



The Witness

Winter 2014/2015 Edition

WINTHROP CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UCC

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Open and Affirming

Minister: Pastor Chrissy Cataldo

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Pastor's Reflections

I feel like such a crank this time of year. It usually starts in early October when green and red elves and shiny bows begin to appear in the aisles at the grocery store and the pharmacy. I sigh and say, "It's not even Halloween yet!" It gets worse as the fall progresses. As we enter November, the more I watch television and go to stores, the more green and red I see. Toy commercials have begun to play in heavy rotation, tempting children with expensive pieces of molded plastic. Electronics commercials begin to amp up their rotation, too, tempting adults with even more expensive pieces of molded plastic. Suddenly I notice snowflakes decorating windows and Christmas carols sneaking into the music on the radio during my morning commute. As I flip channels, I notice that one cable channel has started showing their Christmas movies on Friday and Saturday nights. With great trepidation, I look at the calendar to confirm what I've suspected. It isn't even Thanksgiving yet and the onslaught has begun. Christmas cheer, in the form of ecstatic commercialism, has begun to invade all of my space. And, I can't stand it! Now, this is the point in the letter where the preacher realizes that she probably alienated a significant portion of the readership by appearing to be anti-



Christmas or excessively Scrooge-y. If so, I do apologize. You see, it's not that I don't like Christmas. That is not the case at all. What I don't like is all the consumerism wrapped up in faux sentimentality that gets labeled as "Christmas" in the broader culture. Christmas should be about Emmanuel...God with us. It is not about whatever over-priced, poorly-constructed, heavily marketed piece of plastic that some corporation tells us will make us happy. Christmas is a reminder of God's deep love

enfleshed, living, serving, and hurting in the world with us. I want more for Christmas than stuff and debt and trash and shame for not being able to purchase what the world says I need. Christmas means more, and we need something deeper than the pile of receipts we collect to find meaning and light in the midst of the bleak mid-winter.

I regain some of that meaning when I think less about presents to buy and think more about the presence of God. Advent is the church season leading up to Christmas. Rather than ramping up my anxiety by telling me that I have a lot to

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buy and very few days in which to buy it, Advent reminds me of the value of waiting in expectation for the in-breaking of God. Advent reminds me that I am a beloved child of God, regardless of what I own or what I can afford to buy. Advent reminds me of my call to do justice and love mercy. As we worship together on these four Sundays, we hope to evoke the emotions of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love, rather than Greed, Jealousy, and Shame that seem so much at the core of the consumerist drive. Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love seem much more like Christmas to me than any big screen TV or diamond necklace.

So, this season, don't get swept up in the onslaught. Celebrate Thanksgiving as a time to actually give thanks. Be kind to everyone, especially people working in retail during this harried time of year. Build relationships, not debt. Come worship with us. Spend some time in the mystery of God. You will have a great return on your investment.

With thanksgiving and looking towards Advent,
Pastor Chrissy



WINTER EVENTS



† Tuesday, December 2nd 6:30 pm – “Lighting the way through the Holidays” is a special service for those who find the holiday season difficult sponsored by the Winthrop Area Ministerial Group and Roberts Funeral Home. This year the service is in our Fellowship Hall.

† Christmas Fair – December 6, 2014- Please come to this!

See flyer on **page 8** for more information

- † Sunday December 7th - Bring a personal care product or general household items for victims of domestic violence and help decorate the tree in the Sanctuary during a special Chrismon service.
- † December 14th –All Church Christmas pageant. Come and become part of the Christmas story
- † Installation Service for Pastor Chrissy – December 14 at 3 pm in the Sanctuary. Join the celebration.
- † December 21st - The choir will share its special Christmas cantata with the congregation.
- † Christmas Eve Candlelight Service – December 24th 7 pm.
- † Fish Chowder – Friday, January 9, 2015, 11:30 AM to 1 PM
- † January 11, 2015 – Epiphany Sunday
- † Annual Meeting, Sunday, January 25, 2015 in the Fellowship Hall after Worship along with a Pot Luck Luncheon
- † Fish Chowder – Friday, February 13, 2015, 11:30 AM to 1 PM



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From the Moderator

For the past several years we have asked people who can to contribute the \$15 conference dues. This request normally is made in the spring; however, I forgot to make the request then. The church's budget includes contributions for dues. If you are an active covenant member and are able to, please consider a contribution to offset the dues paid to the Maine Conference. These dues support conference activities, programs and staff.

Board of Church and Community Concerns

The Stewardship Drive has been a wonderful success! Almost all of the pledge forms have been returned, and the pledges exceed those of last year! The BCCC wants to thank Pastor Chrissy for her enthusiastic support.



Food donations are filling the shelves in the Fellowship Hall and looking quite festive! We will continue collecting non-perishable food items and monetary donations for the Winthrop Food Pantry until Thanksgiving weekend.

Our church will again support the Family Violence Project with general household items (new or gently used) which will be used to help families relocate to safer homes. Personal items are always needed as well. A list of items the shelter needs will be posted on the bulletin board in the Fellowship Hall as well as in your Sunday Bulletins. We will be collecting these donations On Sunday December 7th.

Most of us are blessed to have enough food to feed our families and to live in safe homes.

“And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything you may share abundantly in every good work”

2 Corinthians 9:8

Carol Whittier, Chair

CE MATTERS

We have had a very good start to our Sunday school year. We have been working with the Godly Play curriculum. Our students as well as the teachers seem to love the story telling. If you were at church the week that Roxanne demonstrated what a Godly Play lesson is you know how exciting it can be. To keep costs down our teachers have been working hard to make all the necessary props to tell the stories. During the winter months, we hope to have some craft making sessions in which we will prepare ahead for future lessons. If anyone is interested in helping us with this arts and crafts project please contact one of us.

Join us December 14th for the all-church Christmas Pageant! There is a part for **YOU**. Come and see what role you'll be playing and help our children tell the story.



Lastly, we have openings on this board of five, and we welcome participation from others as Sunday school leaders, assistants, or Nursery attendants. We appreciate the continued dedication of our Nursery attendants Linda Rollins & TJ Mauro.

From the Board of Christian Education,

Susan Mauro, Cyndi Hall, Martha Payne & Margaret Imber

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From the Trustees

Our Sanctuary project is in full swing. The ceiling and walls have been painted for less than we anticipated last winter. That savings allowed for the floor to be refinished. The floor was just completed and we are ready to move the piano back and re-install the pews. The chancel, the raised platform at the front of the church, needs work to strengthen one area. A total of \$13,000 was originally available in memorial and designated gifts for the project. To date about \$9,000 has been spent. The sanctuary committee would like to move forward and complete the project by carpeting the chancel, and installing carpet as runners across the back of the sanctuary and down each aisle. This results in carpeting in the high traffic areas but allows us to see the beautiful Douglas fir floor. Carpet options and estimated costs are being solicited now to see how much it will cost in anticipation of asking the congregation about finishing the project.



From the Treasurer

The financial picture at the end of October was good. At the end of the October, total income was \$951 more than budgeted. This surplus was largely due to Total Offerings which were \$1,271 more than budget. At the end of October, total expenses were \$4,838 less than budget. Overall, at the end of October, our expenses had exceeded our income by just \$209. This compares very favorably to the end of last October (2013) when our expenses exceeded our income by \$6,261.



For the most part our budget for this year was quite realistic with respect to income projections for the year and the expense reductions done to balance the budget.

Hannaford Gift Card Sales



The Hannaford gift card sales continue to go well. Cards are always available for purchase and I have them on Sundays. Thank you to all who continue to support this project to support our church budget.

Carol Ellingwood

Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting this year is on Sunday, January 25th after worship. All are encouraged to attend this informative meeting, where important decisions will be made. A pot luck meal will also be shared during this time.

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Women's Guild News

At our September meeting, the Guild voted to buy 4 more of the white light weight tables for the Fellowship Hall. We are gradually "retiring" the warped and heavy brown tables! Hopefully, we will be able to replace or do away with the round tables soon.

Sue and Mike's wedding reception was beautiful! A big "thanks" to Carol Ellingwood who coordinated the event, and also to those who assisted her making it a success.

At the October meeting, the Women's Guild elected the same slate of officers as last year (Carol Whittier as President, Lee Gilman as Vice-President, Cyndi Hall as Secretary, and Marie Hatfield as Treasurer). Due to Thanksgiving and Christmas, the Guild will not meet until January. However, that does not mean that we are not busy! Several ladies and a couple of gentlemen attended "The Miracle Worker" at the Monmouth Theater where our own Ginger Smith and Julia LaCrone "wowed" us with their acting skills! We even were invited back stage to meet the cast! Many Guild members are also Crafty Ladies and are using their talents to make creative items for the Fair.

Blessing for the holiday season!

Carol Whittier, President

Pie Sale



The Pie Sale Was A Big Success!! Thanks to the generosity of many bakers and buyers, our pie sale at the end of September brought in \$1,000 for the church's general fund. A BIG "thank you" to all who participated!

Christmas Fair

Preparation for the Christmas Fair on Saturday, Dec 6th is moving along smoothly. We appreciate so many people offering to assist in this major fundraiser of the church. If you have Second Time Around items to donate, please make sure they are cleaned and in working order. Items may be left in the Sunday school rooms beginning Sunday, Nov 30th until Thursday, Dec 4th. No items will be accepted for this table after Dec 4th!



Also think of the church fair this month as you stay inside out of the cold. It's a good time to bake and freeze items for the baked goods table, candy table, and cookie table. (You'll warm up from the heat of your oven and will help warm many appetites later!)



The jewelry table is always appreciative of your recycled items-pins, earrings, necklaces, etc.

Perhaps you have some unused items that are just collecting dust - they make great donations to the Silent Auction table (An acceptable form of re-gifting!)

With everyone's talents and support, we can make our Christmas fair fun and profitable!


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A Christmas Kaleidoscope

Join the members of **CODA Chorus** as they present their annual Christmas concert on **Sunday, December 7th at 7pm** at Hope Baptist Church in Manchester. The program will feature Craig Courtney's *A Musicological Journey through the Twelve Days of Christmas*, an irresistible and humorous re-interpretation of this well-known piece. Enjoy violin accompaniment and performance by special guests from the **Pineland Suzuki School**, who will join CODA on J.S. Bach's *Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring* and a powerful rendition of *Bashana Haba'ah* by John Leavitt. A carol sing-along and a selection of favorite songs, including *Holly Jolly Christmas* and *Winter Wonderland*, promise an uplifting time welcoming the holiday season! For more information, call 377-4168, or visit www.codachorus.com.

Next Newsletter Deadline: February 17, 2015

December Birthdays		December Anniversaries	
2	Lois Gibbs	12/6/75	Rick McNaughton & Marianne Martin
9	Patrice Putman		
13	Emily Dooling		
15	Marja Hatfield		
19	Nathaniel Smith		
24	Ann Mitchell		
28	Kay Webster		
29	Daniel Whittier		
January Birthdays		January Anniversaries	
2	Kelly deWolfe	1/16/00	Mike & Debbie Burns
3	Helena Müller	1/31/76	Alan & Carol Ellingwood
7	Brint Darlington		
10	Chrissy Cataldo		
17	Derek Hall		
18	Tom Dressler		
24	Gerry Edgar		
28	Martha Hewett		
29	Sarah Dressler		
February Birthdays		February Anniversaries	
3	Tom Irwin	2/19/77	Ron & Nancy Dyer
5	Kristin Morgner		
6	Brett Hiendlmayr		
8	Nora Conrad		
10	Dina Blodgett		
12	Anna Brown		
14	Pat Culp		
20	Debbie Burns		
15	Jonathan Whittier		
22	Milton Hadley		
25	Tasha Dunn		

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Prayers and food for our friends in Roatán, Honduras

The Honduras mission team is saddened and shocked to learn of the October 23rd shooting death of Domingo Caballero, one of the members of the church in Roatán, Honduras. Our Honduran friends' "hearts are filled with grief" as they write to ask for our church's continuing prayers. We met Domingo and his family earlier this year on our second trip to Roatán led by Rev. Alice Anderman. The family was new to the La Vida Nueva Church in Roatán, having come from a different church elsewhere, and they were very happy with their new church and the opportunities to serve God. When the first information that we received about Domingo's death included an error in his wife's name, we were not entirely certain who had been killed.



Further correspondence with one of our dear friends in Roatán has clarified things for us. The father, Domingo, and his wife, Ania, and their new baby Celeste, were a noticeable trio when we were in Honduras last May. They have three other children: Jeremias, 8, Elizabeth 10, and Mario, 14. The family attended several church services while we were there, and they were part of the church group that we accompanied to the beach on Sunday afternoon. The parents and baby spent most of that time in the picnic area sheltered from the sun, while their older children played in the warm ocean water with other children and adults. On our last night there, Elizabeth approached me and gave me a hug and put a plastic bracelet on my wrist. She seemed a little shy with us, and sweet, like her mother Ania.

What will happen to this family now – one young mother and four children? The church people in Roatán are caring and generous (like our church) and they will help, but they are poor in material resources. How will the older children be affected by their father's violent death? He was shot in his car as he left their home one morning for work. Why? We don't know why.

Our church can continue to pray for Domingo's family and for La Vida Nueva church in Roatán, Honduras. They have already thanked us for the prayers we offered last Sunday in church and sent in email. Our friend Esli wrote "God bless all the brothers and sisters there. We love them very much. I give you greetings for them." She has asked us to keep praying for her church – why would we not? They are looking to God and to their brothers and sisters in Christ to ease the burden. The mission team will let them know of our continuing prayers.

Our church can also send a donation to help the family buy food. I know we cannot financially support everyone in need in Honduras or at home, but this, this is so heartbreakingly tragic - we would like to reach out. Pastor Otilio at La Vida Nueva reports that the priority for helping the family is food. \$8 a day is the estimated cost to feed the family. Let's see how many days' help we can give. Contributions can be given to Wendy Dennis or Cyndi Hall; checks should be made out to Winthrop Congregational Church. Any amount, cash or check, greatly appreciated.

Wendy Dennis, on behalf of the Honduras Mission Team (Winthrop unit) - Alice Anderman, Debbie Burns, Cyndi & Dana Hall, Linda Ruman, Lisa deWolfe – and with Rev. Chrissy's blessing.



Ye Olde Christmas Fair
Winthrop Congregational Church, UCC
Saturday, December 6, 2014
9 a.m. - 2 p.m.

- * Baked Goods
- * Jewelry
- * Nature Crafts
- * Silent Auction
- * Homemade Candy
- * Memorial Lights
- * Wreaths and Greenery
- * Needle and Thread Crafts
- * The Cookie Jar
- * 2nd Time Around
- * Christmas Treasures
- * Books
- * Rada Cutlery

Luncheon - beginning at 11:30 a.m.
(Fish Chowder, Chili, Vegetable Beef Soup,
Mac & Cheese, Hot Dogs, Drinks, Brownie Sundaes)

Join us as we prepare for the Christmas season with a wide variety of items
for this special time of year! Something for all ages!

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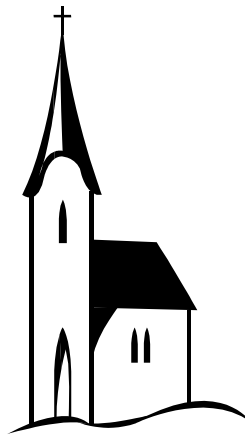
I'M SORRY GUY, I KNOW THAT YOU'VE GOT A GOOD HEALTH PLAN AND YOU GIVE OUT FREE GIFTS AND ALL, BUT JESUS REALLY DOES HAVE A MUCH BETTER PLAN



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