 on how part-time ministry was quickly becoming the norm in churches nationally. Rev. MacDonald offered information and pastoral models from his then soon to be published book, "[Part-Time is Plenty, thriving without full-time clergy](#)". His insights quickly became prophetic for churches in our region. Churches looking for full-time pastoral coverage found that clergy looking to offer pastoral care were retired and only willing to commit to part-time ministry. Due to a shortage of ordained ministers, some of our churches found themselves being lay led. As full-time ministry became more the exception and as local seminaries closed their doors, volunteers for positions serving the Association began to become strained. The Brown Church has had a rich tradition of serving the North Country Association of the U.C.C., both with volunteering on its boards and committees and by offering educational resources for our sister churches. It is with mixed emotions that we say goodbye to our 191 years of commitment as we accept the realities of the changing climate of pastoral ministry.

Rev John Hughes

December 2024



# Diaconate

# ADVENT

PREPARE THE WAY



## Prepare For the way of the Lord

The first Chapter of Mark Gospel in verses 2-4 reads: As it is written in the prophet Isaiah; “See I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way; the voice of one crying out of the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight”.

We begin the Celebration of Advent in the coming four Sundays of December as a people waiting, on the watch for, and preparing for the coming of our Lord. What is to become of this “King” that arrives in the form of a new born in the most humble of ways, laid in place where livestock feed from?

Perhaps we know our Bible stories well, so of course we are ready with a quick and succinct answer; “This is Jesus the Risen Christ, the Son of Man, The Prince of Peace, and God Incarnate”.

We, as a community of faith will begin Advent with the lighting of first four candles on Sunday December 1st. The Advent wreath is a cherished tradition observed during the weeks leading up to Christmas.

The Advent wreath serves as a spiritual compass on our journey in preparation for the nativity of our Lord. It symbolizes hope, peace, joy and love through its four candles, each representing a week leading up to the birth of Christ.

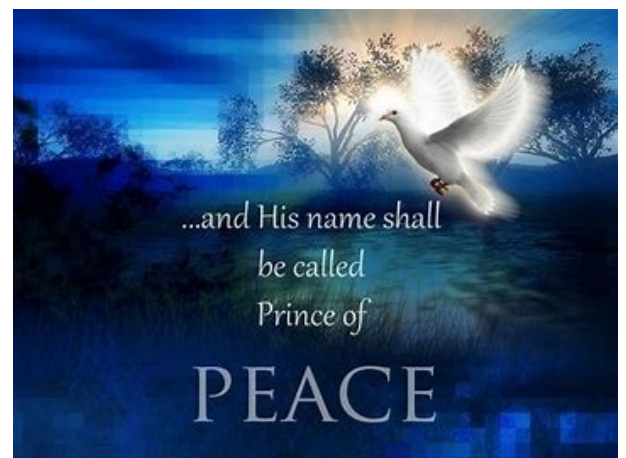
The best scholars of Sacred Scripture have never been so simplistic as to pretend that all the answer to everything is found in the same Scriptures. Yet, the wisest of them have found paradoxically that truth lies in finding as Jesus often did; to ask the right kind of question instead.

As we “Prepare for the Way of the Lord” in the season of advent, perhaps it may be appropriate to each of us and as a community of faith to think about asking the right kind of questions as we wait, watch and prepare for coming of our Lord.

Charles Monaghan

Your Deacons,

Louise Saxby, Judy Workman, Beth Campbell,  
Jill Reynolds and Charles Monaghan





# Prayer Requests

Cathy Currier  
Cynthia Saxby  
Joan Mathurin  
Alice Proctor  
Colleen Albert  
Elise Keeney Edgerton  
Linda Frechette  
Alice Spear  
Nancy Keyes  
Curt Reynolds

Paula Burgess  
Tom Steele  
Carol Baribeau  
Sandy Stowell & Lisa Horne  
Mark & Caroline Weld  
John Edgerton  
Eileen Redmond  
Debbie Kelly  
Jean Hamilton & Family  
Greg Turgeon



Teresa Bernhardt  
Pat (Gahagen) Goetzinger  
Suzanne & Eddie  
Misty  
Charlotte  
Margaret Marshall  
John & Kathy P.



**Fresh Homestyle Meal**




We **TENTATIVELY** will be open  
Monday, January 6, 2025  
Everyone Is Welcome!!  
Mondays 4—5 pm



Call office for confirmation of date.  
603-447-3851




**DECEMBER birthdays**



**Bernie Plimpton**

Thursdays, 1:00 pm


BIBLE  
*Women's*  
STUDY



**The Chosen** study begins on Thursday, October 17th @ 1 pm. Season 4 has 8 Episodes that lead us up to Holy Week.

Each Episode has a Bible Roundtable discussion led by a Protestant Bible professor, a Catholic priest and a Messianic Jewish Rabbi. This helps us understand Old Testament teachings, Jewish traditions and the life, the times and teachings of Christ thru the eyes of his disciples and followers. Come and follow with us each week as we grow our faith and our relationship with Christ.

We would love to have you join us!!  
Judy Workman  
Women's Bible Study Facilitator

Fridays  9 am

**Men's Bible Study**

STRENGTHEN YOUR FAITH

Everyone is welcome to study God's Word with us. If you are interested in attending either of the Bible Studies, please call or email the church for the location of that week's meeting. Bible studies are currently being held in private homes while the church building is being renovated.



## CVCC Food Pantry

As mentioned in the previous newsletters we have been asking for back-up helping with the Pantry. At the end of the year, we will be ending our time as coordinators. Due to Paul's health, he is unable to do what he has done in the past. We are willing to show anyone that is interested in how the pantry works and what it involves. If interested, contact the office.

God Bless, Paul and Sylvia

### Outreach Committee

Anne Getchell, Charlyne Gray, Marilyn Hughes, & Charles Monaghan

## Halloween Town a Great Success

On Saturday, October 26<sup>th</sup>, Halloween Town hosted just under 4,000 people - - - parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts, teens, children, and volunteers. The net results were \$40,000 dollars donated to the Laura Foundation. The mission of The Laura Foundation is to provide funding to develop and support therapeutic recreation and educational programs that enrich the quality of lives of individuals with autism and, or seizure disorders.



The Brown Church contributed to the event. Rev. John Hughes and Tom Jordan served up World Famous Apple Crisp with vanilla ice cream to hungry trick-or-treaters. Ghosts, goblins, fairies, princes, unicorns, and various imaginary creatures feasted on the desserts. Special thanks to Carl Vitters who transported the trailer to the event and to the event coordinators who provided power and gas for the delectable Apple Crisp. Amy Mahoney provides the money to make change, and spooky lighting was provided by the Hot Dog King. Halloween Town is presented by Camp Tohkomeupog and Purity Spring Resort and allows children to walk haunted trails through dozens of cabins decorated with Halloween themes.





# Sunday Worship Services

10:00 AM

Meeting at the Majestic Theater until we are able to return to our church

In person or on zoom

To join us online please go to Zoom.com use this Meeting ID: 832 6656 0783 the Passcode is: 074610

## December 2024

### Sunday, December 1, 2024 - 1<sup>st</sup> Advent Communion

*Psalm 25:1-10*

Scripture: Jeremiah 33:14-16  
Luke 21:25-36

Sermon: *"The Signs of our Time?"*

### Sunday, December 8, 2024 - 2<sup>nd</sup> Advent

*Luke 1:68-79*

Scripture: *Philippians 1:3-11*  
Luke 3:1-6

Sermon: *"My Christmas Prayer for You"*

### Sunday, December 15, 2024 - 3<sup>rd</sup> Advent

*Isaiah 12:2-6*

Scripture: Philippians 4:4-7  
Luke 3:7-18

Sermon: *"Dare, to be Fair, and Share"*

### Sunday, December 22, 2024 - 4<sup>th</sup> Advent

*Luke 1:46b-55*

Scripture: Micah 5:2-5a  
Luke 1:39-45,

Sermon: *"Have You Heard the Stories?"*

### Tuesday, December 24, 2024 - Christmas Eve

*Psalm 96*

Scripture: Isaiah 9:2-7  
Titus 2:11-14  
Luke 2:1-14, (15-20)

Reflection: *"So, This is Christmas!"*

### Sunday, December 29, 2024

Guest Preacher Curt Reynolds

Sermon: TBD



# December 2024

## Advent

*A Season of Hope & Expectation*



| Sunday  | Monday    | Tuesday  | Wednesday  | Thursday   | Friday  | Saturday  |
|---|-----------|--|--|--|---|---|
| <b>1</b><br>10 AM Worship<br>Majestic Theatre<br><br>FIRST SUNDAY<br>OF<br><i>Advent</i>     | <b>2</b>  | <b>3</b>   | <b>4</b>   | <b>5</b><br>1pm<br>Women's<br>Bible Study                              | <b>6</b><br>9am Men's<br>Bible Study<br><br><u>Office Closed</u>  | <b>7</b><br><br>4:30PM<br>Tree Lighting<br>Carol Singing<br>Cocoa &<br>Cookies |
| <b>8</b><br>10 AM Worship<br>Majestic Theatre<br><br>SECOND SUNDAY<br>OF<br><i>Advent</i>   | <b>9</b>  | <b>10</b>  | <b>11</b>  | <b>12</b><br>1pm<br>Women's<br>Bible Study                             | <b>13</b><br>9am Men's<br>Bible Study<br><br><u>Office Closed</u>   | <b>14</b>   |
| <b>15</b><br>10 AM Worship<br>Majestic Theatre<br><br>THIRD SUNDAY<br>OF<br><i>Advent</i>  | <b>16</b> | <b>17</b>  | <b>18</b><br>2:45<br>Diaconate<br><br>4:30pm<br>Combined<br>Trustees &<br>Council  | <b>19</b><br>1pm<br>Women's<br>Bible Study                             | <b>20</b><br>9am Men's<br>Bible Study<br><br>Newsletter<br><br>Articles Due Today!<br><u>Office Closed</u> | <b>21</b>   |
| <b>22</b><br>10 AM Worship<br>Majestic Theatre<br><br>FOURTH SUNDAY<br>OF<br><i>Advent</i> | <b>23</b> | <b>24</b> Service 6 PM<br><br><i>Christmas</i><br>EVE | <b>25</b><br><br><u>Office Closed</u> | <b>26</b><br>1pm<br>Women's<br>Bible Study<br><br><u>Office Closed</u> | <b>27</b><br>9am Men's<br>Bible Study<br><br><u>Office Closed</u>   | <b>28</b>   |
| <b>29</b><br>10 AM Worship<br>Majestic Theatre<br><b>ANNUAL MEETING</b><br>After worship service  | <b>30</b> | <b>31</b>  | <br>Happy<br>New<br>Year!             |  |   |   |