

Old South Church

United Church of Christ

Telstar, December, 2016-January, 2017

Rooted in faith, Growing in love, reaching for justice

Beloved Old South,

We are in the liturgical season known as Advent – a time of preparation for God to be born anew in our world – and we prepare ourselves in so many ways. At home we decorate, bake, wrap, and sing. In worship we light candles for hope, peace, joy, and love in our Advent wreath. Mid-week, we enjoy quiet reflection at Old South’s annual candle-lit Advent vespers (in the Matthew Room on Wednesdays at 5:30 pm).

But after Advent ends, and Christmas has come and gone, this church will still be preparing for the new ways God is being made manifest in this community. The church will reinvest in outreach through the Holman Mission House. The congregation will undertake a capital campaign to become fully handicapped accessible, as well as safe and code-compliant. Each of you will also be preparing to welcome the next person God has called to minister to and with this church – first in the form of an interim, and later in your next settled pastor.

My last day as your pastor will be Sunday, January 1. After that, I will need to step away from our relationship in order for you to prepare your hearts and your spirits to welcome someone new. The separation will be hard for each of us, but while our love and affection remain, it is our ethical obligation to create a clean break so that you can fully embrace your new pastor.

This means that starting January 2, I will no longer be visiting you at home or in the hospital. I will no longer lead worship or conduct your funerals, weddings, or baptisms. The ethical guidelines for clergy insist that I refrain from being present with you or attending any special events for at least one year; this is so you can more easily form a relationship with your new pastor. This also means that I must “unfriend” you all on Facebook. If you would like to reconnect a year after you have called your new settled pastor, you are welcome to send me a new “friend request.”

Rev. Alexis Fuller-Wright

Pastor
Alexis@FarmingtonUcc.org

Jodie Gunther

Director of Children and
Youth Ministries
Jodie@FarmingtonUcc.org

Phyllis Pederson

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Old South Church

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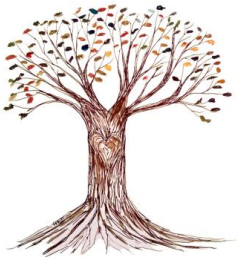
**Find us on Facebook
at:**

Old South First
Congregational Church

Find us on the web at:

www.FarmingtonUCC.org

“Old South Church is called to be a spiritual home where diverse hearts and minds are welcomed, nourished, and formed by God to transform the world.”



Please know that this will be as difficult for me as it is for you. You have been my Farmington family and I have cherished being part of your lives. I assure you that I will not stop praying for you. We pray for the people we carry in our hearts, and I will continue to profoundly care about you.

God bless you. And if you find your way to Princeton, please know that you have a sister congregation that will always be glad to worship with you, and a pastor who would love nothing more than to see your beautiful, beautiful face.

Peace be with you,

Alexis

If you would like to schedule a check-in with Pastor Alexis during DECEMBER, please contact her by phone at 778-0424 or email at alexis@farmingtonucc.org to schedule a visit. You may also stop by during her office hours on Tuesdays between 12-3.

Appointments and visits with Alexis will not be available after January 1 but if you have a pastoral concern, please contact Shelley Griffith, Chair of the Deacons.

Executive Council

Moderator: Chris Magri
Treasurer: Amanda Adams
Clerk: Kim Daellenbach
Financial Secretary & Fundraising: Brenda Scribner
Minister: Alexis Fuller-Wright
Director of Children and Youth Ministries: Jodie Gunther
Chair, Christian Ed: Arin Hilton
Chair, Diaconate: Shelley Griffith
Representative, Financial Trustees: Marilyn Hylan
Chair, Outreach, Justice & Witness: Randy Oakley
Chair, Personnel: Joanna Backman
Chair, Property Trustees: Gil Riley
Member at Large: Robin Beck
Member at Large: Vacancy



From The Moderator

There's a lot going on at Old South of late, but the two items I want to write about this month relate to a common theme: believing in ourselves. First, there's the matter of our annual stewardship drive. You may possibly recall that we recently voted to rededicate ourselves to mission, with the Holman Mission House front and center in that effort. Now, a vote like that could be nothing much more than a vote for the status quo, for avoiding unpleasant choices; or else we could really mean it and forcefully push for something new and bold. So, what's it gonna be, folks? Do we really mean what we said about wanting to grow rather than shrink? Then we need to follow through with participation, energy -- and money. After all, why will anyone from our community feel moved to join us if we ourselves are reluctant to do what it takes to support our ministries? Confidence and enthusiasm are contagious; caution and hesitation, not so much. If we truly believe that God is doing a new thing here in Farmington then now is the time to step up in enthusiasm and faith, to spread the Gospel through our contributions of time, talent, and treasure.

At the same time there's another big thing going on, and this one will last for more than just a month or two: a pastoral transition. It's of course challenging to lose Pastor Alexis just as we're embarking on our new project; but then, is there any such thing as the "right" time to lose your pastor? We just have to remind ourselves that God is preparing a new minister, different from Alexis but right for our new needs, to serve us and serve with us. And in the meantime, we all have to do what it takes to make sure that we move forward rather than stalling. We're God's hands and feet in the world, so it's on all of us to put in the effort to keep God's work in Farmington on track. While that might involve special effort on the part of your moderator, or the Executive Council, or our deacons who are already beginning to search for an interim minister, it ultimately involves everyone. It might mean making the time to attend our church meetings -- and to attend Sunday worship for that matter, so that we maintain our sense of community. It might mean volunteering at least once to help with some ministry (Community Lunch, anyone?) that embodies our Christian commitment. It might simply mean being patient and hopeful rather than anxious or disengaged as this transition proceeds. Let's be confident that we can do this! However sad we are to let Alexis go, good times are in store for us, and we the congregation of Old South will be instrumental in making them good.

Chris Magri



From Your Treasurer

Happy Holidays and Happy Winter to all of you! I hope you are all doing well.

As I write this, we are just kicking off our Stewardship Season. The Financial Trustees have been working to come up with a manageable budget for 2017 that accounts for some of the uncertainties ahead of us associated with our pastoral search.

With regards to stewardship, I hope you have been able to prayerfully consider pledging for next year. I know sometimes this decision can be difficult. None of us are immune to life's surprises that often not only strain us mentally and emotionally, but also financially. If you did not pledge for 2016, I ask you to consider doing so this year. It was a difficult thing for me the first time. I did not come from a pledging a church. I'm glad I pledged, though. This year has handed me some of those "surprises" that I mentioned, but I still don't regret pledging. If you have questions about pledging, please let us know! We would be happy to help.

If you pledged last year, and feel you are able, I would like to encourage you to consider increasing your pledge for 2017. I don't like to make people feel pressured into something, it's not my style. So, all I'll say is if you feel you are able to increase, it would be greatly appreciated. Even an extra \$2/week would amount to an extra \$104 which is the entire annual budget for Worship and Music. If 12 of us did that extra \$2/week, that would cover the entire annual budget for the Youth Program! If you do not feel you are able to increase, thank you for even considering! Your pledge, whatever it may be, is always welcome and appreciated. We need everyone's help to make our mission happen. From the smallest to the largest, all of your gifts are appreciated and help us make things happen!

In October, we voted to keep the Holman Parish House, transforming it into the Holman Mission House, in order to broaden our outreach into our local community. I know this idea of a "mission hub" brought a renewed excitement to my outlook for our church and I hope it did the same for you. In light of that, I hope you are excited about joining our efforts to make that happen either through your pledging or with your time. Sometimes we get this mindset that pledging and giving are all about the dollar bills, but they're not!! The giving of your time volunteering at the church is equally as important to our cause. We are always in need of volunteers whether it be helping with events like Community Lunch, a fundraising concert, our annual Pie on the Porch, and the Yard/Plant Sale or being a greeter, lay leader, or usher on Sunday Morning. Yes, money definitely helps us pay the bills, but money doesn't wash dishes, cook meals, greet people with a smile, say "thank-you", read, or serve pie. Only we can do that!

In closing, as we move into 2017, we say "until we meet again" to our beloved Pastor and her family. This brings us into a transition period but also brings both our family and the Fuller-Wright family new possibilities. I hope you will join me in offering prayers and positive thoughts for their new beginning, and hope and excitement for ours. Pastor Alexis, Liz, and Nora, we will miss you!

As this Telstar covers both December and January, I decided not to include our income and expenses. If you would like to know this information you may contact myself or the church office. As always, if you opt to include UCC Membership Dues as part of your pledge, we ask that you make and designate a separate payment from your pledge payment(s). You can just write a note that says "For UCC Dues". As of 2017, the cost will be \$15.88 per member in your household. This probably seems like a meaningless task, but it really does help us to better allocate those receipts for budget reporting. Thanks so much!

I wish you all the Happiest of Holidays and a Joyful New Year.
Amanda



Deacons' Corner

Dear Old South Family,

At this writing, it's been three weeks since Pastor Alexis informed us of her resignation. For many of us, these weeks have been marked by that empty sad feeling that comes with loss. It's not easy to think about ending a ministry that has blessed Old South with such Spirit, richness, laughter and growth! The sorrow we feel may contain all the elements of grief--denial, anger, bargaining, depression, sometimes all of these in the space of a day--as we make our way slowly toward acceptance. If you are having these feelings and would like someone to talk to, please reach out to Pastor Alexis or any of the deacons. We would love to spend time with you!

And now, we begin our journey. Pastor Alexis has said that somewhere out there is the next beloved pastor of Old South and s/he doesn't even know it yet! Our walk toward this person will be guided by the Holy Spirit, who calls us into discernment, the "practice of seeking God's call in the midst of the decisions that mark one's life." Discernment requires us to listen to one another, examine our thoughts with humility and let go of the need to have our own way.

This journey will have several mileposts:

Milepost #1: The diaconate will choose a candidate for Interim Pastor. We have already been in contact with Darren Morgan, our associate conference minister, who will assist and advise us in this task. The interim pastor will provide continuity in worship, pastoral care and programming during our transition and will lead the congregation through a process of reflection that will help us choose a new settled pastor when the time comes. The interim pastor candidate will be confirmed by a vote of the church membership.

Milepost #2: The diaconate will select 12 church members to be candidates to sit on a search committee for the new settled pastor. These 12 people will be confirmed by a vote of the church membership.

Milepost #3: The Search Committee will work its way through the complex process of selecting a candidate to present to the church as a potential settled pastor, and, finally, the church membership will decide who Old South's next beloved pastor will be.

Because the process of discernment works on God's time, it's difficult to predict how long the journey will take but, all along the way, you, the congregation, will be walking alongside the diaconate, the executive council and the search committee. We will give you frequent updates and answer as many questions as we possibly can without violating the confidentiality of parts of the process.

As we begin this rich time of prayer and discernment, let us give thanks for the gift of Pastor Alexis' ministry. Let us keep Alexis and her family deep in our prayers as they prepare to continue their own journeys of faith. Let us look forward to a new chapter in the life of Old South Church, remembering the words of the old hymn:

"Great is your faithfulness!
Great is your faithfulness!
Morning by morning new mercies I see;
All I have needed your hand has provided,
Great is your faithfulness, God, unto me!"

Wishing Blessings and Peace for all!

Shelley Griffith

(your deacons: Rina Bardo, Roger Condit, Linda Fournier, Thad Gunther (Jr Deacon), Gretchen Legler, Wendy Oakley, Betsy Riley, Michelle Scribner, Mary Sinclair, Fred O. Smith, Carole Trickett, Ryan Westbrook-Vigue, Shelley Griffith, chair)



Deacons' Corner



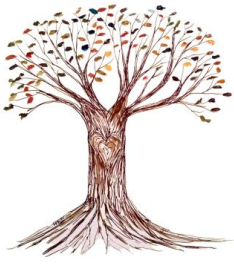
Lay Prayer Chaplain: Ryan Westbrook-Vigue with Rev. Alexis

When members of a special committee or ministry are formed, the congregation blesses them in their work. We've done this with pastoral care providers, search committees, and visioners. Ryan Westbrook-Vigue has been quietly carrying out a ministry of prayer in his role on the diaconate. Each week he records the prayer requests made during the service and faithfully prays for those requests during the week. He then sends cards to those who offered the prayers as a way of helping those individuals know their prayer has not been forgotten. As we enter into a time of pastoral transition, this lay ministry is an especially precious gift to the congregation.

As an affirmation of this work, the congregation commissioned him as a lay prayer chaplain during the November 24 service. Ryan made promises to the congregation to serve faithfully in this capacity as the congregation vowed to pray for him in this role. This is not a visitation role, as is offered by the pastoral care team. This is a ministry of holding light, prayer, and sacred intention for all of those who lift up prayers in our worship service, whether members or not.

As Pastor Alexis anointed Ryan, as a sign of this sacred trust, she prayed the following:
"Ryan, in response to, and as a sign of, this affirmation of your call to service I follow the ancient tradition of anointing you with oil that has been blessed in the name of God: in the name of all that is beautiful, true, and good. As this oil absorbs into your skin, may you absorb into your soul all the love and good wishes which surround you in this moment. Let it be an outward reminder of God, who calls you to this work. Amen."

If this is a ministry that you feel called to participate in, please contact Pastor Alexis or Shelley Griffith, the chair of the diaconate.



News & Upcoming Events

December Worship Service Information



Midweek Vespers Service

As we approach Christmas, the liturgical season of preparation for Emmanuel, God with us, it's easy for the still, small voice of the Holy to get lost in the mix. Join us at our Wednesday evening contemplative services, December 7, 14, and 21, at 5:30 pm in the Matthew Room. The service will include acoustical guitar and time for song, prayer, scripture, and silence. Services will be led by Alexis with Brent Laflin on guitar. Before your calendars fill up, make sure to mark off this time for rest and recreation.

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.

Christmas Day Worship

Yes! Please join us on December 25 for Christmas Day worship. Feeling you just can't quite get your kids (or yourself) out of pajamas by 9:30 am? Come on over, just as you are. We will worship together on this special day for Christians everywhere.



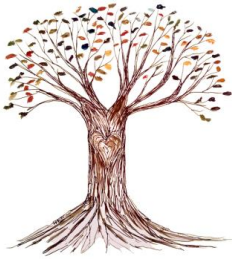
Farmington Area Ecumenical Ministry Worship

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.

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.



News & Upcoming Events

Retiree's Lunches: December 5, January 2

Please join us for the Retirees Lunch at Noon in the Vestry of Old South on Mondays, Dec. 5 and Jan. 2. In December, we will have meatballs and spaghetti. For the January meal, we will be serving chicken stew with biscuits. Bring something to share if you would like. Contact Dick Giard (897-6228) for more information.



Bread for Benefit Sales Dates

The Youth will be selling bread in the Vestry after worship services on Dec. 11 and 18, January dates will be announced. Thank you for your ongoing support for this youth project!



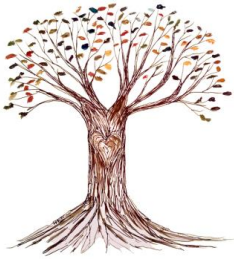
FAIR TRADE AND HEIFER INTERNATIONAL SALE

Sunday, Dec. 4 and 11, After Worship

Outreach, Justice and Witness will be hosting a fair trade and Heifer Living Gift sale featuring Coffee, Olive Oil, Hot Chocolate and Chocolate Candy -- Gifts that honor the growers and producers through Fair Trade Certification which ensures fair wages and humane working conditions.

Alternative giving through Heifer International

Your tax deductible gifts support Heifer's worldwide hunger initiatives, which include livestock projects and other unique projects such as biogas stoves and clean water. Honor Cards for your gift recipients are available. Go to www.heifer.org to find out more about this amazing organization.



News & Upcoming Events



Women's Retreat

A women's retreat will be held at the Marie Joseph Spiritual Center in Biddeford, Maine, May 26 – May 28, 2017. The \$210 cost of the retreat includes accommodations, 6 meals, program expenses and more. You may begin making payments this month to reserve space today. If you begin making payments this month, you may make six monthly payments. Confidential partial scholarships are available. Please contact the church office if you would like to attend.

Save the Date!

Our annual Financial Meeting will be held immediately after worship on February 5. 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.



Winter is coming! 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.

**The next issue of Telstar will be issued in February.
The deadline to submit articles for the February issue is January 15.**



News & Upcoming Events



Please join us for a Special Celebration

Please mark your calendar and join us for a potluck celebration immediately following the worship service to bid farewell to Alexis, Liz, and Nora on December 18. Bring a dish to share and join us as we celebrate Alexis' ministry with Old South and say a fond farewell to the Fuller-Wright family. Rev. Alexis will be leading worship through January 1.



Memorials and Celebrations

The hanging baskets at the Holman Mission House were given in memory of Joe Holman, Jerry Parr, Joel Hayden, and Gayle Davis and in celebration of every person that has supported the HMH Mission and Outreach.

Christmas Wreath Memorials

Given in loving memory of Gayle Davis by Ed Davis

Given in loving memory of Jack Durham by Pat Durham

Given in loving memory of Joseph Grunig by Wendy Huish

Given in loving memory of Jerry Parr by Carolyn Parr

Given in loving memory of Gwil and Pat Roberts and Pauline Hebert by the Roberts and Springer Families

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



Memorials and Celebrations



Poinsettia Memorials and Celebrations

Given in celebration of our beloved family by Roger and Karyl Condit

Given in celebration of our family by Donna and Stan Wheeler

Given in loving memory of Mitch Boulette by Jill Boulette

Given in loving memory of Emma David by Ed and Andrew David

Given in loving memory of Polly Flint by Judy Bjorn and Jill Perry

Given in loving memory of Tom Glidden by the Civiello Family

Given in loving memory of Lyle Gordon by Lyle Gordon II

Given in loving memory of Alfred "Sonny" Hill by Ruth Hill and Gretchen Legler

Given in loving memory of John and Avis Legler by Ruth Hill and Gretchen Legler

Given in loving memory of Bonnie Price Lewis (Sweetie) by Jodi, Bob, Madison and Isabelle

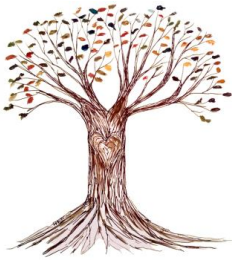
Given in loving memory of Ken and Liz Marks by Ken, Sharon, Kristen and Josh

Given in loving memory of Arthur Perry by Jill Perry and Judy Bjorn

Given in loving memory of our parents by Dave Conant and Joyce Jordan

Given in loving memory of our parents by Amanda and Charley Murrary

Given in loving memory of Clarence and Rose Pederson by Phyllis and Bob Pederson



Mission & Outreach



shampoo, toothpaste, tissue, toilet paper, laundry detergent

Please bring your donations to church, and we will deliver everything to Care and Share. Thank you

Hats and Mittens for Local Children

Winter is approaching 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 13 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



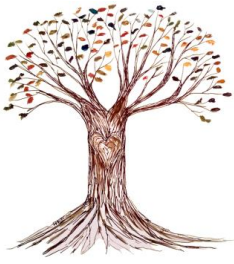
Warm little heads and little hearts



THE CHRISTMAS FUND
for the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund

Special United Church of Christ Offering: The Christmas Fund

Our joy at Christmas is a response to God's promise of new life through the birth of Jesus. You have the opportunity to be a part of a ministry that cares for the active and retired clergy and lay employees of the United Church of Christ through participation in this year's Christmas Fund Offering. Your gift to the Christmas Fund will assist pastors and provide for the Supplementation of Small Annuities, Supplementation of Health Premiums, Emergency Grants, and provide Christmas "Thank You" Gift Checks next December to low-income retirees. The Christmas Fund will be received at Old South on Sunday, December 18.



Mission & Outreach



Community Lunch

The November Community Luncheon was very successful, as we served over 160 meals. With a menu of hot roast turkey sandwiches, stuffing, mashed potatoes and gravy and mixed vegetables, it seems like everyone was pleased with their meals. It was especially nice to be able to offer carrot cake and spice cake, provided by God's Kitchen Crew!

We are making a couple of small, administrative-type changes to our Community Luncheon ministry, but these changes will not affect the main goal of this ministry, which is to provide good quality, comforting meals to anyone in the community who needs them. The biggest change is that Sherry Jenckes has volunteered to take over the "recruiting volunteers" aspect. So Sherry will be responsible for reaching out to folks to make sure that we have enough people present to serve our guests and prepare the meals.

Another change is that we have added Amanda Adams to the Kitchen Crew, which has remained virtually unchanged since our beginning 13 or 14 years ago. We hope that Amanda's presence in the kitchen will allow some of the Kitchen Crew to be able to "take a Saturday off" without feeling guilty!

We are excited in anticipation of our December Luncheon. The menu will feature Baked Ham with raisin sauce, mashed potatoes and corn. We will anxiously await hearing from God's Kitchen Crew as to what they are going to prepare for dessert. But the most exciting part about the December Luncheon is that we will once again be welcoming The Mt. Blue High School Chamber Singers, accompanied by our own Patricia Hayden! This wonderfully talented group has graced us with song for the past several years, and we can't wait to hear them again. If you have never heard them, please come join us for the meal as well as the music.

Stan Wheeler,
Rocell Marcellino, Co-chairs



Children & Youth

Pageant Sunday is December 18

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 a rag-tag group of shepherds, a host of angels, and more. 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. 17 at 9:00 am. Please make every effort to attend! A special "thank you" to pageant directors Arin and Amanda Hilton.

Sunday School

We will be taking a break from our regular lessons on December 4 and 11 to get ourselves ready for the Pageant. (Please refer to the schedule, below, for details.) When we return in January, we'll be stepping into the stories of the New Testament, beginning with Jesus and his first miracles.

BBC (Middle School and High School)

No official lessons in December! Instead, we'll be opening Coat & Cupboard on Dec. 4, then joining the worship service on Dec. 11 to immerse ourselves in the quiet expectation of Advent. On Dec. 18, we'll likely be lending a helping hand or two for the Christmas Pageant.

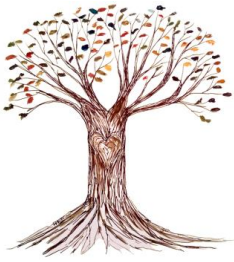
In January, we'll re-open Coat & Cupboard on Jan. 8, then move back into our study of the Book of Acts for the remainder of the month.

Youth Group, Part 1: Coat & Cupboard is open twice in December!

The Youth Group will be hosting the third annual "Open House" --but this time, in our new carriage house location!--from noon to 2:00 pm on Chester Greenwood Day, Saturday, Dec. 3. Members of the community are warmly invited to stop by and select a clean, gently used coat from our large selection of donated items. Plus, we'll be joined by a group of enthusiastic UMF students, who will supply crock pots of soups, plus hot coffee, tea, and hot chocolate, to make our Open House even more welcoming to the community.

Because the first Sunday of January is New Year's Day, we'll open Coat & Cupboard again on January 8th.





Children & Youth

Youth Group, Part 2: Confirmation Conversations

We meet just once in December for evening Youth Group (Dec. 11th), then resume our schedule on January 22. After the New Year, we'll welcome two more incredible guest speakers, Rev. Cathie Wallace (former minister of Old South) and Rev. Doug Dunlap (who serves as chaplain at Franklin Memorial Hospital). These are great opportunities to ask questions about how God is revealed, powerfully and lovingly, in everyday lives.

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. We'll pause, too, to listen to the beautiful children's book, *The Bearer of Gifts*, in which a bearded man from the North Pole travels to Bethlehem to find the source of peace and hope for the world. And, (of course!) we'll be making cakes once again in the kitchen, to be served at the Community Luncheon. Join us Wednesday, Dec. 7, from 3:00 pm to 4:45 pm. Bring along a friend! Please RSVP to Jodie@FarlingtonUCC.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. 11 and 18. (Dates in January TBA.) We sell 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.

Old South Movie Studio:

Returns (finally!) in January! Watch for details in an upcoming *Old South This Week* newsletter.

Soup Group

We're back to our namesake--soup!--for December and January. In December, we'll be stirring up turkey noodle soup (hey, remember that turkey that God's Kitchen Crew went "bowling" with? That's going to re-



Children & Youth

appear in a delicious way....). Our December culinary work will be served at a special potluck luncheon as we wish Pastor Alexis, Liz, and Nora the very best with their move to New Jersey. In January, we'll be cooking for the Warming Center.



Preble Street Mission Trip: *New Date*--March 11 & 12--but same great plan!

To accommodate the many things that are already scheduled for March, we've had to make a few adjustments, but we're still planning to head down to Preble Street (Portland) for some serious kitchen work. *New date: Saturday, March 11 to Sunday, March 12.* All teens in grades 7 - 12 are warmly encouraged to attend this powerful mission trip. More details coming soon!

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.

Old South Youth Programs: December 2016/January 2017:

Saturday, Dec. 3: Youth Group Coat & Cupboard "Open House" noon - 2 pm

Sunday, Dec. 4: Pageant rehearsal during the Sunday School hour; Coat & Cupboard for BBC classes (9 am to 11 am); No Youth Group this evening

Wednesday, Dec. 7: God's Kitchen Crew (3:00 pm)

Sun. Dec. 11: Pageant rehearsal during the Sunday School hour; No BBC classes today (we'll be in the sanctuary to observe Advent); Youth Group at 6:30 pm (Jodie's house)

Thursday, Dec. 15: Soup Group (2 - 5 pm)

Saturday, Dec. 17: Pageant rehearsal 9:00 am - 11:00 am

Sunday, Dec. 18: Pageant Sunday! (Children should arrive by 9:00 am), no Youth Group tonight

Saturday, Dec. 24: Christmas Eve service, 5:30 pm

Sunday, Dec. 25: Christmas Morning worship service 9:30 am (*no Sunday School*)

Sunday, Jan. 1: *holiday weekend, no Sunday School*

Sunday, Jan. 8: Sunday School, Coat & Cupboard for BBC classes (9 am to 11 am), no Youth Group at night

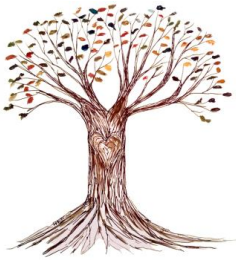
Wednesday, Jan. 11: God's Kitchen Crew 3 pm

Sunday, Jan. 15: Sunday School, BBC; no Youth Group

Thursday, Jan. 19: Soup Group

Sunday, Jan. 22: Sunday School, BBC; Youth Group resumes 6:30 pm

Sunday, Jan. 29: Sunday School, BBC; Youth Group 6:30 pm



Fundraising



Holiday Shopping?

Check out the Fundraising Committee Table for a variety in stock scrip (store gift) cards. Additional cards from numerous vendors may also be ordered in time for Christmas gift giving. Please note, the Fundraising Table will not be available on pageant Sunday (12/18) nor on Christmas (12/25), but cards will be available in the Church Office.



Have any shopping to do on Amazon?

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. Simply go to smile.amazon.com and click select on First Congregational of Farmington! Thank you.



Coig Returns for A Celtic Christmas ECU Heat Share Fuel Assistance Benefit Concert

The Cape Breton band, Coig, returns for a repeat performance of a Celtic Christmas on Tuesday, December 6th. They will be joined by Remi Aresenault.

Old South Church's portion of the admission will benefit ECU Heat. In the 2015-16 heating season, this Farmington Area Ecumenical Ministry project provided 50 gallons of non-emergency fuel assistance to 262 Franklin County households, warming 543 people for a total of \$19,466.

Doors will open at 5:45 pm. The jam session will begin around 6 pm. The concert will begin at 7 pm. Refreshments will be available by donation during the jam session and intermission. Admission is adults \$20, student discounts (\$10/\$5). Ticket reservations are highly recommended.

Volunteers for the evening (before, during and after the event) will be needed beginning at 4:15 pm, as well as donations of finger food desserts, fruit and cider.

This concert is in partnership with New England Celtic Arts. Please contact Debbie Davis-Robinson to reserve tickets, volunteer or donate refreshments at 207-491-5919 or by email at debnrich@myfairpoint.net.

Old South Concert 2017 Series Kick Off

The Old South Church and New England Celtic Arts partnership kicks off the 2017 with the worldly traveled award winning duo of Richard Wood and Gordon Belsher from Prince Edward Island on Thursday, January 19th. Doors open at 5:50 pm with jam session that begins at 6 pm. Wood and Belsher will take the stage at 7 pm. Tickets at the door. Student discounts offered (\$10/\$5). Call Brenda Scriber at 207-299-3686 to volunteer, donate food for refreshments and reserve tickets.

To learn more about the individuals in this performance, please check our website!

Upcoming 2017 NECA partnership concerts include:

February 9th Scott MacMillan and Colin Grant

March 23rd Irish Descendants

April 20th Songs Beyond Borders Part 1

May 18th Ozere



Worship & Music

Check the News and Upcoming Events section for information regarding Special Worship services during December. We will have Advent Vesper services in addition to Sunday services and information about Christmas Eve worship will be found there as well.



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. If you would like to study the lectionary that will be used in church each Sunday, please contact Phyllis in the church office. Below, you will find the Revised Common Lectionary for the months of December and January.

December 4, Second Sunday of Advent (Vision of Peace): Isaiah 11:1-10; Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19; Romans 15:4-13; Matthew 3:1-12

December 11, Third Sunday of Advent (Heartbeat of Justice): Isaiah 35:1-10; Psalm 146:5-10 or Luke 1:46b-55; James 5:7-10; Matthew 11:2-11

December 18, Fourth Sunday of Advent (God with Us): Isaiah 7:10-16; Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19; Matthew 1:18-25

December 24, Christmas Eve: Isaiah 62:6-12; Psalm 97; Titus 3:4-7; Luke 2 (1-7), 8-20

December 25, Christmas Day (A Great Light): Isaiah 9:2-7; Psalm 96; Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-14 (15-20)

January 1, New Year's Day (Truly I Tell You): Ecclesiastes 3:1-13; Psalm 8; Revelation 21:1-6a; Matthew 25:31-46

January 8, The Baptism of Christ (Possibilities Unfolding): Isaiah 42:1-9; Psalm 29; Acts 10:34-43; Matthew 3:13-17

January 15, Second Sunday after Epiphany (All That We Are): Isaiah 49:1-7; Psalm 40:1-11; 1 Corinthians 1:1-9; John 1:29-42

January 22, Third Sunday of Epiphany (Called Together): Isaiah 9:1-4; Psalm 27:1, 4-9; 1 Corinthians 1:10-18; Matthew 4:12-23

January 29, Fourth Sunday of Epiphany (The Vision Beautiful): Micah 6:1-8; Psalm 15; 1 Corinthians 1:18-31; Matthew 5:1-12



Maine Conference and the UCC

From Your Maine Conference Deacon

Dear Old South Church Family,

Greetings from the Maine Conference of the United Church of Christ (UCC)!

As I write this letter, you have recently learned that your pastor is continuing to follow her call from God – this time, the call to be close to family and friends as she and Liz prayerfully consider Nora’s and their own wholeness and well-being. Her new church in Princeton will, we know, be blessed by her service there, as we have been blessed here.

Although I was not able to be present at worship on the Sunday after Alexis’ letter arrived, I heard that our Moderator, Chris Magri, focused on the holy reality that the church is not the minister – the church is the people. The church is us, the community of faith that Old South is in this moment. The community of faith that we are becoming, with trust and hope that God is still speaking and that our job is always, always to listen as well as we possibly can.

How do we listen? In whatever ways serve to open our ears and our heart. By praying, singing, walking, being outdoors in the beauty that is Maine, spending time with those we love, worshipping together, breaking bread together, basking in the warmth of our church community.

All of this and more we do to listen for the voice of God during this church season of Advent, a time of longing and waiting for the birth of God among us. It is a good season to be saying goodbye (if there is such a thing!), for as Alexis leaves us, the Holy arrives in baby Jesus yet again and we remember that God’s intention for us is rebirth, new life. As we move toward the New Year together, we will be looking for what comes next. As Alexis has said, God already knows who coming to us, even if in this moment that pastor has never heard of Old South.

And so we wait. We trust. We hope. We long for rebirth, knowing that God is surely present, as near to us as our own breath.

Thanks be to God!

Your Conference Deacon and fellow church member,
Rev. Cathie Wallace



Old South Worship led by Maine Conference Minister on January 8

On January 8, worship will be led by Maine Conference Minister, the Rev. Deborah J. Blood. The Rev. Deborah J. Blood came to Maine from Connecticut where she served in a local church setting for ten years. She was born in Massachusetts and has consistently spent time in Maine, both while growing up and returning frequently later in life, enjoying places from Monhegan Island to a cabin in Rumford Center. She has ties going back generations, her family having once farmed in Cherryfield.

Deborah has worked as a music teacher, a practicing attorney, and a local church pastor. Her participation in the life of the church is broad. She has had extensive training in mediation and conflict resolution for churches and has contributed this expertise in different settings. In the national setting Deborah has chaired the Wider Church Ministries and Common Global Ministries Boards, and travelled widely under the auspices of Wider Church Ministries. In the Association and Conference settings she has served on Church and Ministry, facilitated New Clergy Community of Practice, co-chaired the Sacred Conversations on Race Ministry Team, and chairs the Board of Directors of the Connecticut Conference.

Please join us!

God is still speaking,
**UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**



Would you like to learn more about the United Church of Christ? Please check the United Church of Christ website for more information about our denomination: <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/>



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[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 2016

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>Alexis' office hours are on Tuesdays, Noon to 3:00 pm.</p> <p>Copies of the January calendar will be made available through the church office and on a table in the Narthex later in December.</p>				1	2 3:00pm Buttons for Babes Board Meeting (Holman Mission House)	3 12:00pm Coat and Cupboard Open House (HMH Camiage House) 1:00pm Community Chorus rehearsal (Sanctuary)
4 9:00am Coat and Cupboard Open (HMH Camiage House) 9:30am Worship (Sanctuary) 9:30am Farmington Friends (Holman Mission House) 11:00am Heifer Living Gift Market and Fair Trade Coffee Fair (Vestry) 3:30pm Community Chorus (Sanctuary)	5 12:00pm Retirees Lunch (Vestry) 6:00pm Zen Buddhist sanga (John Room (next to Chapel))	6 5:15pm InnerRhythm (Chapel) 5:30pm Teen Faith (John Room (next to Chapel)) 6:00pm Meeting (HMH Gathering Room) 7:00pm EcuHeat Concert (Sanctuary)	7 2:00pm Bereavement Support Group (Chapel) 3:00pm God's Kitchen Crew (Kitchen, Vestry) 5:30pm Advent Vesper Service (Matthew Room) 6:00pm Executive Council (HMH Meeting Room) 7:00pm Choir Rehearsal (Matthew Room)	8 6:00pm Shepherd's Pie (Chapel)	9	10 12:00pm Community Lunch (Kitchen, Vestry)
11 9:30am Stewardship Sunday (Sanctuary) 9:30am Farmington Friends (Holman Mission House) 11:00am Deacons' Meeting (Matthew Room) 11:00am Bread for Benefit (Vestry) 11:00am Heifer Living Gift Market and Fair Trade Coffee Fair (Vestry)	12 6:00pm Zen Buddhist sanga (John Room (next to Chapel))	13 2:30pm Just Friends (Chapel) 5:15pm InnerRhythm (Chapel) 5:30pm Teen Faith (Matthew Room) 6:30pm Property Trustees (HMH Meeting Room)	14 5:30pm Advent Vesper Service (Matthew Room) 7:00pm Choir Rehearsal (Matthew Room)	15 10:00am Staff Meeting (Offsite) 2:00pm Soup Group (Kitchen, Vestry)	16 5:30pm Meeting (HMH Gathering Room)	17 9:00am Pageant Rehearsal (Sanctuary)
18 9:30am Farmington Friends (Holman Mission House) 9:30am Pageant Sunday (Sanctuary) 11:00am Outreach, Justice and Witness (Matthew Room) 11:00am Bread for Benefit (Vestry) 11:00am Farewell Celebration Potluck (Old South Church)	19 6:00pm Zen Buddhist sanga (John Room (next to Chapel))	20 5:15pm InnerRhythm (Chapel) 7:00pm FAEM Service of Compassion and Hope at Fairbanks Union (Offsite)	21 2:00pm Bereavement Support Group (Chapel) 5:30pm Advent Vesper Service (Matthew Room) 7:00pm Support Group (HMH Gathering Room) 7:00pm Choir Rehearsal (Matthew Room)	22	23	24 5:30pm Christmas Eve Worship (Old South Church)
25 9:30am Worship (Sanctuary) 9:30am Farmington Friends (Holman Mission House)	26 6:00pm Zen Buddhist sanga (John Room (next to Chapel))	27 5:15pm InnerRhythm (Chapel)	28 4:30pm Christian Ed (Matthew Room) 7:00pm Choir Rehearsal (Matthew Room)	29	30	31