

Old South Church

United Church of Christ

December 2017 - January 2018 Telstar

Rooted in faith, Growing in love, reaching for justice

A Message from Pastor Linda Hatch

It was January 10th in the evening that I met with the deacons at the Holman Mission House about being the Interim Minister for Old South Church. In the middle of the table was a Kalanchoe plant with yellow blossoms. The plant stayed there for several months and then began to look like it could use a little attention. So, I put it in my office in front of a window and just kept it watered. A few weeks ago, it looked like it needed a bigger pot and so I took it home, transplanted it and put it in my kitchen window. It now has buds growing that I assume will become yellow flowers again.

That plant has come full circle through the year and so has the church. They are both ready to bloom and move through the holidays into the new year with beauty and light for any to see. Much has been accomplished in the transition process. The very capable Transition Team has put in many hours and is working on the new Church Profile. The Search Committee will come into being. The Transition Team will hand off to the Search Committee as the process moves forward to seek a settled pastor who fits the needs of this congregation.

There are a number of challenges, which we will continue to work through in preparation for settled ministry here. It is the very places of challenge in ministry that bring new seeing and unity within a congregation by the work of the Spirit. We continue to gather as we do for worship and prayer and fellowship ever keeping close to God and focused on who's we are and how we live that out now and going forward.

“No heaven can come to us unless our hearts rest in it today—take heaven. No peace lies in the future, which is not hidden in this present instant—take peace. The gloom of the world is but a shadow, behind it, yet within easy reach is joy—take joy.”

Fra Giovanni

Rev. Linda Hatch

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Old South Church

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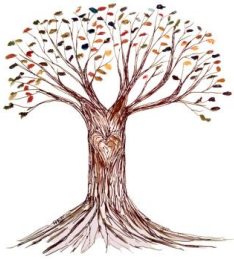
Find us on Facebook at:

Old South First
Congregational Church

Find us on the web at:

www.FarmingtonUCC.org

*No matter who you are
or where you are on
life's journey,
you are welcome here.*



We choose as God's people the things of beauty and light, which speak of heaven, peace and joy, in the midst of now, seeing glimpses of what will be in God's will and love in what comes in newness ever. Thank you for all the ministry you do here.

May Blessings Abound through the Advent- Christmas Season,
Linda

Would you like to meet with Rev. Linda? Linda will be in the office when she doesn't have appointments or meetings. In general, Linda is in town Tuesday through Thursday and Sunday. Please feel free to contact Pastor Linda at 356-7573 or email her at Linda@FarmingtonUCC.org

Please note, Linda will be on vacation December 25 through January 1. If you have a pastoral emergency during this time, please contact the church office at 778-0424 or Deacon Shelley Griffith. Shelley may be reached at: 207-578-1801 (cell), 639-2013 (home), or by email at sgriffith875@gmail.com.

Executive Council

| | |
|--|------------------|
| Interim Minister: | Rev. Linda Hatch |
| Moderator: | Chris Magri |
| Treasurer: | Amanda Adams |
| Clerk: | Shannon Munro |
| Financial Secretary & Fundraising: | Brenda Scribner |
| Director of Children and Youth Ministries: | Jodie Gunther |
| Chair, Christian Ed: | Arin Hilton |
| Chair, Diaconate: | Shelley Griffith |
| Chair, Financial Trustees: | Marilyn Hylan |
| Chair, Outreach, Justice & Witness: | Randy Oakley |
| Chair, Personnel: | Joanna Backman |
| Chair, Property Trustees: | Barb Fortier |
| Member at Large: | Robin Beck |
| Member at Large: | Wendy Huish |

The next issue of Telstar will be the February issue. The deadline for submissions is January 10. Please submit all articles to the church office (Phyllis@FarmingtonUCC.org) no later than January 10.



From The Moderator

December is approaching, 2017 is in its home stretch, and the situation at Old South is unsettled. This, folks, is the time for us to show we're a community.

Unsettled? Well, things are unsettled in the literal sense that our search for a settled pastor is still ongoing. Our Transition Team is working hard to produce the lengthy "profile" that will tell candidates who we are and what we're looking for, but it's not done yet and thus candidate profiles aren't yet streaming our way. Some of you, I know, are anxious about that.

Our handicapped accessibility project is also ongoing: as of this writing we have a paved parking lot but we're still waiting for the wheelchair lift and automatic door openers to arrive so they can be installed. Anticipation is fun up to a point, but I'll be happy when this project is complete.

Then there's the Holman Mission House and its new upstairs vacancy. Suggestions for how to use the space are being offered and explored, and in early 2018 we'll set up a way (Our Turn?) for the congregation as a whole to chime in. For now, though, SAPARS is gone, and that brings uncertainty, however hopeful we might be looking forward.

As a community, as a faith family, we need to respond by stepping forward, not back; by taking part, not waiting for someone else to solve everything; by wrestling with the problems, not staying away until all is settled and easy. And yes, in this stewardship season we need to respond by supporting our church as generously as we can so that we have the best possible chance of successfully navigating these unsettled waters: keeping our buildings intact, hiring a wonderful settled pastor, funding meaningful ministries. . . . Even if you don't agree with this or that that's being done or not done, please stay involved, stay committed, stand with us. With all of us working together, and with the help of God, we can hope for a bright 2018.

Chris Magri



From the Treasurer

Why should you pledge to Old South?

As we are in the middle of our stewardship campaign, you have probably heard about pledging many times over the last few weeks. The question may be lingering in your head – but why? Why is it important? My budget is tight already; I don't think I can spare anything else.

Honestly, I cannot answer the “why” for you. There are many reasons “why”, and I believe they are different for everyone. Maybe you love hearing the choir each week or you really love how warm and cozy our church is on those winter Sunday mornings. Maybe you really love our children and youth and all of the outstanding ministries they are providing our community. Maybe a full-time minister is at the top of your list for our church needs. Maybe the Holman Mission House holds a special place for you and you want to see it preserved and utilized.

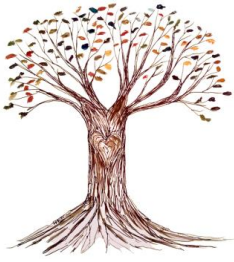
Our church family does SO MUCH in our community, I could honestly go on and on, but the simple fact is the ministries we provided do not come without a cost. We are in a huge transitional period. We are searching for a settled pastor and for new tenants for the Holman Mission House. We need your support and continued giving.

Do you know that with just \$8/month you could help provide music for choir for an entire year or provide childcare for our church meetings for the year? At \$30/month, you could meet our Diaconate budget. For \$50/month, you would meet the budget for water and sewer at the Holman Mission House. The list, again, continues.

In order for our ministry here to continue, in order for our church to survive, we need your support. We cannot make this work without you – plain and simple. Your pledge, no matter how big or small, makes a difference. *We* have to work together to continue being the light and hope to our community as we are to so many.

Blessings,
Amanda Adams
Treasurer

When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore, pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.”
-Matthew 9:36-38 (ESV)



Financial Trustees

If you have been reading this issue of Telstar then you know that our 2018 Stewardship Campaign- Journey to Generosity: The way of Jesus has begun. I know that you are aware that this year's campaign is overlapping with year 2 of our three-year capital campaign. However, we need to remember that it is our on-going stewardship pledges that are the true life-blood and heartbeat of financial vitality of Old South. This is a time in which each of us is asked to consider how it is we offer to God and to Old South our gifts of time, talent and treasure. For those of you who have received your stewardship packets in the mail, please give thoughtful consideration to what you are able to give and, if possible, increase your pledge and consider paying the additional fellowship dues that go directly to the Maine Conference and our local Association.

If all goes well, we will be calling a new pastor next year. I believe that our church, its programs and missions, need to remain strong so that we find a strong pastoral leader for our congregation. We will bless our pledges on December 10 so please return your pledge cards on or before that date. You may mail them, put them in the weekly offering, or leave them with Phyllis during office hours.

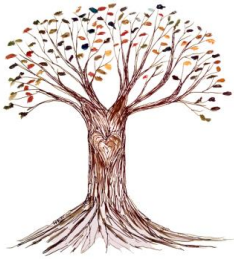
If you have not yet received your stewardship packet in the mail, please contact me.

Thank you for your generosity.

Marilyn Hylan, Chair
Financial Trustees

Property Trustees

The work to begin construction on the Newman Wing lift has begun. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause. If construction requires that we use the Vestry entrance, we will do our best to notify you through the weekly email and on Sundays at church.



Deacons' Corner

SEASON'S GREETINGS OLD SOUTH FAMILY!

The Deacons have started the process of choosing candidates to nominate to the Church for the Pastoral Search Committee. According to our Church Bylaws, this is one of the duties of the Diaconate. Once we have completed our selection, the candidates will be presented to members of the Church body for election.

We began our journey by doing some research into what the UCC considers "best practices" for search committee selection. These are the qualities that the UCC recommends for members of a search committee: 1) a strong commitment to the Church, 2) a positive attitude, 3) a spirit of openness to varying viewpoints (rather than a pre-determined agenda), 4) personal integrity, 5) respect for others, 6) an ability to maintain strict confidentiality, 7) a capacity to listen and 8) a willingness to come to consensus. That may sound like a tall order, but perhaps not out of reach for Old Southerners engaged in a Spirit-led group process!

In addition, the UCC suggests that each member of the search committee be an active participant in Church life. (Our bylaws mandate that each member of the committee be a full member of the Church.) Finally, according to the UCC, each member of the search committee must be willing and able to give this responsibility a very high level of priority in his or her life.

By the time you read this, the Deacons will have finished studying the UCC material related to the search and call process, will be gathering information and suggestions from people who have served on our search committees in the past and will be consulting with Pastor Linda. We will also be reaching out to the Transition Team, who facilitated our congregational small group discussions this fall. Information from those discussions will be used to form the Church Profile, which will be shown to ministerial candidates. The Search Committee will work closely with this document throughout the search and call process and members of the committee will need to feel comfortable with its contents.

During the month of December, the Deacons will select nominees for the Search Committee from a pool composed of interested church members who apply as well as church members suggested by individual Deacons. Needless to say, not everybody who applies or who is suggested will be chosen to serve on the committee. According to the UCC, "the search for a new pastor is one of the most spiritual ministries of the Church" and "the selection of Search Committee members is a task that is approached with prayer, wisdom (and) sensitivity".



Therefore, the Deacons will consider each applicant very carefully and strive to allow the Spirit to lead us to discover who God is calling to serve God's church in this particular way. The Deacons ask for your prayers and your support during this phase of our Church's journey, in the belief that God's footsteps will lead us to the person who has been called to partner with us in Faith and Service at this time.

Blessings,

Shelley

(Your Deacons: Rina Bardo, Roger Condit, Linda Fournier, Wendy Oakley, Grace McIntosh Jr. Deacon), Michelle Scribner, Fred O. Smith, Carole Trickett, Ryan Westbrook-Vigue and Shelley Griffith, chair.)

Transition Team

Your Transition Team has begun the process of putting together the new church profile. The topics of our round-table discussions, "Who are we now?" "Who is our neighbor?" "Who is God calling us to become?" and "Who is God calling to minister with us?" are also the topics of four sections in the new Profile. Thanks to all who participated in these very rich conversations and explorations. They have provided the Transition Team with the up-to-date congregational feelings and ideas with which to write the narrative response to these essential questions. Other sections are current congregational demographics, staffing needs, and church finances. Concurrently, the Deacons are in the process of creating a Search Committee (see Shelley Griffith's article in this issue).

Please hold the Transition Team and the Diaconate in your prayers as we thoughtfully and prayerfully move towards calling a new full-time pastor. Please contact any of our Transition Team if you have any questions.

Rina Bardo (phone: 778-9978, dnrbardo@gwi.net)

Jen and Gabe Civiello (phone: 645-2180, civielloja@gmail.com)

Karyl Condit (phone: 778-3722, krcondit2@gmail.com)

Shelley Griffith (phone: 639-2013, sgriffith875@gmail.com)

Roy Scribner (phone: 602-0561, rbike02@gmail.com)

Mary Sinclair (phone: 712-2930, mary.sinclair@maine.edu)

Donna Wheeler (phone: 778-3642, donna.wheeler71@gmail.com)



Prayer Ministry at Old South

“Peace and Light”

Advent greetings my Spiritual Family,

It is my sincere prayer that this article finds you well into the Christmas spirit as we prepare the way of Christ’s coming. I feel that during the hustle and bustle that comes from all the holiday activities, that it sometimes become too easy to lose the true focus of the reason for the season, however this is an awesome opportunity for us to really let “The Holy One’s” love that dwells deep within our hearts and spirits shine through us through our prayers and actions.

As we begin lighting the Advent Wreath candles I encourage you to keep in mind that lighting each of the outer candles encourages us to have faith, peace, love, and joy, and then celebrate our re-birth as the Christ candle is lit for the birth of Jesus. One thing that I like to practice as the candles on the Advent Wreath are lit is to keep my focus on the circle of the wreath and allow The Holy One to remind me that I am a part of the beautiful circle of life. The Advent wreath is not just simply a beautiful green wreath with lit candles, but helps to offer a time to center and ground ourselves to ensure that we remain truly focused on the reason we celebrate the coming of our Savior. I encourage you to join with me in meditating on what each candle reminds us of as each candle is lit every Sunday through Advent. We are connected in several ways. Each of us serves as a circle of faith as a congregation sharing that Faith, Peace, Love, and Joy for all those outside of our doors. It is up to us to show others these attributes for all our community to see within our actions outside the Church doors. I’ve taken one of the famous Christmas carols “Silent Night.” “All is calm all is bright, which through the lyrics can direct our attention to the Creator who brought peace on Earth. So, I would encourage us to take a deep look within and see if we need to prepare our hearts differently this Christmas season. Don’t let the hustle, bustle, and glittering presents take your focus away from the true meaning of Christmas this joyous season. Below is a Christmas prayer that I wrote and will be using this season, I hope that this prayer will inspire you to remember the reason our loving Savior came.

Holy One,

As we anticipate with joy the coming of your birth on that Holy Night filled with the voices of an angelic choir. Let us remember that the Holy One was not born in a palace or even in the inn, but in a lowly stable with a manger for His bed. Help us to remember Christ’s humble life and remember why he came down from heaven to minister to everyone, not just a select few, for it was the shepherds who first came to worship our King. Jesus came to share his message and the importance of love beyond all measure to all people and he never turned anyone away and was always found loving those who society deemed unworthy of love. Help us to remember and to truly love as He loved because no matter who you are or where you are, you are welcomed at Christ’s table. As we examine our hearts in anticipation of our Saviors birth, renew and refresh our hearts and spirits this Christmas season as we joyously await the birth of our King.

*In All your Holy names we pray,
Amen*



News and Upcoming Events



**DON'T
FORGET...**

Committee and Group Meetings

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Christian Education | Tuesday, Jan. 9, 10:00 am in Matthew Room |
| Deacons' Meeting | Sundays, Dec. 3, Dec 10, Jan. 14, Matthew Room at 11:00 am |
| Executive Council | Wednesdays, Dec. 6 and Jan. 3, HMH Meeting Room at 6:00 pm |
| Financial Trustees | Tuesdays, Dec. 12 and Jan. 9, HMH Meeting Room at 5:30 pm |
| Outreach, Justice, Witness | Tuesday, Dec. 19 and Jan. 16, Matthew Room at 6:30 pm |
| Property Trustees | Tuesday, Dec. 19 and Jan. 16, HMH at 6:00 pm |
| Staff Meeting | Wednesday, Dec. 13 and Jan. 10, HMH at 10:15 am |

Phyllis will not be in the church office on Tuesday, Dec. 5. Office hours for the first week of December will be Wednesday, Dec. 6, through Friday, Dec. 8, 8:00 am to 4:30 pm.

Special Office
HOURS



Prayer Circle

Please join us for fifteen to twenty minutes of centering prayer on Wednesdays at 12:30 pm at the Holman Mission House. All are welcome.



News & Upcoming Events

Retirees Lunch

Mark your calendars and join us for lunch on Dec. 4 for spaghetti and meatballs and on Jan. 8 (please note, this is not the first Monday of January) for beef stew.

Bring a dish to share if you would like and join us. For more information, contact Dick Giard at 897-6228.



Fair Trade and Heifer International Alternative Gift Giving

Join us for the annual Heifer International Gift and fair trade coffee and chocolate sale day on Sundays, December 3 and 10, immediately following worship. Coffee and chocolate from Equal Exchange will be available for purchase, and you will be able to make contributions to Heifer International in honor of loved ones for alternative gift giving.



News & Upcoming Events



Poinsettia Memorials and Celebrations

Given in celebration of Patricia Hayden by David Conant and Joyce Jordan

Given in celebration of Carolyn Parr by David Conant and Joyce Jordan

Given in loving memory of Grandpa, Tom Glidden, by Noah, James, Ben, and Audrey Civiello

Given in loving memory of our parents by Roger and Karyl Condit

Given in loving memory of Emma David by Ed David

Given in loving memory of Gayle Taylor Davis by Ed Davis

Given in loving memory of Jack Durham by Pat Durham

Given in loving memory of Herbert Gunther by the Gunther Family

Given in celebration of Ken and Liz Marks by the Marks-Grieggs families

Given in celebration of our loved ones by Carolyn Parr and Sarah

Given in celebration of the many stewards of Old South, past and present, by Bob and Phyllis Pederson

Given in celebration of our families by Debbie and Rich Robinson

Given in loving memory of Allan Smith by Joanne W. Smith

Given in loving memory of the Wheeler and Sundeen Families by Stan and Donna Wheeler

Given in loving memory of Stanley and Hazel Ginther by Shirley and Dick Waddell

Given in loving memory of Richard, Margaret, and William Waddell by Shirley and Richard Waddell

Wreath Memorials

Given in loving memory of Gayle Davis by Debbie and Rich Robinson

Given in loving memory of Joseph F. Holman by Debbie and Rich Robinson

Given in loving memory of Donald and Grace Wertz by Wendy Wertz Huish and Family

Given in loving memory of Richard G. and Barbara A. Morton by Marilyn Hylan, Patricia Larson, and Richard M. Morton



News & Upcoming Events



Our Christmas Eve worship service will be held at 5:30 pm on December 24. Please join us as we hear the story of the birth of Christ, and we pray for peace in the world. Regular Sunday morning services will also be held at 9:30 am on Sunday, December 24.



SAVE THE DATE

Our annual Financial Meeting will be held immediately after worship on February 11. Childcare will be available. If you are able, please bring snacks to share with all. Water and coffee will be provided. The call to meeting will be share when it becomes available in January.

Church Service Cancellation Information

We make every effort to hold worship and other scheduled events in inclement weather, but we may cancel in the event of dangerous road conditions. Should this happen, we will update the church voicemail (778-0424) and Facebook page, and announce it on WKTJ-FM 99.3.

If Sunday school is cancelled, but worship is not, we will update our answering machine and Facebook.

The church office will close if RSU 9 cancels school due to weather.



Mission & Outreach

Outreach, Justice and Witness will be meeting in the Matthew Room at 6:30 pm on Tuesdays, Dec. 19 and Jan. 16. This is an open ministry with no fixed membership, and we encourage you to stop in, see what plans are in action and help us to serve God's people both locally and globally.



**Farmington
Area
Ecumenical
Ministry**

ECU Heat Fundraiser – Outreach, Justice, and Witness invite you to attend the Christmas concert at Old South on December 14. The concert will be the main fundraiser for the local ecumenical heating assistance fund, and all proceeds will be contributed to ECU Heat. If you are unable to attend the concert but would like to make a donation, you may send your contributions directly to the Fund by mailing a donation to:

**ECU Heat
PO Box 147
Farmington, ME 04938**

Hats and mittens for local youth

Cold weather has arrived, and it's time to think of warm hats and mittens for the children in our local elementary schools. These items are distributed by the teachers to children who need them. Items may be new or used as long as they are in good condition and in sizes for a child 5-10 years old. A box will be in the Vestry (Assembly Room) near the kitchen for your donations beginning November 5 through the end of December. The teachers have expressed how grateful they are to receive this box each year. Thank you for your donations!

Polly Howatt





Mission & Outreach



COMMUNITY LUNCH

As most of you know, we occasionally have challenges in getting our monthly meals successfully to the table. Our November Lunch was no exception. We were preparing 70 pounds of turkey, 45 pounds of potatoes, 2 gallons of gravy, and 20+ pounds of frozen peas, all to be served that morning. We usually start dishing up the “to go” meals for delivery to our Farmington area friends at around 11:00 to 11:15 so the drivers can get out the door by 11:30 or so.

However, at a few minutes before 10:00 we realized that we had run out of propane and the ovens had shut off. A quick phone call to Phyllis Pederson to find out who our propane supplier was, and then a quick phone call to the gas company, and our problem was (more or less) solved. We got an emergency delivery of propane and were able to finish off the food prep in time for the drivers to get going on schedule. Whew!

Our December menu will feature Stan’s “regionally famous” American Chop Suey and garlic bread, with cake for dessert (as always, lovingly supplied by God’s Kitchen Crew!!). We will also continue our annual Christmas tradition of hosting the Mt. Blue High School Chamber Singers to entertain us with WONDERFUL music, accompanied by Patricia Hayden! That meal will be served on December 9th, and we hope you will be able to join us.

Stan Wheeler
Rocell Marcellino, Co-chairs

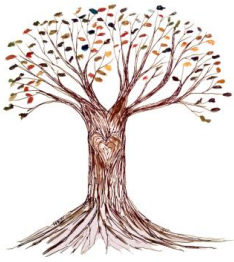


Fair Trade Orders

Stock up on fair-trade certified, wholesale coffee, tea, chocolate and olive oil from Equal Exchange through Old South's consolidated group ordering. View the products online at shop.equalexchange.coop.

Submit your order by 6 pm on the following dates: Monday, December 4, and Monday, January 15. Contact the coordinator, Myrna Vallette, at 778-4387, or by email at myrna.vallette@gmail.com, to order or to get more details.

You may also shop for Fair Trade products at the Fair Trade Coffee and Chocolate Sale at Old South on Sundays, Dec. 3 and 10. This event is sponsored by Outreach, Justice, and Witness.



Mission & Outreach



Annual Christmas Benefit Concert to Benefit Fuel Assistance Fund

Mark your calendar for Thursday, December 14, as Old South Church hosts the Ecumenical Heat Share Fuel Assistance Fund Christmas concert. This year's program opener will feature a special recitation of "A Child's Christmas In Wales" by Andrew Harris, currently the Theatre Department Chair at the University of Southern Maine's (USM) and the Artistic & Executive Director of Deertrees Theatre. Harris' theatre credits include projects with the Royal Shakespeare Company, the National Theatre and the Globe London. He has worked as an actor, director, production manager, Affiliate Artist and Education Associate at Portland Stage. Headlining the concert is Boston-based Matt and Shannon Heaton. With their engaging presence and beautifully, masterfully-crafted music, the Heaton's will bring "Fine Winter's Night" to Old South. They bring sweet harmonies passionately integrated with flute, whistles, accordion, guitar and bouzouki. To view their online music videos visit <http://mattandshannonheaton.com>.

According to Rev. Susan Crane, \$50,000 is needed each winter to supplement the home heating costs of area families. Old South's Christmas Concert will be the main fundraising event. FAEM has secured a \$5,000 matching grant for proceeds to the concert. Our neighbors need help so please invite your family, friends, neighbors and co-workers to join us in celebrating the spirit of Christmas. A special collection will be taken during intermission by Santa's elves to help fill the Fuel Fund's Fuel Tank. Donations are tax deductible.

The doors open at 6 pm with a pre-concert jam session at 6:15 and the concert at 7 pm. Adult admission is \$20, students \$10/\$5. Students playing with the jam session will receive free admission to the concert. Refreshments will be available by donation during the jam session and intermission. Ticket reservations are highly recommended by calling 207-491-5919

Volunteers and food donations are needed. FAEM member churches will join in providing refreshments. If you can help, please contact Debbie Davis-Robinson 491-5919, Hallie Yorks 778-0111 or Brenda Scribner 299-3686.



Fundraising

Credit Cards Now Accepted at Fundraising Table



Hannaford and Merchant Gift Cards

Hannaford cards and merchant gift cards may be purchased on Sundays before Church and during coffee hour and at the church office during office hours. Check out the selection of ready to use gift cards of local, regional and on-line merchants at the Fundraising Committee Table or in the church office! On Sundays, you now have the option of using a credit card to make your purchases at the Fundraising Committee Table. Fees apply. Check with Brenda Scribner for more information.



Holiday Shopping That Benefits Old South Church

Be sure to do your shopping through Amazon Smile and Amazon will donate .5% of your total to Old South. There's no cost to you and once you choose Old South as your charity, there's nothing else you need to do. You can go to smile.amazon.com and click select on First Congregational of Farmington. Thank you to those of you who have been utilizing this giving method already!

Purchase gift cards for holiday giving. Old South receives a percentage of the cost of the card. A wide selection of on hand gift cards are available for immediate purchase at the Fundraising Table but did you know that you can order from an even greater assortment? Check out the full list of available cards in the church office or at the Fundraising Committee Table on Sundays or at:

<https://www.scripzone.com/certificatelist.aspx>



Children & Youth



Pageant Sunday-- December 17

It's a beloved tradition at Old South---the annual Christmas Pageant, performed by our very own Sunday School children. Once again, the sanctuary will welcome a baby in manger, plus shepherds, a host of angels, and an usual assortment of animals. All children are warmly invited to participate! We'll begin our preparations during the Sunday School hour, beginning December 3. As in years past, we'll have a Very Important Dress Rehearsal on Saturday, Dec. 16 at 9:00 am. Please make every effort to attend! A special "thank you" to pageant directors Arin Hilton and Karri McCarthy.

Sunday School

We will be taking a break from our regular lessons on December 3 and 10 to get ourselves ready for the Pageant. When we return in January, we'll be stepping into the stories of the New Testament.

BBC (grades 7 and older)

We'll be opening Coat & Cupboard on Dec. 3, then joining the worship service on Dec. 10 to immerse ourselves in the quiet expectation of Advent. On Dec. 17, we'll be lending a helping hand or two with the Christmas Pageant. We'll re-open Coat & Cupboard on Jan. 7. Later in January, we may take a field trip across the driveway to observe a Farmington Friends meeting. Stay tuned for details!



Children & Youth



Youth Group, Part 1: Thrifty Santa Toy Sale

The Vestry becomes Santa's workshop on Friday, December 1 as we prepare for our first-ever Thrifty Santa Toy Sale. Our mission work is twofold: to offer good, clean toys at very affordable prices, and to raise funds for Coat & Cupboard. We work from 3:00 pm til we're finished--and pizza is delivered at 7 pm. Then, the doors open Saturday morning---please arrive by 7:30 am so we can be ready to greet our shoppers at 8 am. Ho, ho, ho!

Youth Group, Part 2: Coat & Cupboard is open twice in December!

The Youth Group will be hosting the fourth annual "Open House" from noon to 2:00 pm on Chester Greenwood Day, Saturday, Dec. 2--then again the next morning, December 3, from 9 am to 11 am. Members of the community are warmly invited to stop by and select a clean, gently used coat from our large selection of donated items. We also have blankets, hats, mittens, and some snow pants and boots, too!



Confirmation Discussion

It's all about Jesus this month--from his humble beginnings to his radical teachings that would transform the world. Both human and holy, Jesus challenges us, inspires us, (and sometimes confuses us)---and invites us on a journey to a deeper relationship with the Holy. As the Simple Minds song goes, "Will you call my name, or will you walk on by?"



Children & Youth

Pancakery

We meet just once this month, December 10, for an hour of free brunch deliciousness! As we predict chilly weather, we'll be setting up shop inside the Vestry---so, we'll have a bit of figuring out to do to make this happen smoothly. But, we'll be offering our fabulous brunch menu of egg-and-sausage sandwiches, oat bars, sweet rolls, fruit...and maybe a pancake or two, too! Everyone in grades 5-9 is warmly invited to don an apron and help serve up a little bit o' love!

God's Kitchen Crew: We are NOT Santa's elves!

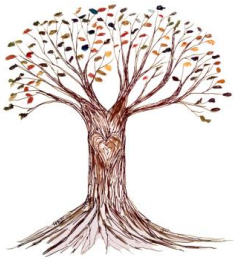
Santa just can't compete with this month's silly game, in which wearing a red furry outfit and white beard delivers nothing but laughs. And, (of course!) we'll be making cakes once again in the kitchen, to be served at the Community Luncheon....but this time, we serve up a holiday surprise! Join us Wednesday, Dec. 6, from 3:00 pm to 4:45 pm. Bring along a friend! Please RSVP to Jodie@FarmingtonUCC.org so we have sufficient supplies on hand.

Youth Group: "Bread for Benefit" Continues

Our delicious fundraising project continues, with artisan loaves of bread available for sale immediately following the worship service--Dec. 10 and January 28. We sell plain both plain, simple bread (for \$3) and a variety of "flavored" breads (\$4). Check out our "holiday" flavors! Look for our bright green tablecloth in the vestry.

How Do I Find Out More?

Don't miss a single youth activity! Sign up for our email newsletter, "Old South Kids This Week," to receive updates, news, photos, and more. Just send a note to Jodie@FarmingtonUCC.org.



Children & Youth

Old South Youth Programs: December 2016/January 2017

Friday, December 1: Youth Group Thrifty Santa Toy Sale set up 3:00 pm - 7:00 pm (with pizza)

Saturday, December 2/Chester Greenwood Day: Youth Group: Thrifty Santa Toy Sale 7:30 am (sale begins at 8:00 am); Coat & Cupboard open noon - 2:00 pm

December 3: Sunday School (Pageant Rehearsal); BBC: Coat & Cupboard open today!

December 10: Sunday School (Pageant Rehearsal); BBC in worship today; Pancakery; Confirmation Discussion 6:30 pm

Saturday, December 16: Christmas Pageant rehearsal 9:00 am

December 17: Christmas Pageant Sunday!

December 24: Family worship service 9:30 am; Christmas Eve service 5:30 pm

January 7: Sunday School: Special Project; Coat & Cupboard (no evening youth group)

Wednesday, Jan. 10: God's Kitchen Crew

January 14: Sunday School: Special Project; BBC in worship; Pancakery (??)

January 21: Sunday School; BBC Field Trip; Confirmation Class 6:30 pm

January 28: Sunday School; BBC "work" day; Bread for Benefit; Youth Group 6:30 pm





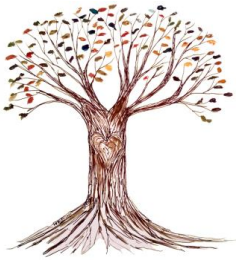
Worship & Music



Revised Common Lectionary

The Revised Common Lectionary is a list of Bible passages followed by the majority of mainline Christian churches, including the United Church of Christ. Pastor Linda will be following the Revised Common Lectionary each week. You will find the lectionary readings below for December and January.

| | | | | |
|---|---------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| First Sunday of Advent December 3, 2017 | <u>Isaiah 64:1-9</u> | <u>Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19</u> | <u>1 Corinthians 1:3-9</u> | <u>Mark 13:24-37</u> |
| Second Sunday of Advent December 10, 2017 | <u>Isaiah 40:1-11</u> | <u>Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13</u> | <u>2 Peter 3:8-15a</u> | <u>Mark 1:1-8</u> |
| Third Sunday of Advent December 17, 2017 | <u>Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11</u> | <u>Psalm 126 or Luke 1:46b-55</u> | <u>1 Thessalonians 5:16-24</u> | <u>John 1:6-8, 19-28</u> |
| Fourth Sunday of Advent December 24, 2017 | <u>2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16</u> | <u>Luke 1:46b-55 or Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26</u> | <u>Romans 16:25-27</u> | <u>Luke 1:26-38</u> |
| Epiphany of the Lord January 6, 2018 | <u>Isaiah 60:1-6</u> | <u>Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14</u> | <u>Ephesians 3:1-12</u> | <u>Matthew 2:1-12</u> |
| Baptism of the Lord January 7, 2018 <i>First Sunday after the Epiphany</i> | <u>Genesis 1:1-5</u> | <u>Psalm 29</u> | <u>Acts 19:1-7</u> | <u>Mark 1:4-11</u> |
| Second Sunday after the Epiphany January 14, 2018 | <u>1 Samuel 3:1-10, (11-20)</u> | <u>Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18</u> | <u>1 Corinthians 6:12-20</u> | <u>John 1:43-51</u> |
| Third Sunday after the Epiphany January 21, 2018 | <u>Jonah 3:1-5, 10</u> | <u>Psalm 62:5-12</u> | <u>1 Corinthians 7:29-31</u> | <u>Mark 1:14-20</u> |
| Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany January 28, 2018 | <u>Deuteronomy 18:15-20</u> | <u>Psalm 111</u> | <u>1 Corinthians 8:1-13</u> | <u>Mark 1:21</u> |



Music and Worship



Old South Vesper Services

Please join us in the Matthew Room on Wednesdays, Dec. 6, and 13 for midweek evening services at 5:00 pm. The services will include music, readings, and prayer. All are welcome.

Farmington Area Ecumenical Ministry Worship Service of Compassion and Hope

A Service of Compassion and Hope will be held on December 20th at the Fairbanks Union Church, 583 Fairbanks Road, Farmington, at 7:00 pm. This is an ecumenical service; all are welcome.

Old South Christmas Eve Worship December 24, 5:30 pm

Please join us as we gather together for this special time of worship when we hear the story of the birth of Christ and we pray for peace in our world. Regular Sunday morning services will be held on December 24 as well.

FAEM Martin Luther King, Jr. Service

There will be a Farmington Area Ecumenical Ministry Martin Luther King Jr Day Service at Noon on January 16 at Old South Church. All are welcome.



What is the Living Water Association??

As a new Moderator for the new Living Water Association, I'd like to share with Old South some of what I have been learning this year. Much of the work of the Maine Conference UCC is carried out by the Associations. Originally, the Associations were comprised of ministers and lay representatives from all the UCC churches in a particular county. The trend today is to consolidate, which makes sense as many churches experience lower attendance and activity. In 2016, the 18 UCC churches of the Franklin (County) Association and the Kennebec Valley Association voted to merge. They chose their new name of Living Water Association. We have enjoyed two outdoor worship services at Titcomb Mt. with members of the Kennebec Valley Association in anticipation of the merger. Look for the next outdoor worship in Wilton in September.

So what do Associations do? Why are they part of the Conference structure?

Below is that answer, as described in the by-laws of the Living Water Association:

ARTICLE III – COVENANT

Remembering that Jesus Christ is the head of the Church and relying on the power of the Holy Spirit to lead us, we seek to respect one another, challenge one another, empower one another, and support one another in our struggle to build a loving community of faithful servants to the glory of God. We are in covenant with each other to:

- 1. Build community, encourage cooperation, and provide opportunities for service among our ministers and laity, as well as among Christians and among all peoples.*
- 2. Determine, confer, and certify the standing of member churches and affiliated clergy.*
- 3. Advise candidates for authorized ministry (e.g., ordination, commission, or licensure).*
- 4. Stimulate and encourage the spiritual, educational, community, and justice and peace ministries of our member churches and ministers.*
- 5. Serve as partners in common ministry with the Maine Conference of the United Church of Christ and with the wider ministry of the United Church of Christ.*

The work on behalf of our clergy, authorized or candidates for ministry (called Members in Discernment) is done in monthly meetings of the Committee on Ministry, a sub-group of the Association. Building community, stimulating and encouraging ministries of our member churches happens in two larger meetings each year.

Old South hosted the fall meeting of the Living Water Association in early November. Over 40 people representing the 18 churches of the association attended. InnerRhythm opened the meeting which included time for attendees to talk about their churches and activities.

These meetings are very interesting. You are welcome to attend and/or you may like to become a delegate from Old South to these meetings. Feel free to contact Karyl Condit.

Liturgical Colors and the seasons of the church year

The use of colors to differentiate liturgical seasons became a common practice in the Western church in about the fourth century. At first, usages varied considerably but by the 12th century Pope Innocent III systematized the use of five colors: Violet, White, Black, Red and Green. The Lutheran and Anglican churches that emerged from the Reformation retained the traditional colors but they disappeared entirely (along with most other ritual) from the worship of the Reformed churches. During the 20th century, the ecumenical Liturgical Movement prompted the rediscovery of ancient Christian ritual—including the traditional colors of the Western church. To these have been added Blue and Gold—colors that were used in some Western rites before the 12th century. Briefly, the colors express emotions and ideas that are associated with each of the seasons of the liturgical year. Violet is the ancient royal color and therefore a symbol of the sovereignty of Christ. Violet is also associated with repentance from sin. White and Gold symbolize the brightness of day. Black is the traditional color of mourning in some cultures. Red evokes the color of blood, and therefore is the color of martyrs and of Christ's death on the Cross. Red also symbolizes fire, and therefore is the color of the Holy Spirit. Green is the color of growth. Blue is the color of the sky and in some rites honors Mary. Congregations in the United Church of Christ have the freedom to use any combination of colors (or no particular colors) as seems best to them. The use of traditional colors, however, connects us to the wider Body of Christ and provides worship planners with visual aids that mark the transition from one season to another. Colors can be used in altar and pulpit decorations, vestments, banners and tapestries.



Advent

Advent is a season of spiritual preparation for the celebration of the birth of Christ (Christmas) and looks forward to the future reign of Christ. Eschatological expectation rather than personal penitence is the central theme of the season. Advent is a preparation for rather than a celebration of Christmas, so Advent hymns should be sung instead of Christmas carols. The first Sunday of Advent is not the beginning of the Christmas season. The Christmas celebration begins on Christmas Eve and continues for the next "twelve days of Christmas."

Purple is normally Advent's liturgical color, associated both with the sovereignty of Christ and with penitence. Deep Blue is also sometimes used to distinguish the season from Lent. As the color of the night sky, Blue symbolizes Christ who in one ancient Advent song is called the "Dayspring" or source of day. As the color associated with Mary, Blue also reminds us that during Advent the church waits with Mary for the birth of Jesus.

Christmas and Christmas Season

The Lectionary readings for Christmas and the following twelve days (culminating in the feast of the Epiphany) invite the church to reflect on the Incarnation (or embodiment) of God as a human being: "The Word became a human being and lived among us, and we have seen his glory...." (John 1:14). In Christ, God enters human history and identifies fully with the human condition. The traditional colors of the season are White or Gold, symbolizing joy in the light of day.



Season after Epiphany

The season following Epiphany continues the theme established on Epiphany Day: the spread of the Good News of Christ from its source in the Jewish community to all nations on earth. The Lectionary therefore explores the mission of the church in the world. The theme of this season (along with the sequence of readings from the Gospel) continues in the season after Pentecost, so both seasons together can be called the "Time of the Church." The traditional liturgical color for both seasons, Green, is the color of growth.

Would you like to learn more about liturgical colors or about the United Church of Christ? Please check the United Church of Christ website for more information: <http://www.ucc.org> On this site, you may sign up for "Weekly Seeds" a reflection based on the Revised Common Lectionary readings for each Sunday of the year. There is also a link to an electronic daily devotional called, "The StillSpeaking Daily Devotional."





Get Connected

OLD SOUTH CHURCH

First Congregational Church of Farmington
235 MAIN ST. (Church) ~ 227 MAIN ST. (Office)
FARMINGTON, ME 04938
TEL: (207) 778-0424

WORSHIP: 9:30 AM SUNDAYS
OFFICE HOURS: 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM, Tuesday through Thursday



<http://www.farmingtonucc.org/>



www.facebook.com/OldSouthFarmington



[TWITTER.COM/FARMINGTONUCC](https://twitter.com/FARMINGTONUCC)



[INSTAGRAM.COM/OLDSOUTHLOVE](https://www.instagram.com/OLDSOUTHLOVE)



[PINTEREST.COM/OLDSOUTHCHURCH](https://www.pinterest.com/OLDSOUTHCHURCH)

Old South Statement of Identity

"In Christ there is no longer Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for all are one..."

(Galatians 3:28)

Walking toward God, we, the members of (Old South) First Congregational Church United Church of Christ, Farmington, Maine, seek through God's Grace to be a congregation that includes all persons who desire to live God's Love, as shown to us through the teachings and example of Jesus Christ. We respect and embrace differences of gender, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identification, mental and physical ability, as well as racial, ethnic, or socioeconomic background. We welcome all to share fully in the life and leadership, ministry, fellowship, worship, sacraments, responsibilities, and blessings of participation in our congregation. We are an open and affirming church: open to all, and affirming of all God's beloved children. No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here.

December 2017

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--|--|---|---|--|--|--|
| | | | | | 1 1:00pm Bereavement Support Group (Matthew Room) | 2 8:00am Thrifty Santa Toy Sale (Vestry) 12:00pm Coat & Cupboard Open House (HMH Carriage House) 2:00pm Community Chorus Rehearsal (Sanctuary) |
| 3 9:00am Coat & Cupboard Open (HMH Carriage House) 9:30am Worship (Sanctuary) 9:30am Farmington Friends (HMH Gathering Room) 10:00am Heifer Living Gift Market and Fair Trade Sale (Vestry) 11:00am Deacons (Matthew Room) 3:00pm UMF Community Chorus (Sanctuary) | 4 12:00pm Retirees Lunch (Vestry) 6:00pm Buddhist Group (Newman Wing) | 5 2:00pm Pastoral Care Team (Holman Mission House) 5:30pm InnerRhythm (Chapel) | 6 12:30pm Prayer Circle (HMH Gathering Room) 3:00pm God's Kitchen Crew (Kitchen, Vestry) 5:00pm Vesper Service (Matthew Room) 6:00pm Executive Council (Holman Mission House) 7:00pm Choir (Matthew Room) | 7 | 8 9:30am Peeling Party (Kitchen) | 9 12:00pm Community Lunch (Kitchen, Vestry) |
| 10 9:30am Farmington Friends (HMH Gathering Room) 9:30am Worship (Sanctuary) 10:45am Bread for Benefit (Vestry) 11:00am Pancakery (Old South Church) 11:00am Deacons' Meeting (Matthew Room) 11:00am Heifer Living Gift Market and Fair Trade Sale (Vestry) 6:30pm Confirmation (Matthew Room) | 11 6:00pm Buddhist Group (Newman Wing) | 12 5:30pm Financial Trustees (HMH Meeting Room) 5:30pm InnerRhythm (Chapel) | 13 10:15am Staff Meeting (HMH Meeting Room) 12:30pm Prayer Circle (HMH Gathering Room) 5:00pm Vesper Service (Matthew Room) 7:00pm Choir (Matthew Room) | 14 6:15pm Concert Jam Session (Vestry) 7:00pm ECU Heat Fund Benefit Concert (Sanctuary) | 15 Pageant Set Up (Sanctuary) 1:00pm Bereavement Support Group (Matthew Room) | 16 9:30am Pageant Rehearsal (Sanctuary) |
| 17 9:30am Worship (Sanctuary) 9:30am Farmington Friends (HMH Gathering Room) | 18 6:00pm Buddhist Group (Newman Wing) | 19 5:30pm InnerRhythm (Chapel) 6:00pm Property Trustees (HMH Meeting Room) 6:30pm Outreach, Justice, Witness (Chapel) | 20 12:30pm Prayer Circle (HMH Gathering Room) 7:00pm Choir (Matthew Room) 7:00pm LinQ/LGBTQ Support Group (Chapel) 7:00pm FAEM Service of Care and Compassion at Fairbanks Church (Offsite) | 21 6:00pm Third Thursday Group (Newman Wing) | 22 | 23 |
| 24 9:30am Farmington Friends (HMH Gathering Room) 9:30am Worship (Sanctuary) 5:30pm Christmas Eve Worship (Sanctuary) | 25 6:00pm Buddhist Group (Newman Wing) | 26 5:30pm InnerRhythm (Chapel) | 27 7:00pm Choir (Matthew Room) | 28 | 29 1:00pm Bereavement Support Group (Matthew Room) | 30 |
| 31 9:30am Farmington Friends (HMH Gathering Room) 9:30am Worship (Sanctuary) | | | | | | |

January 2018

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|---|---|---|---|--|--|--|
| | 1 6:00pm Buddhist Group (Newman Wing) | 2 5:30pm InnerRhythm (Chapel) | 3 6:00pm Executive Council (Holman Mission House) 7:00pm Choir (Matthew Room) | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 7 9:00am Coat & Cupboard Open (HMH Carriage House) 9:30am Farmington Friends (HMH Gathering Room) 9:30am Worship (Sanctuary) | 8 6:00pm Buddhist Group (Newman Wing) | 9 10:00am Christian Ed (Matthew Room) 5:30pm InnerRhythm (Chapel) 5:30pm Financial Trustees (HMH Meeting Room) | 10 10:15am Staff Meeting (HMH Meeting Room) 3:00pm God's Kitchen Crew (Kitchen, Vestry) 7:00pm Choir (Matthew Room) | 11 | 12 9:30am Peeling Party (Kitchen) 1:00pm Bereavement Support Group (Matthew Room) | 13 12:00pm Community Lunch (Kitchen, Vestry) |
| 14 9:30am Worship (Sanctuary) 9:30am Farmington Friends (HMH Gathering Room) 11:00am Pancakey (Old South Church) 11:00am Deacons' Meeting (Matthew Room) | 15 12:00pm FAEM Martin Luther King Jr Service (Old South Church) 6:00pm Buddhist Group (Newman Wing) | 16 5:30pm InnerRhythm (Chapel) 6:00pm Property Trustees (HMH Meeting Room) 6:30pm Outreach, Justice, Witness (Chapel) | 17 7:00pm LinQ/LGBTQ Support Group (Chapel) 7:00pm Choir (Matthew Room) | 18 6:00pm Third Thursday Group (Newman Wing) | 19 | 20 |
| 21 9:00am BBC Field Trip (Offsite) 9:30am Farmington Friends (HMH Gathering Room) 9:30am Worship (Sanctuary) 6:30pm Confirmation (Matthew Room) | 22 6:00pm Buddhist Group (Newman Wing) | 23 5:30pm InnerRhythm (Chapel) | 24 7:00pm Choir (Matthew Room) | 25 | 26 1:00pm Bereavement Support Group (Matthew Room) | 27 |
| 28 9:30am Worship (Sanctuary) 9:30am Farmington Friends (HMH Gathering Room) 10:30am Bread for Benefit (Vestry) 11:00am Pancakey (Old South Church) 6:30pm Youth Group (Matthew Room) | 29 6:00pm Buddhist Group (Newman Wing) | 30 5:30pm InnerRhythm (Chapel) | 31 7:00pm Choir (Matthew Room) | | | |