



Cross Ways

The Newsletter of
The Congregational Church of Brookfield
160 Whisconier Road,
Brookfield, CT 06804
(203) 775-1259

December 2019

Join us for

Christmas Eve Worship

Tuesday, December 24, 2019

"Rediscovering Christmas"

- 5:00pm With a children's story from Rev. Jennifer Whipple, music from our children's choirs and our traditional Christmas Eve carols and candle-lighting. *(The Nursery is open at this service only, but children of all ages are always welcome in worship.)*
- 8:30pm With music from our Chancel Choir, plus a Christmas message from Rev. Bryn Smallwood-Garcia and traditional carols by candlelight.
- 11:00pm Sing carols by candlelight, share communion, and enjoy special music, plus a message from Rev. Bryn Smallwood-Garcia, before departing into the magical darkness of Christmas.



Church Council Notes: November 12, 2019

Church Safety Committee: Kathy Taylor reviewed the Safety Committee's recommendations:

1. Improve communications: Station (6) Walkie-Talkies on chargers in Barbara Crandell's office. Sundays, one with Barbara, one with Miss Debbie, one with head usher, and one with rear usher (2 extras). Walter Ostrom is researching the cost, estimate about \$300.
2. Gain control of building access: Re-key all existing locks; document all new keys as they are distributed. Council to decide who gets a key (including outside groups). Estimate under \$1,000. Fellowship Hall Improvement Group (FHIG) is likely to include a new door locking system with a future capital campaign (like a key FOB system). It was suggested that if this re-key option is chosen, keys that can't be copied be purchased. Also asked was who would be in charge of handing out and maintaining the list of keys. (Would likely fall to Office Administrator, Jeannine McCullough.)
3. When announcements end at start of church service, ushers should lock all doors except courtyard entrance. Sign would be placed by the front walk at the parking lot "If you find doors locked, please enter through the courtyard entrance, where a lift is available."

Beth asked why doorbell camera and sensor lights were not mentioned since many committees had recommended them. Kathy stated that these were not part of the Safety Committee's recommendation, but council can recommend them.

Motion (Bryn/Wendy): Council recommends that Church House investigate the purchase of a walkie-talkie system (up to a set of 6), as well as doorbell cameras and motion sensor lights.

Passed unanimously. **Motion** (Bryn/Beth): Council requests Church House re-key all existing doors. After discussion, the motion was withdrawn, with the request that Council Reps ask their committees to re-discuss impact on their volunteers. **Motion** (Bryn/Sue): To adopt the policy for ushers to lock all but the courtyard doors following announcements, and place the sign described above by the parking lot. Passed unanimously, with the request for signage and congregational education before implementing, as well as installation of an emergency safety bolt high on the Church School side of the exterior door that our children from the courtyard entry hall.

Moderator: Summary of FEA fall meeting – Sue W. reported that our CCB delegation attended the Fairfield East Association meeting in Redding and learned a lot about Silver Lake.

Vice-Moderator: Sue W. shared Jack's written Vice Moderator's report on FHIG activities – FHIG has developed a draft milestone plan (which Council asked to see in December) that suggests construction would start 2Q of 2021 the earliest. Council also asked for Crossways status update for January (Dec. 10 print deadline). FHIG is pursuing state grant monies, and have reviewed a third design option that the architects have provided, which recommends a bump-out option. FHIG is going to interview 2 to 3 organizations who do feasibility studies; this will then be turned over to a separate capital campaign team, with representation from multiple church committees. 2020-21 Budget update – Committee budgets are due to Jack Brown by Nov. 22nd.

Church Clerk: Approval of Minutes of the last CCB Church Council Meeting (October 8th, 2019) – 2 revisions were made. A motion was made by Wendy to approve the amended minutes of October 8th. The motion was seconded by Bryn and passed unanimously.

Church Treasurer: Financial Reports for October 2019 and Fiscal Year-to-Date – In Greg's absence, Sue briefly reviewed the summary report, and mentioned that there always seems to be a disparity between what Church Windows shows and what the Treasurer's report shows. Timing could be an issue – Sue will ask Greg when she sees him next.

Investment Treasurer: Update on Investment Activity – Audrey handed out her 3-month report ending 9/30/19. The quarter was down slightly and market value decreased with a slight unrealized loss of \$432, and designated funds had a small gain of \$2,302.

Stewardship Committee: Tom B. reported that Stewardship is holding off on celebrating legacy gifts until they are sure they have a complete list. They are developing a children's giving program with envelopes. The Passport Program will end with a party at 5pm on January 5, 2020.

Church Council Notes: November 12, 2019, continued

Fellowship – Michele O. reported on the success of presentations by Kerri Colombo and Tosha Gordon this fall; Becky Bishop will offer a nutrition program on Jan. 26, 2020.

CIS – Luke reported the Giving Tree will be put up Nov. 23rd; Thrift Shop had a good sale on Nov. 2nd, and \$2,763 was donated to IRIS from summer sales; SERRV had a very successful Yankee Fair, and Dining For Women met on 11/4 and meets next on 1/6/20; Neighbors in Need is complete; CIS is looking into participating in a “go bags” program for women fleeing domestic violence; the suicide walk was Oct. 20 with a small team from CCB participating.

Church House – Steve W. reported that they are looking for a new pest control company; Kathy and Larry are working on parsonage landscaping using \$4,300 leftover from storm cleanup; the small balance from 2018 cottage painting will be transferred to CH Designated Fund; Audrey will transfer from Building & Grounds the \$2,633.70 she believes is owed for the new phone system.

Welcome – Beth reported Yankee Fair Welcome Booth was busy handing out shopping bags; a new banner was made and can be borrowed (it’s in the library closet); the directory is in the works, and FaceBook hits are way up; there are 12-16 possible new members for Nov. 17.

CE – Wendy reported 70 people attended the Great Pumpkin Challenge (38 pumpkins were carved and \$360 donated); the next “Gordon Ruins Everything” (date TBD) is “What the Hell? Heaven and Hell in the Afterlife”; Intergenerational Thanksgiving program is Nov. 17; Church School door decorating and Advent wreath making is Dec. 1 (pen pals will be revealed that night); Christmas pageant is Dec. 8; the Live Nativity will not take place this year.

Worship – Bryn reported in Kathy’s absence: the organ swell box has been repaired; the Advent theme was brainstormed and the theme is “Re-discovering Christmas.”

Deacons – Jen reported in John’s absence that all new members have been approved.

Pastors’ Reports: Jen asked that prayers be lifted up for Jeannine McCullough, Toni Sullivan, Pete Lane, Stephanie Joy, Sherrie Ruschmayer, Liz deLambert, as well as those recovering from surgery and preparing for surgery; Jen officiated 2 funerals, Gladys Grumman and Margitta Savo; Ben Wallin (who added a hand rail to Memorial Garden) was approved for Eagle Scout, and Jen signed off on another Eagle Scout project (benches at the Labyrinth); 44 care packages were sent out to college students; the Alternative Gift Fair will be held 12/7 and 12/8, with Simply Smiles, Heifer, Building Homes for Heroes, SERRV.

Brookfield High School Special Chorus Concert – Monday, Dec. 9th at 7:00pm – CCB Meetinghouse



On Monday, December 9th at 7pm, the Fellowship Committee is hosting the Brookfield High School Special Chorus for a Holiday Concert, free to the community and the entire congregation. The show starts at 7pm in the sanctuary, followed by an assortment of Christmas cookies served in Brooks Hall. We are in need of cookies to be made or purchased and dropped off by Sunday December 8th in the upstairs kitchen off Brooks Hall. Contact Monica Pondiccio for more info.



Christmas Serendippers Gathering Tuesday, December 12th at 11:45am

Please join us for a special holiday concert as we welcome
the Brookfield High School Special Chorus Small Group,
led by Mr. John LaMendola.
The SERRV booth will also be open!

Our menu:
Strawberry Cream Punch, Sissy's Almost Famous Mac and Cheese,
Kale Salad, Ambrosia and Cookies

Please contact Eleanor Loesch for additional information
OR you can contact the Church Office 203-775-1259.
Hope to see you all there!

Serendippers is open to everyone! Sponsored by our church Fellowship Committee, the Serendippers hospitality team provides a lunch and monthly program for daytime-available members and friends. Please let the church office know by the 2nd Sunday each month if you will have a need for childcare.



VETERANS OF THE CROSS

This is one of the "5 for 5" offerings of the United Church of Christ, which is sponsored each year by the Church In Society Committee. Donations to this program help retired clergy and other church workers who struggle to make ends meet.

They may have worked for small congregations that couldn't afford larger salaries or couldn't pay into a retirement account on their pastor's behalf. This program can offer these retired "church veterans" either some emergency assistance, supplements to their healthcare premiums, or special gift checks at Christmas time.

If you wish to donate, envelopes are on the small white table near the door in Brooks Hall. Checks should be made payable to CCB, noting in the memo line (or in the PushPay drop-down menu) "Veterans of the Cross." Thank you!

NOTE: Donations to our own CCB annual end-of-year Christmas Offering, which supports the programs and ministries of our own local church, can also be made at this time – either by check or PushPay (again noting on memo line "Christmas Offering"). Thank you for your generosity.

Christmas Flowers



Help us beautify the Meetinghouse with poinsettias & greens as we **celebrate the glory of Christ's birth. Just complete this form and** return it with your donation in the offering plate, or mail it to the church office by December 10th. **Please write on your check that it's for Christmas Flowers.** Checks can be made payable to CCB.

If you have any questions, please call either Kathy Wandelmaier (203-740-8335) or Tina Crepeau (203-740-2825). *Note: Any donations that exceed our cost for Christmas decorations will remain in the designated Flower Fund until needed.*

- ☐ Please use my donation to provide a poinsettia to someone who is homebound or grieving.
- ☐ I would like to take a poinsettia home after the December 24th Christmas Eve services.

Your Name _____

Amount of Donation _____

Given in Memory OR Honor of _____
(circle one)

Angels for Anthems



One of the highlights of the Christmas season is the wonderful Christmas music. The Music Committee is giving you the opportunity to be an "Angel for Anthems" by making a donation to help support the cost of purchasing extra music for the season.

To make a contribution in memory or in honor of someone special, especially someone who really loved or loves holiday music, complete this form and place it in the collection plate, or mail it to the church office along with your check on or before December 10th. Please write on your **check that it's for Angels For Anthems.** *Note: Any donations that exceed our cost for Christmas music will remain in the designated Music Fund until needed. Checks can be made payable to CCB.*

Your Name _____

Amount of Donation _____

Given in Memory OR Honor of _____
(circle one)

A Note from SERRV

We are growing again! CCB's SERRV/International Marketplace is continuing its work out in the world thanks to the generosity of our congregation and the greater community. Our Fair proceeds were the highest ever (\$5880!) and all the money we receive will support SERRV and other organizations with a message of hope and justice through fair trade.

We're excited to introduce you to our newest partnership directly with *Craftworks Cambodia*. Cambodians have suffered for decades as a result of war during the 1970s. About a third of Cambodia's population lives below the national poverty level as a result of this turmoil, and one in every 250 Cambodians is disabled. The proportion of amputees - one in every 384 people - is considered among the highest in the world.

Brass jewelry hand made from bombshells helps transform the scars of war into the beauty of peace. Craftsmen and women use the brass bombshells to create fashionable jewelry as powerful statements for peace. This symbolic jewelry offers a more positive future for the artisans and reminds us of the impressive strength that lies within so many. Craftworks Cambodia was established to provide market access for these fair trade items and we are thrilled to support this organization that promises these talented artisans a sustainable and reliable income.

Our holiday sales will be held during the Alternative Gift Fair on **Saturday, December 7** (10 am – 1:00 pm) , **Sunday, December 8** after both services and **Tuesday, December 10** during Serendippers (starting at 11:45am).

We hope you will be inspired by the beautiful work of artisans such as those you meet through Craftworks Cambodia, SERRV, Sak Saum, Limitless Horizons, Haiti Projects, Aid through Trade and Denur Crafts. CCB's support of the ethically crafted products from farmers and artisans around the world truly makes a difference. We are filled with gratitude for the opportunity to continue to extend the reach of your generosity yet again!

The SERRV Team,
Linda, Karen and Marie

SERRV is a nonprofit, fair trade organization dedicated to lifting disadvantaged artisans, farmers, and their families out of poverty. In our world today, handcraft production is the second largest form of employment behind agriculture. Through SERRV's nonprofit mission and deep commitment to fair trade principles, we create opportunities, strengthen communities and empower women around the world.

Memorial Garden

As the holidays approach, the Memorial Garden Committee would like to remind everyone that no items may be left on the wall. One of the terms and conditions of our Memorial Garden is that no markers, adornments, flowers, etc. are permitted other than the name plaque provided by the committee. We appreciate your understanding.

On Offerings and Stewardship

Do you remember the final scenes of *Schindler's List*? Schindler, a Nazi Party member, purchases imprisoned Jews to work in his weapons factory. His factory, however, is making worthless weapons and his purchase of Jews is an attempt to save them from death. As the movie ends, grateful Jewish workers line up to have gold from their teeth extracted to make a ring for Schindler. Inscribed inside are the words: *"Whoever saves one life, saves the entire world."*

Schindler looks at all those he has saved and laments: *"I threw away so much money... I didn't do enough. This car could have saved ten people. This pin, two people. This cufflink, one more. I could've saved one more person and I didn't."*

We would do well to look at our cufflinks.

We ask *"Why should I give to the church when I could put this money directly in the pocket of someone who needs it?"* But the question is based on a false premise. We do not give to the church; we give as a church. We give as a body of people who have said that the name *Christian* is our primary identity, who discern the needs of the world with the eyes of Jesus, and then give in his name.

And, our giving should not be out of guilt or shame, but in response to our own internalization of the gospel. Lisa Hickman says it about as well as anyone: "We are able to let go because we are held on to. Our offering is about much more than our money—it is about what we let go of. It is relinquishing control and fear, because we know that in the relinquishing, God transforms [us]... To relinquish is to save a life; to hold on is to choose death. Our offering is truly a matter of life and death." (*The Worshipping Life*, p. 97)

As the end of the year nears, and as we prepare to pledge for the new church year, here's what I want you to know: you will never regret what you give in witness to God's goodness and grace. Let's let our giving generate a new spirit within us. Let's truly become our Father's children. In so doing, we'll trust in a new way, offer our lives in a whole new way. We'll let go of our cufflinks and coins, loan payments, personal agendas and goals. We'll lose our lives so that others might be saved. Yes, in our relinquishing, lives will be saved (and, not least of all, our own), and Christ's rule and peace will spread over our hearts and homes, our communities and world.

We only ask that you do two things: First, pray. Pray that your heart will be opened to God's grace and that your response will reflect that grace. And, second, act faithfully. The biblical standard for giving is 10% of income. But, whatever we give is to be of a level of sacrifice that it is clear that our first priority and loyalty belongs to Jesus. Jesus said that our giving is the clearest indication of our spiritual condition: *"for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also"* (Matthew 6:21).

Joe Glaze,
for the CCB Stewardship Committee

GET OUT OF THE BOAT AND JOIN US FOR DINNER!

We hope you have taken advantage of the Passport Program and enjoyed visiting various committees and groups. The program ends on Sunday, December 15th. Please bring your passports to church that day. In grateful recognition of your participation, all participants are invited to a dinner on Sunday January 5th. Already a member of a committee or group, or have been in the past? You are invited as well! Are you interested in learning more? You, too are invited to join us for an evening of fellowship and gratitude. Please RSVP to Susan Dodd, or call the office at 203-775-1259.

Your Stewardship Committee

Thank you from the Thrift Shop

The Thrift Shop Committee would like to extend a thank you to the Brookfield Congregational Church and its extended group of friends and family who have truly made the last four years an abundantly successful mission of our church.

Your contributions of gently used clothing, your many, many hours of volunteer work sorting and working at the shop, your help with the upkeep of the building all have made our four year mission a huge success.

Not only have we been able to clothe many needy families and individuals, we have been able, over those four years, to give away more than \$34,000.00 to social service organizations: supporting local fire, EMT and Police units, Brookfield Cares, our own Pastor's Fund, homeless shelters and the many individuals who come to us in crisis. We have given to national and International causes and worked closely with many local organizations.

There are many heart-warming stories of people who find just the right thing to wear for a job interview, of children who have new shoes and a special outfit to wear the first day of school, or a warm winter coat to replace a worn and thin one. All of this because you have continued to support this important mission.

We are blessed to be part of this and thank you all.

The Thrift Shop Committee,
Joni Park, Sue Slater, Lyn Lyon, Carolyn Lindroth, Elayne Schwartz, Marianne Gaffey,
Laurie Matson, Sally Markiewicz and Monica McInerney

My Blanket Story

By Margitta Savo

November 1950. Thanksgiving Day. My family arrived in New York City Harbor after an arduous journey by ship across the Atlantic Ocean. We were a refugee family who had just fled Communist East Germany. My father was a wanted man for his involvement in anti-Communist propaganda. Our destination was Iowa, where a Presbyterian Church sponsored us. We knew no English. We carried only a few suitcases.

After disembarking, we boarded a train. Halfway through the journey the train encountered a blizzard. The train had to stop, and power was lost. Our family took out our blankets to wrap ourselves in some warmth. The porter walked through, checking all the passengers and stopped in front of my family. My father was taken away. Several hours **passed before he returned after all of the train's blankets were accounted for. The porter** thought our family had stolen the blankets from the sleeper cars, as they looked identical. But these blankets were given to us by Church World Service (CWS), from generous donors just like you!

Note from CIS: Your \$10 contribution to our CWS Blanket Fund, as you place a Christmas card on the Blanket Fund Tree, will allow CWS to purchase a new warm blanket for a family in need of help today. Thank you!



Notes from the Choir Room

Choirs offer "A New Song" Lessons and Carols on Sunday, December 15th

Lessons and Carols is going to look a bit different this year at the 10:30 service. In years past, we have told the Christmas story and sung carols and/or anthems that went with each part of the story. During the past few years we have shared meditations that go with each of the events in the Christmas story.

However, this summer, as I listened to the sample anthems from the various music publishing houses, I noticed that there were several arrangements of traditional Christmas carol words set to a new tune and with a different accompaniment. As I listened to these new arrangements, I realized two things. First, I was hearing, really hearing, the words in a whole new way; and second, what I was hearing was absolutely gorgeous.

So this year we will accept the challenge from Psalm 98: **"Sing to the Lord a new song!"** We will revisit several of our favorite carols in the traditional form, sung by the congregation, and in a new arrangement, sung by the choir. We will continue to have meditations based on the themes of the carols. My hope is that you, too, will discover new insights and inspirations while listening to old and familiar words sung to new and different tunes.

Note: Our 8:30 service on December 15th will be more traditional, with lessons and carols read and sung by our congregation, as well as our usual Communion.

Have you ever wanted to learn how to play bells?

We have had several people who have expressed an interest in ringing bells. A great place to start would be the **Glory Ringers**, which is an entry-level bell choir for anyone who reads music and would like to learn how to ring bells. We need 10 or 11 people to start this choir. If you have an interest, let me know. We would meet on Wednesday evenings at 6:30.

Toni Sullivan, Director of Music

Thank You CCB!

Trained as an educator and Christian at heart, I feel privileged that this congregation has entrusted me with the position of Church School Coordinator. This position is one I truly enjoy. Over the past 5 years, I have been able to go from "not knowing anything about the Bible" to developing a comfort level in my ability to research, create and design a themed curriculum each year that is unique to the needs of our church children. ***This transformation has been possible because this congregation has financially supported my continuing education opportunities.***

My most recent conference "**2019 Faith Formation Symposium on Effective Practices & Promising Innovations in Faith Formation**," led by John Roberto, brought religious educators, pastors, resource developers, and youth advisors from all over the world together. For three days as our work groups changed, I engaged in conversations about faith with a youth advisor for the Church of England who has had tea with the Queen, to a Creative Resource developer from Kitchener-Waterloo, Ontario who happened to be the creator of the Faith Building Block curriculum that is the basis for this year's church school theme, and with our very own neighboring staff at Prince of Peace.

Thank you for creating vibrant and relevant opportunities for me that have not only fostered my own faith formation but have enabled me to continue to improve our Church School.

Barbara Crandell,
Church School Coordinator

Come join us for our
Deck the Halls & Advent Wreath Making Evening
Sunday night, December 1, 2019, 5pm to 7pm

We invite you to hit the pause button for a few hours to refresh, celebrate and prepare for the season of Advent with your CCB family. There will be something for all ages and interests at our **Deck the Halls Evening**. A **potluck dinner** will be shared at 5pm. **Please bring a dish that your family enjoys as tradition around the holidays.** Next, there will be Advent wreath making in Fellowship Hall for everyone. Children will have the opportunity to make some decorations or work on a service project, and adults can help deck out the sanctuary with greenery. At 6:30pm we will bless the wreaths at a short caroling ceremony in the Meetinghouse. This is a popular event for all ages to start the advent season. **Please bring your own pruning snips and work gloves.**

Please return RSVP below, email the church office (office@uccb.org), or click on the link to the online signup sent through the church office this past week to help us plan for set up and supplies.

Name _____

of people _____



Join Us for our Annual "Instant" Christmas Pageant

Our Instant Christmas Pageant will be held this year on
December 8th during the 10:30am service.

All children are welcome to participate. We ask that they
arrive between 10:00 and 10:15am for wardrobe selection.
Children's Choir members are asked to come at **9:45am.**

*The 8:30am Dec. 8th service will be in our usual format, with communion and
a traditional sermon from the Rev. Bryn Smallwood-Garcia.*

CCB Stephen Ministers invite you to

"Hope at the Holidays" What does it look like?

This informative and supportive workshop for adults dealing with grief will be
presented by The Rev. Sam Dexter of Regional Hospice and Palliative Care

5-7pm Sunday, December 15th in Brooks Hall

Holidays are supposed to be merry and bright, but for people who are grieving they
can be a time of sadness, anxiety and loneliness. Join in conversation with others
who understand the challenges of coping with the holiday season. Learn strategies
for getting through these difficult times and discover new ways to celebrate.

Light refreshments will be served, and childcare can be provided on request.

Celebrating Christmas with Church in Society (CIS)

We are continuing this year with collecting gifts under our Giving Tree. How does this work? We receive gift requests from both Brookfield Social Services (5 families) and Interfaith AIDS Ministry (2 families). Under the guidelines of these agencies, adults are allowed one gift, children three gifts; gift costs are not to exceed \$30. These requests are on special shaped tags (each shape is for each family) and hung on the large Christmas tree in Brooks Hall in time to shop on Black Friday! You and/or your family can choose a tag off the tree, purchase that gift and return it to Brooks Hall by the date listed on the back of the gift tag – so CIS can deliver the gifts to these social service agencies.

Also on the Giving Tree will be tags for Miriam's Kitchen, toys for ARC, Gift Cards for Simply Smiles (iTunes/Target/Walmart/Amazon), donations to Loaves and Fishes Hospitality House to feed the hungry and to Holy Joe's coffee ministry for the troops overseas, as well as requests for gift cards for gas/groceries which are used at the discretion of the Pastors for those in need. We will also collect new hats, gloves, scarves, and socks for various missions.

As with any request for giving from our church, we hope you will prayerfully consider which, if any, contribution you can make at this very busy time of the year. Whether or not you are able to give this year, CIS thanks you and wishes you and yours a wonderful holiday season!



See something that needs fixing?

If you see something in church or on church grounds that needs attention or repair, please notify our Office Administrator Jeannine McCullough in the church office:

Email: office@uccb.org

Phone: 203. 775.1259

She will forward the information to the appropriate party. This is the most efficient way to address requests for repairs.

Thank you for your cooperation,
The Church House Committee

It's a Wonderful (Church) Life!

We couldn't do it all without YOU! So in recognition of all you bring to our church, Nominating Committee is sponsoring two theater parties at the Palace Danbury on Saturday, December 7 at 2pm and 8pm. Enjoy a time of fun and fellowship (no committee work!) with your church family.

Adapted for the stage by Joe Landry, *It's a Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play* is family-friendly entertainment for all ages. Based on Frank Capra's beloved film, this production has a local twist thrown in: it is staged as a live radio broadcast set on Christmas Eve 1946 at Danbury's WLAD studio starring five local actors and a Foley artist (sound effects)!

For more information, google "Palace Danbury It's a Wonderful Life."
You can also contact Tom Young at WilsonCT203@aol.com for other specifics.
All are welcome! Feel free to invite a friend to join you.

Tickets (including fees): \$21 (regularly \$25 / \$30 PLUS fees)
Use code CCB to order online or by phone (deadline 12/2/19)
The Palace Danbury * 165 Main Street * Danbury, CT 06810 * 203-794-9944

Youth Fellowship in December:

Please let Pastor Jen know (Jennifer@uccb.org) if you are (or have) a youth in 6th-12th grades. That way we can be sure you are on the appropriate youth fellowship email list. Plans are in the works for some **service opportunities** and **Ugly Sweater Fun** for the month of December. Our Junior Youth Fellowship group is for youth in 6th-8th grades, and our Senior Youth Fellowship group is for youth in 9th-12th grades. Email updates are sent weekly with information about upcoming events.

Confirmation Class

We have 8 awesome confirmands paired with adult mentors for our Confirmation journey this year. Our confirmands attend confirmation classes together and then meet with their mentors individually as they strive to discern what they believe about God and make decisions about confirming their faith and joining CCB through the Rite of Confirmation. *We invite you to keep our confirmands and their mentors in your prayers.*

Wednesday, December 18th—Confirmation Class: The Bible—7-9pm

Math for Mammals: Thank You for Your Support

With the support of our CCB members and friends and the hard work of our Church School children we are on our way to raising enough money to purchase our second Heifer Project World Gift Ark. *Math for Mammals raised \$2000!*

Note: If you didn't have a chance to support the Math for Mammals fundraiser you can make a donation to our Heifer World Gift Ark project at the Alternative Gifts Fair on either December 7th or 8th.

Fellowship Of Concern



CONTINUING CONCERNS:

Lillian Covill,
Liz DeLambert,
Des & Nancy Desmond,
Nina Jacobs,
Stephanie Joy,
Greg & Jan Labas,
Marion Miller,
Millicent Morrison,
The Ruschmeyers,
Lavinia Schmaling,

NEW ADDRESS:

Sara Cline, 11 Curve Street, Framingham, MA 01702.

GRIEVING:

- Donna MacKenzie and family on the loss of her mother.
- Tania Carreras and family on the loss of her mother.
- Bonnie Highlander and family on the loss of her mother.

PRACTICAL MATTERS FROM STEWARDSHIP

PLEASE NOTE: Due to how the holidays are falling on the calendar this year, please ensure that year-end pledges/gifts are received no later than Sunday's church services on 12/29/19. As the office will be closed on Tuesday the 31st, any mail received that day will not be processed until after the first of the year.

CrossWays Deadline

The deadline for the January 2019 issue of CrossWays is **December 10th**. You can e-mail articles to Jeannine McCullough at office@uccb.org or leave them in the CrossWays mailbox outside of the church office. Please e-mail or call Jeannine McCullough, Office Administrator at 203-775-1259 if you have any questions.

Note: Because of the short holiday week the presses will run on this CrossWays very soon after Dec. 10th, so be sure to submit your article(s) by the deadline.

Join us for Advent 2019—Rediscovering Christmas:

- Dec. 1 PEACE: 1st Sunday of Advent (Communion at both services)
- Dec. 1 Advent Wreath Workshop & Hanging of the Greens—5-7pm
- Dec 7th/8th Alternative Gifts Fair—December 7th from 10am-1pm & December 8th after both worship services in Fellowship Hall (see article below for more information)
- Dec. 8 HOPE: 2nd Sunday of Advent (Christmas Pageant at 10:30am)
- Dec. 15 JOY: 3rd Sunday of Advent (Lessons and Carols at both services, with special music from our Chancel, Alleluia and Bell Choirs at 10:30am.)
- Dec. 22 LOVE: 4th Sunday of Advent
- Dec. 24 Candlelight Christmas Eve Services at 5:00pm, 8:30pm, and 11pm (See article on cover for details about these services.)

***Come shop for your family & friends at
THE ALTERNATIVE GIFTS FAIR!***

When: Saturday, December 7th (10am-1pm) & Sunday, December 8th (9:30 & 11:30am)

Where: Congregational Church of Brookfield in Fellowship Hall

The Alternative Gifts Fair gives you the chance to help others as you help yourself. You can get some Christmas shopping done, while at the same time donating to a local, national, or international charity. The way it works is that you pick any of the amazing charities that are at the fair and donate money in someone's name. Then you can give this person a card showing the donation you made on his or her behalf.

There will also be beautiful gifts for sale (ones you can wrap) plus delicious home-baked goods to buy with the proceeds going to the SYF Mission Trip 2020. Organizations represented at this year's Alternative Gifts Fair will be Simply Smiles, Building Homes for Heroes, SERRV (Sales Exchange for Refugee Rehabilitation & Vocation), Heifer Project International and more.

Advent Adult Education Opportunities:

Monday AM Women's Study—9:30-11am—Church Library—11/25 & 12/2, 9, 16

Join us as we explore the themes of Advent: Peace, Hope, Joy and Love through TED talks and various other visual images and conversation. No homework required. Come as you are!

Monday PM Adult Study—5-6:30pm—Church Library—12/2, 9, 16

This group of men and women meets for discussion on many topics. Throughout the Advent season we will meet to consider the themes of the season from various perspectives, guided by our CCB Advent theme of "Rediscovering Christmas." *Note: Childcare is provided for our Monday AM and PM studies.*

Thursday Morning Bible Study & Prayer—10-11am—Main Office Study—12/5, 12 & 19

We will join together to learn about and discuss the preaching texts for Advent and Christmas Eve, as well as pray together for those on our prayer list. This gathering is very helpful to the pastors as they prepare their sermons for upcoming Sundays & special holidays.

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel – that is “God with Us.”

~Isaiah 7:14 (NRSV)

I don't know about you, but as we head into Advent this year I am feeling a bit bogged down and a bit stuck. There is so much going on in our country and the world. The divides seem to get bigger and deeper between differing sides of the political aisle. The chasm separating the “haves” and the “have nots” is widening. We hear regular reports of school shootings and other violent acts and seem to look at them with passing glances and quick prayers moving on to the next thing, because they have sadly become so commonplace in our society. I read at night with my 11-year-old WWII enthusiast about that war and then support my brother as he works with Mission 22 – an organization that strives to prevent the 20+ daily veteran suicides due to the scars of war that are only sometimes visible. I read at night with my 9-year-old goofy strong daughter about young women who are working hard to change the world, and we read about climate activists who are only a few years older than her who just want a planet to survive on when they are my age. The list of issues and news headlines and things that weigh heavy on our hearts can unfortunately go on and on and on.

And so this Advent it will be important for us to come together and to think again about hope, peace, joy and love. Our Advent theme this year is “Rediscovering Christmas.” How do we take something that now begins in the stores in September (no word of a lie this year), something that many of us grew up celebrating in our homes, and rediscover it? How do we look at old traditions in new ways? How do we think creatively as people of faith about being bearers of hope, peace, joy and love into a community, a nation, a world that is SO in need of those things?

We will come together this Advent season, and we will hear prophecies like that in Isaiah 7 above. We will sing and see kiddos dressed up as camels. We will baptize a baby and offer opportunities to give to others and the world. We will join around the table and offer outreach and care to those who are struggling with grief this holiday season. We will gather to hear the story again – perhaps in a new way – of a sign from God, that a newborn will come into the world who is Immanuel – God with Us.

As Anne Lamott writes in her book *Stitches*, “Nothing is larger than a newborn.” In that newborn wrapped in bands of cloth we find focus – a turning toward God and God's call for us and desire to see the kingdom built on Earth as it is in Heaven. In that larger than life baby we find an example of how to share and welcome and work for justice. In that tiny little body we find the hope, peace, joy and love we need and that the world most especially needs.

We hope you will join us this Advent and Christmas season as we seek ways to rediscover Christmas, to celebrate the traditions that bind us and feed us and to explore some new things too. We hope you will join us as we strive to bear hope, peace, joy and love to one another and to God's world.

Board of Deacons

Your Deacon Branch provides a way for you to have a specific member of the Board with whom to relate. If you have requests or concerns that you'd like to share with a lay person, your Deacon is available. Naturally, if you're more comfortable calling one of the other deacons, or one of your pastors, please feel free to do so. Such requests or concerns might include:

- a need for prayer
- a request for help (transport to a doctor's appointment, church function, etc.)
- a sorrow (illness, accident, death)
- a joy (a birth, graduation, upcoming wedding, etc.)
- something that particularly pleases you, or would better meet your needs in the worship service

Remember, if you don't know your Deacon, ask someone to introduce you. He or she will look forward to meeting you – in church or out!

Deacon Branches 2019-2020

A-BO	Ruth Allen
BR-CO	Martha Parvis
CR-DY	Sharon Santi
E-GI	Jeanine Hanewicz
GL-I	Pete Lane
J-LI	Sue Boughton
LO-MA	Alex DeLucia
Mc-O	Mary Gallagher DeLucia
P-RI	Ed Insull
RO-SI	Marie Immohr
SL-TY	Carol Ryan
UN-Z	John Pondiccio

Youth Deacons:

Catie Coneybear
Stephen Wutzl

Committee Chairmen and Church Council Reps

Moderator: Sue Waschak
Vice Moderator: Jack Brown
Treasurer: Greg Dorrell
Clerk (Asst. Treasurer): Kristi McPadden
Investment Treasurer: Audrey Himebaugh

Committee Chairs

Christian Ed Amy D'Alessandro
Church House John Mangold
Church-in-Society Lyn Lyon
Deacons Marie Immohr
Fellowship Monica Pondiccio
Nominating Tom Young
Stewardship Susan Dodd
Welcome Robin Murphy
Worship Kim Downey

Church Council Representatives

Christian Ed Wendy Elsen
Church House Steve Waschak
Church-in-Society Luke Duval
Deacons John Pondiccio
Fellowship Michele Ostrom
Nominating Carolyn Lindroth
Stewardship Tom Brown
Welcome Beth Telesco
Worship Kathy Wandelmaier
Historian Bob Brown

Church Safety Committee: Rodger Wutzl (chair), Tina Crepeau, Walter Ostrom, Bryn Smallwood-Garcia, Kathy Taylor, Linae Wutzl

Long-Range Planning Committee: Larry Ruschmeyer (chair), Barbara Crandell, Maurice Downey, Michael Matson, Deseré Edwards, Sian Hunter, Rick Hardin

Pastoral Relations Committee: Wendy Elsen, Dave Goral, Gordon Markiewicz, Larry Ruschmeyer, Olivia Quinsland.

Personnel Committee: Sue Waschak (chair), Jack Brown, Bryn Smallwood-Garcia, Jennifer Whipple, Bob Emrich, Monica McInerney, Eileen Koch, Mark Lyon

Senior Pastor	Rev. Bryn Smallwood-Garcia		bryn@uccb.org
Associate Pastor	Rev. Jennifer Whipple		jennifer@uccb.org
Organist/Choir	Toni Sullivan		toni@uccb.org
Church School	Barbara Crandell		barbara@uccb.org
Church Office	Jeannine McCullough	203-775-1259	office@uccb.org
Nursery Care	Debbie Marquardt	203-775-1259	



Wanted: Office Volunteers

From time to time the need arises for office volunteers to “man the phones” when Jeannine McCullough, our CCB Office Administrator, is away. If you are interested in being a part of the team of wonderful volunteers already helping out, please let Jeannine know by calling 203-775-1259 or emailing her at office@uccb.org.

WOMEN’S ANNUAL MISSION TRIP 2020 SAVE THE DATE

Mission Trip to Providence, Rhode Island

Dates: Friday, January 17, 2020 (6:00 PM) to Sunday, January 19, 2020 (4:00 PM)

We are busy planning our Women’s Mission Trip to Providence, Rhode Island in January 2020. We will be staying at Irons Homestead (UCC Retreat Center and Camp) and working at Providence Rescue Mission (a homeless shelter).

Please contact Jeanine Hanewicz if you are interested in attending.

We must confirm the number of attendees to make the deposit to Irons Homestead.

CrossWays – the newsletter of

The Congregational Church of Brookfield
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(203)-775-1259 Fax (203)-775-3466
Email: office@uccb.org



Sunday Worship at 8:30am and 10:30am

The Rev. Bryn Smallwood-Garcia, Senior Pastor
The Rev. Jennifer Whipple, Associate Pastor