

FEDERATED COMMUNITY CHURCH  
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PAID  
Springfield,  
MA  
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2702

# *The Federated Courier*

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Volume 75 1

January 2022

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## *From the Pastor's Desk*

*After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi<sup>[a]</sup> from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him." Matthew 2: 1-2*

Greetings of Grace and Peace!

Merry Christmas to you and I pray Christ is born anew within you! During the Advent season, our Bible study class looked at characters that played a part in Jesus' birth: Mary, Joseph, Gabriel, shepherds, Herod, Elizabeth, Zechariah, Wise people, Simeon, and more. I asked, "Besides Jesus, which character(s) speaks to you loudest and why?" Through the years, different people have spoken to me, but I usually return to the Magi. They are wise people who seek Jesus; their lives so transformed at meeting Jesus they leave by a different road.

Both the Old Testament (Jeremiah 29:13) and New Testament (Matthew 7:7) speak about finding God when you seek with all your heart. For myself, Magi are not some historical figures but are those in humanity that seek to live connected by the Spirit to God and to live out what God asks of them. Sometimes it is not easy to know what God is asking of us, but through daily spiritual disciplines of Bible reading, prayer, meditation, fasting, worship, holy gathering with others who are striving to walk God's path, God's ways are revealed.

As we enter this new year, I ask you to join me as we take on the role of Magi. What does that look like and why should we act like Magi you may ask? Let me answer “Why” first. I believe God is striving to get the attention of more people in the world; trying to get us to find new ways to speak and engage with folks. As we seek new ways, we will need courage to follow God’s vision and go down different paths, just as the Magi in Jesus’ birth story went home by a different road. The world is hurting and needs Jesus. Remember Jesus means, Yahweh saves, or the Lord saves.

What does the role of Magi look like? I need all members of our congregation to pledge to pray daily, listen, and seek what God is asking us. I will offer a time of weekly prayer: learning new ways to pray through visualization, manifesting what we hear from God into reality. I will offer Bible studies that offer times of open and honest conversation. I need you to show up and engage. How awesome and fun it will be to be Magi, wise folks, on a mission to seek God with all our hearts and to find. To go down a new road will be exciting and dangerous, but if we are together and God is in the lead, we can be at peace, knowing we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us. (Philippians 4:13)

I hope you will join me as Magi, wise folks, who seek God with all their heart in as many ways as we can. When we do, God will be found and our lives, our church, our world will be led to God’s ways of hope, peace, joy, and love and new roads will be built. Join me in this exciting journey!

Look for weekly e-news and bulletins that will invite us to begin our journey by making Magi hats together. If we are going to travel together, let’s have fun and dress for the occasion.

In Christ’s Light and Love,

*Pastor Pat*

## *From the Deacons' Bench*

### LETTING OUR LIGHTS SHINE TOO

Like many, I suppose, daylight and its timing has a special fascination for me.....like the vernal equinox when the sun crosses our celestial equator. It says to me: check your seed inventory, have you soil-tested the new garden patch, and how about tilling? That's special. And then, there's the summer solstice in June.....the day with the longest daylight hours.

When the kids were small, we would rent a cabin in the woods along the Vermont shore of Lake Champlain right after their school year had ended. Here we would celebrate the specialness of that event too. And of course, the winter solstice was as equally important. It meant daylight would gradually and joyfully lengthen again.....about 14 minutes a week. Even today, in my elder years, scarcely a day goes by without my venturing forth before daylight to catch the first light of another sunrise.

Our ancient ancestors, they too must have had a special connection with light. I am thinking of the Druids in England who built Stonehenge 5,000 years ago which scholars today believe was both sacred and functional, as it marked both solar lighting events as well as lunar. The Mayans in Central America and ancient Egyptians left behind monuments to their light-centered cultures. Even today, our Jewish ancestors celebrate the Festival of Lights close to the darkest days of the year with the lighting of 9 candles symbolizing the immortality of life, knowledge, wisdom and joy. In Europe pre-dating Christianity, our ancestors celebrated their dark days with evergreen wreaths and candles . The circular wreaths were symbols of the continuum of everlasting life....no beginning and no end....and the lit candles highlighted mankind's need for illuminated thought and spiritual awareness. Christianity followed suit.

The Apostle John writes of John the Baptist as harbinger of Jesus: *"In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in darkness, and the darkness has not*

*overcome it.....He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe." (John 1:4--7)*

Then Apostle John quotes Jesus: *"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."* (John 8:12)

And Apostle Mark challenges us: *"You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on a stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."* (Mark 5:14-16).

Perhaps this year that 300 mini-light strand of white lights decorating a wild winterberry bush in our deep and dark woods out back will have a special meaning.

Advent adventure awaits.....

David Spencer, Deacon.

Let your  
★ *light* ★ shine. ★



## *January Birthdays*

Birthday Greetings to the following members of our church who celebrate birthdays in January.



Gail Banning	01/03
Richard Ritz	01/03
Albert Jones	01/06
Geraldine Spear	01/06
Donald Ryan	01/07
Lisa Wyman	01/10
Steven Safford	01/13
Madison Regnier	01/13
Marilyn Connor	01/18
Dennis Connor	01/18
Nicholas Hummel	01/19
Edith Casey	01/20
Susan Quill	01/20
John Panek	01/20
Joan Harris	01/24
Richard Nelson	01/24
Richard Taylor	01/27
Paul Willoughby	01/30
Rosemary DiSimoni	01/31

## *Wedding Anniversaries*

Carmel & Richard Grant	01/19
Richard & Elizabeth Taylor	01/24

*Congratulations*



## *Prayer Corner*

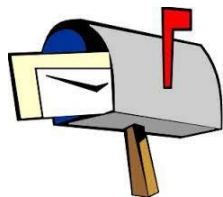


Evie Meacham  
Winnie  
Dennis  
John (Jack) Bennett  
Watson Family  
Janet Brehaut  
Josh G & Family  
Mary Lou Black  
Sandra Gibson  
William  
Amy  
Joan  
Vincent  
Jake  
Joyce Libby  
Patrick  
Pat Safford  
Rich  
Tony Rogers

Christopher  
Bob Green  
Fran Brown  
Elaine Selfridge  
Doreen  
Jaoat  
Ed  
Adam  
Jan  
Melinda  
Ann  
Anna  
Kelvin  
Doug  
Barbara  
Phil Stoddard  
Jack Hess  
Ed  
Sherry & Family

For those battling cancer  
For those that grieve the loss of loved ones  
For those working on the COVID vaccines  
For those who do not have access to COVID vaccines  
For first responders & health care workers  
For those impacted by weather disasters  
For the people Afghanistan  
For the people of Haiti  
For the changing climate  
For our country  
For all world leaders  
For those traveling  
For shut-ins and those who are isolated  
For the homeless  
For Asian & Black people & all who are persecuted for simply being how  
God created them  
For transitions within our church

Dear FCC:



Thank you for your love, prayers, encouragement, and support. We see so many that come to us struggling with many different things; however, it's so exciting to see many turn their struggles into victories by the power of God. Jesus is the only way! Thank you for your prayers. How can we pray for you? Please share with the Springfield Rescue Mission team how we can pray for you all. Thank you again.

Love in Christ,  
Your Brother in the Lord, Robert Richards  
Ministry Engagement Officer, Springfield Rescue Mission

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Dearest Friend & Partners,

Cheryl and I are so thankful to the Lord for your partnership in the Gospel all over the world. Our recent trip North included speaking in four of our lovely supporting churches, including Rumney Baptist in Rumney, New Hampshire; Trinitarian Congregational Church in Wayland, Massachusetts; Spring Brook Congregational Church in Spring Brook, Pennsylvania and Cross Road Assembly in Elmhurst, Pennsylvania. In every place we were overwhelmed by the love and warm friendship we received. We were blessed to see our Lord save souls, touch lives, and heal people. God is so good!

We will be sending out a newsletter soon telling of our upcoming mission trip which will include our son David and his wife Connie.

God bless you and your family and may you have a very blessed and Merry Christmas!

Shalom in Jesus our Lord,  
Paul & Cheryl Bendele



## Missions

The MaryAnn's Kids representatives, the Giving Tree organization, were very grateful for the generosity and said a big Thank You to all for ensuring a wonderful Christmas for the children!



There are more missions coming soon! They will be in the Newsletters, Friday emails, and Sunday announcements.

Many Thanks and a Blessed New Year,  
Joyce Brooks and the Mission Committee



## Game Night Postponed

Please note that due to concerns regarding Covid, Family Game Night will be postponed until the Spring for the safety of members of the community.

## Wonderful Wednesday Worship Postponed

Due to increased rates of Covid, we will be postponing our Wednesday Lunch & Worship service until later in the Spring.



## Altar Flowers

January 30<sup>th</sup> is available for altar flowers.

Please contact the office (566-3711) if you would like to have flowers in honor or memory of someone.

# *Christian Youth Faith Formation News*



This month we are focusing on the gifts we have to offer the world. We will begin within ourselves and explore beyond. First, we are discussing our hopes and dreams for the upcoming year and the things that are most important to us. We are examining the things we want most for ourselves and what we can do to make that happen.

We are sharing what is most important to each of them and ask God to be with us in all we do. We are helping our community through prayer and exploring how to welcome God into our daily lives. From here, we will move beyond to learn about the world as a global village. We will discuss what happens in a village: sharing, caring communication and contribution.

As always, we pray together, include Bible teachings, music, art and celebrate our joy-filled time together. A time for reflection and renewal for young people and the adults fortunate enough to spend time with them.

If you would like to volunteer with the Children's Program for a fun change of pace on Sunday, please contact Laura Lillibridge by email at [beariverfarm@gmail.com](mailto:beariverfarm@gmail.com).

Have a Blessed New Year!  
Laura Lillibridge, CYFF Coordinator

## *"Connecting in the Spirit" Update*

Over the past months, our Renovation Team has been meeting on the first Thursday of each month with Ministry Architects to build a solid foundation for our comprehensive ministry revitalization vision, Connecting in the Spirit.

Starting in January, our "Reno" Team will also gather on the third Thursday of each month to continue designing a faith formation program that centers on the original vision goals (and our responsibilities as Christians):

1. Deepen our own faith and connection to one another, and
2. Act on our faith, building meaningful connections in the wider community.

Supporting children and their families in their faith journeys is central to our spiritual and physical growth as a faith community. Every faith formation goal and practice apply both to adults and to children. No matter our age, we are all seekers:

- \* we want to learn Jesus' teachings, and
- \* learn how to *effectively live out* His call.

The "Reno" Team is finding that a *transformational* faith formation program for children and youth must go beyond the traditional 1-hour Sunday School instructional model which we are used to (just as adult spiritual formation needs more nourishment than one hour of Sunday worship!). In addition to (a.) researching curriculum and teaching strategies that support our Christian mission of "faith-in-action", we are (b.) looking for ways to knit together the children and adults into worship, fellowship activities, and intergenerational mission service projects.

It's a big vision, and requires a big reservoir of time, energy, resolve, discernment, and faith from each member of the Renovation Team: our Children/Youth Faith Formation Coordinator Laura Lillibridge, Beth Algie, Joyce Brooks, Karen Kielb, Linda Hornig, Janet Libby, Ellie Soucy, and Pastor Pat. We

ask for your input (speak to any one of us) and prayers as we go forward in this transformational ministry. May God richly bless us all!

## *Stewardship Update*

A big thank you goes out to all that have sent in their pledge cards for the coming year. It is so hard to ask for your pledges during the holiday season, when it seems that more money than usual is already being spent on necessities, gifts and other non-profit requests. Fortunately, ours is a pledge that can be paid over 52 weeks or 12 months. Our budgeting process starts with the pledge drive where we find out how much money will be coming in and ends with the Annual Meeting when the finance committee shows where those dollars will be spent.

This fall our committee has felt a great loss with Carol Darnley's passing, not only for her accounting abilities but also her writing skills when it came to Stewardship letters, newsletter articles and thank you notes. Please consider joining our Finance Committee.

This past Sunday we started passing out our new offering envelopes – they have a built-in register to help with your record keeping. After next Sunday, I will mail the remaining envelopes to those that I have not seen at church. They are a perpetual series, meaning that they are not dated. The envelope says “January First Sunday”, so if you are a monthly doner you can pay this year using the envelopes that say January First Sunday, February First Sunday Mar..., then next year you can use all the envelopes that say January Second Sunday etc. So you can actually use the same pad of envelopes (with the same number) for 4 years! Thank you for your continued support.

Janet Libby

## *Music Update*



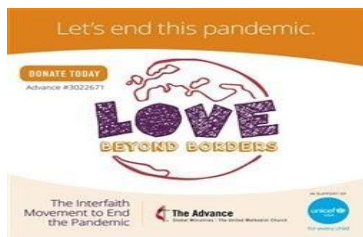
Well, this is a tricky bulletin to write. I want to invite your participation in the music ministry, but I have to tell you that we're erring on the side of caution by restricting our rehearsals and limiting our singing for a month until we can reassess the Covid threat.

The bright side is that now you have a month to consider how drastically your life would improve by participating in our music ministry. The opportunities are not limited to singing. You may have noticed the presence of "other sounds," during worship; incidental bells, xylophones, and drums. The Psalmist tells us to "Praise God with loud clashing cymbals, praise God with timbrel and lyre." For those who might be interested; the timbrel developed into the tambourine and the lyre was a stringed instrument (let's say today's guitar). See, there are life enriching opportunities galore!

Anyone interested in a drumming circle? Do you have a drum at home and don't know what to do with it? Can you tap out a rhythm to match "I-want-to-play-my-drum," or "Mashed -Potatoes," or "I-like -apple-pie?" Then you can play in a drumming circle. It's not only a good stress buster but it's a covid-safe activity.

We're in a holding pattern right now because we care about your health and safety but please consider future participation in some aspect of the music ministry here at Hampden Federated Community Church. Talk to me after Church, or email me at [markjacobson104@gmail.com](mailto:markjacobson104@gmail.com) or call me at 736-7611.

Mark Jacobson



United Methodist Global Ministries is launching a new initiative and joining interfaith partners in an effort to increase the equitable distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine around the world. Funds donated to a new Advance giving project will support

“Love Beyond Borders: The Interfaith Movement to End the Pandemic” campaign supporting UNICEF’s global vaccine distribution efforts

The coronavirus pandemic continues to have severe consequences, especially on the poorest and most vulnerable populations. Accelerating the rate at which all people are vaccinated is the key to ending the pandemic and reducing harm.

According to research from Northeastern University, 61% of deaths globally could be averted if an effective vaccine were distributed to all countries proportional to their populations. While many wealthy countries have made significant inroads into vaccinating their citizens, this is not the case in less-developed countries.

The *Love Beyond Borders* campaign will support COVAX’s initiative to equitably distribute vaccines around the world.

This grassroots campaign aims to engage The United Methodist Church in working to stop the spread of COVID-19 through immunizations.

The goal of this project is to assist COVAX and UNICEF in equitably distributing the COVID-19 vaccine around the world to end the pandemic.

#### Contact Information

Kathleen Griffith, Global Health Team Lead

**[kgriffith@umcmmission.org](mailto:kgriffith@umcmmission.org)**

1-770-625-7796

Dr. David Boan, Chair, Missions Committee, First UMC, Boise, ID

**[dboan@outlook.com](mailto:dboan@outlook.com)**

# January 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 Happy New Year!
2 10:00 AM Worship CYFF begins in classroom Fellowship Hour	3 9:30 AM Spirit Chat	4 6:00 PM AA	5	6	7 7:30 PM AA	8 8:00 AM Men's Breakfast
9 10:00 AM Worship * CY Faith Form	10 9:30 AM Spirit Chat	11 6:00 PM AA 6:00 PM Bell Choir 7:00 PM Finance	12	13	14 7:30 PM AA	15
16 10:00 AM Worship * CY Faith Form	17 9:30 AM Spirit Chat	18 6:00 PM AA 6:00 PM Bell Choir 7:00 PM BOD	19 10:30 AM Bible Study	20 1:30 PM Memorial Gifts	21 7:30 PM AA	22 8:00 AM Men's Breakfast
23 10:00 AM Worship * CY Faith Form	24 9:30 AM Spirit Chat	25 6:00 PM AA 6:00 PM Bell Choir	26 10:30 AM Bible Study	27	28 7:30 PM AA	29
30 10:00 AM Worship * CY Faith Form	31 9:30 AM Spirit Chat				* Children Youth Faith Formation will begin in the sanctuary and will be dismissed after approx. 15 minutes	*

## ***“White Out Blizzard”***

*During the month of February, we will be collecting the following items  
for various local shelters and organizations:*

*Paper towels, Paper Plates, Paper Cups, Napkins, Tissues, Toilet Paper,  
Toiletries, Feminine Hygiene Products, Children's Diapers*

*Stay tuned for more information!*