



# THE CHIMES

THE NEWSLETTER OF  
THE BAR HARBOR CONGREGATIONAL  
CHURCH, UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
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December 2014

## FROM THE PASTOR:

My wife Cristy will tell you that I am a serial reader of bulletin boards (like a moth to a flame.) I love to see what's going on, who's doing what, and what inspiration I can glean from what I see. A few years ago, while getting an ice cream cone on Rt. 1 in Searsport, I saw a flyer for a Habitat-for-Humanity-based Vacation Bible School co-hosted by Episcopal and Baptist congregations in Belfast. Whoa. Imagine Christians working together (in spite of a whole litany of doctrinal differences) to nurture the faith of children and youth in the community, animated by a common concern for society's most vulnerable and for sharing the good news of God's abundant love. These days they're *still* working together - along with a Methodist and a UCC church, too - on a games-based youth program called *Encounters*. The plot thickens - the circle widens - God is at work.

When you receive this month's *Chimes*, we'll already be in the season of Advent, the beginning of the Christian year and the time of preparation and waiting for the rebirth of God's presence in our lives. Even now we sense its coming - a combination of anticipation and excitement, a movement of the Spirit kindling our hearts. As we begin

our first year together to prepare for Christmas, what's on your spiritual 'wish list?' What are your hopes and dreams for our congregation and our community? What is your vision of how we might live together so that our lives and our faith would shine God's light far and wide, perhaps even forging new partnerships with other people of faith on MDI?

In these few short weeks as your pastor I have cherished your kind welcome, your enthusiasm, your patience, your faithful devotion, and your exciting ideas. It seems clear that God is calling us to walk together - down paths of cherished tradition and along paths untrod. Something of Emmanuel, God-with-us, is just over the horizon, and though we can see its glow we can't yet make out its shape. We can glimpse signs on the bulletin board but we can't quite make out the text. Together we have this graced opportunity to share, learn, and grow together, guided by God's steady hand, by the companionship of Christ, and by the leading of the Spirit. I am excited to begin this journey with you.

Blessings and peace,  
Rob



## From the Deacon Bench

Here we are at last, poised for a new beginning, a new chapter in the history of Bar Harbor Congregational Church, UCC. We ask all of you to join with the Deacons in adding our new pastor and his family to your prayer list as they settle into a new life.

Here are a few suggestions for consideration:

- When you have a suggestion or a prayer request, write it down. We can't expect a pastor to remember everything. Send an email. Write a note.
- When you see changes that you do or don't like in the church service, speak with or send a note to one of the Deacons or the pastor. Many issues that become misunderstandings come from lack of communication.
- If you have a concern about any part of our life together, make an appointment with the pastor or attend Church Council and let your concerns be known.
- If you learn that someone in our congregation is in the hospital, contact the office.

You may not be aware that Patty and Charlie Benore have moved from Bar Harbor to Kennebunkport to be closer to their children. Both of them have given many years of service to our church and, amazingly, Charlie has agreed to continue his job as editor of the Chimes. This decision to remain editor is typical of the generosity they have shown over the years by giving their time, money, talents and friendship for many years.

Charlie and Patty, you will be greatly missed. Thank you from all of us! We wish you many joyous years in your new home.



## Christmas Holiday Calendar

**Friday November 21st:** Parent's Night Out! Join us for pizza, popcorn, and a movie! 5:30-7:30 The Polar Express. Bring a friend and something comfy to sit on

**Sunday November 23rd:** Last day of the Fall Trimester

**Sunday November 30th:** Christmas Pageant Rehearsal during church, join us!

**Saturday December 6th:** Gingerbread house making. 10am -12 pm. Bring a bag of candy to share and your gingerbread pieces

**Saturday December 6th:** Christmas Pageant Rehearsal after gingerbread house making. We will have pizza and rehearsal. 12-1:30 pm

**Sunday December 7th:** Christmas Pageant Rehearsal during church, join us!

**Sunday December 14th:** Christmas Pageant Rehearsal during church, join us!

**Sunday December 14th:** Christmas Pageant after church, join us! We will have a potluck luncheon then head upstairs for a wonderful Christmas Pageant.

Amanda Beals



**The Bar Harbor  
Congregational  
Church will  
perform the  
41st Annual  
Living Nativity  
for the  
community**

The event will take place on the evenings of Thursday, December 4th at 6-7:20 pm, and will co-ordinate with the Bar Harbor Chamber of Commerce's "Midnight Madness" on Friday, December 5<sup>th</sup>, 7-8:20 pm. This event, depicting the biblical characters at the time of the birth of Jesus, will take place on the church steps.

Sign-up sheets will be placed in the parlor before Thanksgiving. Participants are asked to be at the church 5:15 pm on Thursday and 6:15 pm on Friday. Dress warmly. The massive size costumes fit over most winter jackets. Don't worry about supper, as hot soup, cocoa, and sandwiches will be available.

Newcomers to our church and friends in the community are welcomed to join in. At least 60 volunteers are needed for the two nights. Stop for a few moments during your Holiday activities and ponder the true meaning of Christmas. Contact Norma Spurling at 266-0459, or [vintagelady@roadrunner.com](mailto:vintagelady@roadrunner.com), if you have any questions.

**Wanted: Food for hungry  
Living Nativity cast and crew!**

For the two nights of the Living Nativity portrayal on the church steps, we are seeking warm, simple food and treats (crock pots of chili, pasta or soup, bread, cookies) so that our cast and crew can make it through the "costuming department" and to their "curtain times" ON time! Please check the list of needs on the sheet in the church parlor to see if you can help in this way.

**Thank You**



Christmas Eve services at our Church will be at 5:00 PM and 7:00 PM. The 5:00 service will be especially designed with children and families in mind, and at 7:00 there will be a candlelight service.

Come join us and be a part of this festive night! The messenger of God is revealed to us this day!

Because of the Christmas Eve Service, there will no church service on Christmas Day.

**A Morning Prayer**

Dear God: Thank you for being our Father, for your infinite mercy and grace, forgiveness of sin, and opportunity to join You in heaven;

for sending Your only Son, Jesus, to show us how to live, and to give His life so that we might be saved;

and for the Holy Spirit to guide us through life.

You are purity, goodness, and love. Please help me to be as much like You today as I can be. Amen.

## Pastor Rob's Notes:

I'm looking for prayer shawl knitters, either solo or team. We're dangerously low and it's an important, caring ministry of the church. Please see Rob to volunteer.

Come to a Prospective New Member's Supper (date in January TBA) with Pastor Rob, representatives from the Deacons, and other church committees for delicious food, delightful company, and most importantly to learn about joining the church.

A supplemental offering will be received throughout Advent for the Christmas Fund for Veterans of the Cross. Envelopes are available on the Christmas Gift Tree, and in Pastor Rob's office.

Join other carolers at 4pm on Sunday Dec 21st for Community Christmas Caroling on the Green in partnership with other MDI congregations.



### From the Outreach Board:

Thanks to EVERYONE who donated funds and food, sorted cans and boxes, and packed **more than 245** Thanksgiving baskets for this year's project! Heading up this huge community-wide effort is a heartfelt tradition for our church family, and we couldn't do it without the help of so many including other neighboring churches on MDI, Mt. Desert Elementary School, Conners-Emerson School, Morning Glory bakery, our own Cas Dowden, the Bar Harbor and Westside Food Pantries, Bar Harbor Bank and Trust's Bar Harbor office, and dozens of volunteers. **Thanks to all!**

There's still time to help with the Maine Seacoast Mission's Christmas project. Our church is scheduled to volunteer on **Wednesdays from 9-12 or 1-3**. Look for the Seacoast Mission **gift tags** on our own Narthex Christmas tree. Please take one or two, and return the unwrapped gift(s) under the tree in December.

Also on our tree this year are special offering envelopes for the Year are **special offering envelopes for the Christmas Fund for Veterans of the Cross and their Emergency Fund**. Please consider a gift of any amount.

**Thank you and Merry Christmas!**



Time to think about decorating our sanctuary for Christmas. Please consider donating a poinsettia in memory or honor of a loved one. We will use them the last Sunday in Advent and during the Christmas Eve services. You can pick them up after the final service on Christmas Eve. They are \$20.00 each. Order forms will be included in Sunday morning bulletins in December, or may be picked up in the church office. Checks should be made out to the Bar Harbor Congregational Church, and sent to the church office with your completed order form. Not only do we beautify our church, this is also a fundraiser for the Evening Auxiliary. Thank you.

# CHURCH FAIR

When you receive this issue of The Chimes, the December 10th Christmas Fair will be right around the corner! Don't worry if you didn't sign up yet, there is time!

The posters are still up through December 7th in the church parlor for you to select your role! Unlike Broadway productions, or many competitive sports, there is NO high-pressure "try out," and we only "cut" pies and sandwiches! (There are no lines to memorize, and lots of experienced cast to help you play your part.)

Taking some time out to come for lunch is also a great way to participate. **If you need a ride to the Fair, call 812-1013 (this is a local number) by Monday, December 1st** to get on our drivers' lists. Mark your calendars now so you won't miss out on the fun!

## Other reminders:

**December 7<sup>th</sup>**, After worship and the conclusion of our annual meeting, stay to put up tables and chairs in the parlor and downstairs fellowship hall. Bring any stored Attic Treasures up in the elevator to the parlor. Last year's crew did the tables, treasures and chairs in 20 minutes flat!

**December 8 and 9** Food items can be dropped off in the downstairs church hall when convenient, OR, the church, kitchen and pie room that will also be open by 7:30 am on Fair day, December 10.

**December 8 and/or 9**, help sort and price the attic treasures with an experienced crew. It's fun! Times will be announced at service or in bulletins.

## On Fair Day, December 10<sup>th</sup>, fill one or more of these time slots:

by 7 am, Place one of our advertising sandwich boards at key road junctions on MDI (Head of the Island, RA corner island, West Street/Rte. 3 island).

Prepare and place our plastic lettered sign in front of the church early!

2:30 to 4:30, Wipe and help take down tables, sweep. Put parlor, kitchen, and hall back together for next Sunday!

3:30, Pack up small boxes of leftover items for recycling to the YWCA, Serendipity, Library, Goodwill, etc.

The Fair provides good food and fellowship at an old fashioned fair to all our community. We offer rides to those who let us know they need them. Being part of the Fair gives us the joy of working together AND all proceeds go to support the Bar Harbor Congregational Church and its work in our world.

Deb Wade

## **Alternative Gift Giving**

*"Remember the words of the Lord Jesus himself, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" Acts 20:35*

*Heads up - December 2 - is St. Nicholas Day. The 4th century saint, Nicholas, is the patron saint of quite a line-up: sailors, merchants, archers, thieves, children and students (by the way, who decides these things?). He is also a precursor to Santa Claus, a.k.a. "Old St. Nick."*

*So gift giving is associated with St. Nicholas, but gift giving with a difference.*

*Nicholas had a thing about giving gifts secretly. He would slip a few coins into people's shoes while they slept - with no indication of whom the gift came from.*

*One year our family decided to "keep St. Nicholas Day." We were living in an apartment building then and decided to buy a Christmas wreath of greens to decorate the lobby. (This was not the kind of building where management decorated.) So we all went to the Public Market and picked out a most beautiful, large wreath. Later, as my sons kept watch, I hung the wreath in the building's small and spare lobby.*

*Subsequently, we had the treat of listening to people notice the wreath and comment. "Isn't that pretty," "I wonder where it came from?" and "What a beautiful wreath!" It was a sly joy to listen in. And it was also a challenge not to claim credit.*

*This experience brought home to me how often the gifts we give come wrapped, not just in bright paper, but in lots of other stuff: our needs for acknowledgment and affirmation, along with who knows what other "strings attached." It's all this extra wrapping that can make gift-giving such a fraught and complex matter this time of year.*

*So this year, consider an experiment. Keep St. Nicholas Day and give a gift secretly. Try it on December 2 or on December 25. Taking ourselves out of the equation, even just a bit, may allow for a renewed sense of the mystery and gifted nature of life itself.*

### **Prayer**

*O God, giver of every good and perfect gift, thank you for holiday traditions new and old. Amen.*

*Anthony B. Robinson, UCC.org*





## December Birthdays

1 Dannie Bickford  
2 Michael Breen  
2 Patrick Breen  
4 Eric Kelley  
4 Terrance Kelley  
6 Bill Fuller  
6 Jefferson Hobbs  
11 Beth Paradis  
11 Mary Elizabeth Kelley  
12 David Blaney  
12 John Collier  
14 Linda Kelley  
15 Fran Fry  
18 Ian Hepburn  
18 Deb Wade  
18 Mark Reece  
19 Isabella Webster  
20 Kelsey Mills  
21 William Parker Renault  
23 Tom Shea  
27 Mary Drury  
27 Dean Bryer  
31 Michael Blaney  
31 Eve Moore



**To the family and friends of  
Charlotte Skiff**

## Sunday Worship Contributors

**Head Deacon** – Cindy Fox

**Assistant Deacon** – Debbie Hammond

**The Deacons Need Your Help!  
Liturgists are needed!**

**Please sign up and share the joy!**

### Coffee Hour Hosts –

**7**  
**14**  
**21**  
**28**

### Flowers –

**7**  
**14**  
**21** Poinsettias  
**28** Poinsettias

### Lectionary -

**7** Isaiah 40:1-11  
Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13  
2 Peter 3:8-15a  
Mark 1:1-8  
**14** Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11  
Psalm 126  
1 Thessalonians 5:16-24  
John 1:6-8, 19-28  
**21** 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16  
Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26  
Romans 16:25-27  
Luke 1:26-38  
**28** Isaiah 61:10-62:3  
Psalm 148  
Galatians 4:4-7  
Luke 2:22-40

# December

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesda	Thursday	Friday	Sat.
	1	2	3	4 Living Nativity 5:00 -8:00	5 Living Nativity 5:00 – 8:00	6 Gingerbread Houses 10:00-12:00
7 <i>Worship Service and Sunday School</i>  <b>Annual Meeting</b>  Pageant rehearsal during worship	8	9	10  Church Fair 10:00-2:00	11	12	13
14 <i>Worship Service and Sunday School</i>  Christmas Pageant, Lunch, and Concert after worship	15	16  Outreach Board 7:00	17	18  Trustees 5:30  Cub Scouts 6:00 PM	19	20
21 <i>Worship Service and Sunday School</i>  Community Caroling on the Green 4:00 PM	22	23	24  Family Worship Service 5:00 PM  Candlelight Service 7:00 PM	25	26	27
28 <i>Worship Service and Sunday School</i>	29	30	31			

Bar Harbor Congregational Church  
United Church of Christ  
29 Mount Desert Street  
Bar Harbor, Maine 04609

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### Special dates

- Second Sunday of Advent, *December 7, 2014*
- Third Sunday of Advent, *December 14, 2014*
- Fourth Sunday of Advent, *December 21, 2014*
- First Day of Winter, *December 21, 2014*
- Christmas Eve, *December 24, 2014*
- Christmas Day, *December 25, 2014*
- New Year's Eve/Watch Night, *December 31, 2014*

## With humble hearts



Bethlehem's Church of the Nativity, which marks the likely spot of Jesus' birth, has a four-foot-high entrance. Throughout the centuries, the height of the entrance has been lowered twice: once to prevent looting and once to keep out camel- and horse-riders.

Because visitors must bow as they enter, this has become known as the Door of Humility. It's a reminder of the reverent, submissive posture our hearts should take as we approach our newborn Lord and Savior. It's also a reminder that Jesus is the narrow door (Luke 13:24) — the only path to eternal life.

As you worship this Christmas season, whether or not you're physically able to kneel, enter Jesus' presence with a humble and thankful heart. He alone deserves our reverence because he alone is able to save.

Articles this page: [NewsletterNewsletter.com](http://NewsletterNewsletter.com)

## Finding God?

Occasionally, a troubled person may say something like, "My life's a mess. I've tried to handle my problems alone, but without success. Maybe I need to find God."

The truth is that God has been seeking them. That's the message of the Bible. The story after Adam and Eve sinned is the tale of God's searching for them. God called, "Where are you?" (Genesis 3:9, NRSV). Their guilt made them fearful of God, yet God sought them out — as a parent searching for his children.

When we spurn God, attempting to live life on our own terms, we alienate ourselves from the loving Creator. We suffer the consequences: guilt, shame, lack of inner peace, joylessness. Our lives lose real meaning and hope.

Christmas reminds us that God makes every effort to keep in touch with us. The arrival of Jesus Christ was God's most dramatic act of reaching out to us.

Jesus said, "I have come as light into the world, so that everyone who believes in me should not remain in darkness" (John 12:46, NRSV). God was in Christ seeking us that we might find the fullness of life which is the great gift for each of us.