

# **The Steeple Chimes**

**Columbia Congregational United Church of Christ**

DECEMBER  
2013

## **Pastor Betsey Polglase**

Church: 860.228.9306

Pastor Betsey's

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Church Office

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### ***Mission Statement***

*The Columbia Congregational United Church of Christ as part of the United Church of Christ and the worldwide Christian Church is called by God to be disciples of Jesus, the Christ. Therefore, the mission of the Columbia Congregational United Church of Christ is to worship God and to preach and teach the Gospel of Christ: to promote Christian fellowship among our members and friends, and to live in Christian fellowship with the Church Universal and the whole creation; that we might live faithfully, serving God and humanity, and striving for righteousness, justice, and peace.*



## **FROM THE PASTOR'S PORCH**

Brrr, it's cold outside. There won't be much use of the porch for a while now. We store a little fire wood near the front door so we will go out to get the wood to build a nice fire in our fireplace, but otherwise it is in winter mode – furnishing covered or stored away.

While the weather stayed very nice throughout most of the fall, commercials have been proclaiming Christmas is upon us, and gearing up everyone for the "biggest shopping day of the year," Black Friday. Stores have been selling Christmas items now for a month, at least, and I wondered with friends what is happening to the national holiday of Thanksgiving. Are we passing over the need to give thanks, a prime Christian value? By the time you read this, the turkey and all the other leftovers will be stored in the refrigerator or freezer, and those who enjoy the shopping sales will be checking out, and maybe even wrapping, the purchases on Black Friday.

I fear we have also lost sight of the purpose of Advent. In our western culture, we fill these next few weeks with elaborate decorations, multiple shopping trips, Christmas concerts and plays, lots of baking and parties and caroling, and finally family gatherings that might make us just a bit crazy but also fill us with the joy of festive togetherness. The fact is that Advent is a season for simplicity, solemn reflection, even penitence; until we sing "Joy to the World the Lord is Come." Of course, no one wants to hear this.

I admit I love the lights, the decorations, the festivities, and oh how I love singing those Christmas Carols. But as I read through the lectionary, I am reminded of this other side of Advent. I am reminded to keep it simple. Overdoing distracts from the sense of waiting and preparing our hearts for the coming of the Messiah. This is a season for remembering the basics of our faith, for turning away from the bad habits of works of the flesh which we have developed, and making ourselves ready for the Christ. It is a time for demonstrating inclusive and generous hospitality and building up our relationship with God. Advent is patient waiting with the expectation of a world changing event. It is the pregnant pause that leads to rejoicing in the birth of understanding that God is with us now and forever. In and through Jesus, God's realm breaks into our troubled world and begins to transform our world into a new realm of justice and peace.

So as we all get caught up in the hustle and bustle of the holiday, let us keep in mind the more reflective purpose of Advent, preparing ourselves for the true joy of Christmas. Include in your plans daily prayer, and attendance at worship. Perhaps attending the special service on Friday Dec. 20<sup>th</sup> will help you refocus on what this season is all about. This service is not just for those who grieve or are having a difficult time.

Join us on Christmas Eve to sing in jubilation for the birth of Jesus, God with us; the greatest gift any of us can receive. Wishing you a simple and meaningful Advent and a very Merry Christmas.

***Pastor Betsey***

**Sunday 10:00 AM Worship**

**DECEMBER 1**

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Communion Sunday

Worship Leader: Pastor Betsey Polglase

Deacon: Charlotte Sabine

Lay Reader: John Polglase

Greeters: Kim Foss, John Polglase, and Tim Bassett.

**Loaves and Fishes Fellowship Hour follows Worship Service in the Parish Hall.**

**DECEMBER 8**

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Worship Leader: Pastor Betsey Polglase

Deacon: Charlotte Sabine

Lay Reader: Donna Doucette

Greeter: Charlotte Sabine

**Advent Workshop, Soup and Bread Luncheon, and Hanging of the Greens follows Worship Service in the Parish Hall.**

**DECEMBER 15**

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Worship Leader: Pastor Betsey Polglase

Deacon: Charlotte Sabine

Lay Reader: Charlotte Sabine

Greeter: Charlotte Sabine

**COOKIE EXCHANGE follows Worship Service in the Parish Hall.**

**DECEMBER 22**

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Worship Leader: Pastor Betsey Polglase

Deacon: Charlotte Sabine

Lay Reader: Charlotte Sabine

Greeters: Charlotte Sabine

**Loaves and Fishes Fellowship Hour follows Worship Service in the Parish Hall.**

**DECEMBER 29**

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS

Worship Leader: Pastor Betsey Polglase

Deacon: Charlotte Sabine

Lay Reader: Charlotte Sabine

Greeters: Charlotte Sabine

**COMING EVENTS**

For our **COFFEE HOUR** contributions of finger foods are encouraged. **Donations in the Coffee Hour basket** helps fund the coffee, milk, sugar and paper goods. Thanks for supporting this ministry.



**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 8TH**

Advent Workshop, Soup & Bread Luncheon following worship service.

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 14TH**

**CHURCH BREAKFAST**

8AM – 11:00AM/Parish Hall

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15TH – SPECIAL MEETING & COOKIE EXCHANGE follows worship service.**

**HANDBELL CHOIR HOLIDAY CONCERT**

1:00PM/Sanctuary - Followed by refreshments

**4PM SALVATION ARMY CHRISTMAS BASKETS**

**SET-UP/Foyer Delivery of Baskets Monday morning.**

**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 20TH**

**THE LONGEST NIGHT BLUE CHRISTMAS SERVICE**

7:00PM

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 22ND**

**CHURCH SCHOOL CHRISTMAS PAGEANT** During worship Service.

**TUESDAY, DECEMBER 24TH**

**CANDLELIGHT SERVICE 7:00PM and 10:30PM**



**LAY READER** – Anyone wishing to share in the leadership of worship by reading the Scripture or bringing a children’s sermon, please sign-up on the appropriate list on the bulletin board by the elevator door **and** speak with Pastor Betsey Polglase.

**DEACON OF THE MONTH**

DECEMBER – Charlotte Sabine

**TRUSTEE OF THE MONTH**

DECEMBER – Dave Pearce

**GREETERS AND USHERS**

DECEMBER 1- **Deacons:** Kim Foss, John Polglase, Tim Bassett, and Millie Ramsey. **CONFIRMANDS:** Chloe Weston and Hannah Erickson.

**December 8 – Deborah, Doug, and Hannah Erickson**

**December 15 - Sydney Lambert**

**December 22 - Ellie Foss**

**December 29 - Volunteers needed**

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**PARISH NOTICES**

The return of Pledge Cards to support the budget for 2014 is always welcome. Cards may be left in the Stewardship box, given to any member of the Stewardship Committee or handed into the Church Office. Extra pledge cards are available in the Stewardship box upon request. We invite your generosity in supporting the 2014 budget.

**WAIM** is frequently in need of the volunteer services of skilled craftspeople. If you are skilled as a carpenter, painter, electrician, plumber, sheet rocker, heating systems, computer technician, etc. and would be willing to become part of a craftspeople resource guide for WAIM please see Anthony White, Sr. for survey form.

**FOOD PANTRY IN URGENT NEED OF FOOD:** The Church is collecting food for the Soup Kitchen and the Columbia Food Pantry. **Items especially needed: Soups, Pastas and Cereals.** If you would like to contribute, please leave items in the basket found at the front of the sanctuary or deliver directly to the Soup Kitchen.

**Columbia Congregational Church of the United Church of Christ**

Special Meeting

**December 15, 2013**

Sanctuary

The members of the Columbia Congregational Church of the United Church of Christ, Columbia, Connecticut, are hereby notified that a **SPECIAL MEETING** of the church will be held immediately following morning worship on Sunday, December 15, 2013 for the following purpose:

- 1) To inform the congregation of the status of the elevator project.
- 2) To discuss ways to fund the elevator project.
- 3) Other Business.

**Dated this date, November 26, 2013**

**Kathy Chapman**

**Church Council President**

## **Worship Schedule December 2013**

(Subject to change at pastor's discretion)

<b>Date</b>	<b>Scripture</b>	<b>Sermon Title</b>	<b>Worship notes</b>
Dec. 1	Mat. 24: 36-44	Stay Awake	Communion Candle of Hope
Dec. 8	Isaiah 11: 1-10	God's Glory	Candle of Peace
Dec. 15	Isaiah 35: 1-10	He Who Comes	Candle of Joy
Dec. 20	various	Blue Christmas Service	Reflective
Dec. 22	TBA	Christmas Pageant	Candle of Love
Dec. 24	Jesus' Birth stories	Christmas Eve 7:00 pm & 10:30 pm	Lessons & Carols Christ Candle

**~CHRISTIAN EDUCATION~**

The season of Advent is upon us. This period of anticipation and preparation for the celebration of Jesus' birth is extremely important in the lives of Christians, because it helps us to make way in our hearts to receive the one true gift of the Christmas season.

We often talk to the children what the Advent candles represent and how those gifts change our lives and this year we are talking about the meaning of the advent wreath. The Advent wreath is made of evergreen boughs, symbolizing everlasting life. The circle represents the continuous love of God, with no beginning and no end.

Each child will receive an Advent devotion book to share with their families. This will help with the understanding of each candle and the gift it offers. Those gifts are Hope, Peace, Joy and Love.

CHRISTMAS PROGRAM: "Just a Little Christmas"

It is also a time to start preparing for our annual Christmas program, which will take place on Sunday, December 22<sup>nd</sup> during the Church Service. This year the Church School will present "**Just a Little Christmas**" and offer refreshments in the Parish Hall following the Service. We invite all to join us in celebrating this joyful pageant in preparation for Christmas.

**CHURCH SCHOOL CALENDER:**

- Dec. 1** Church School Rehearsal: During Morning Worship
- Dec. 19** Rehearsal 6-8pm-Pizza will be served at 6:00 and rehearsal will begin at 6:30pm
- Dec. 21** Rehearsal 9-11am- All participants are asked to make this rehearsal
- Dec. 22** Arrive 9:00am- Costume check, rehearse songs, Etc.

As we celebrate let's try and remember that it truly is better to give than to receive!

**Happy Holidays to all: Jean**

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**ADVENT WORKSHOP**  
**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 8th**  
**AFTER WORSHIP**  
**FUN FOR ALL AGES**  
**SOUP AND BREAD LUNCHEON**  
**ADVENT CRAFTS**

**Bring a soup or bread to share**  
**Bring some greens to share for**  
**making sprays**

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Family and Friends  
Get Together Breakfast  
Come and linger for a while.

*Saturday, December 14, 2013*

*8:00A.M to 11:00A.M*

*Columbia Congregational Church*

*Parish Hall, Route 87*

"C'mon people now, Smile on your Brother,  
Everybody get together. Try and love one another  
right now." Youngblood, Kingston Trio, J. Collins

Breakfast Buffet Menu: Belgian waffles, omelets, eggs, toast,

Bacon, sausage, ham, potatoes, juice, milk, coffee, tea,

Fruits, homemade muffins & coffee cakes

Suggested free will offering: \$8.00 per person

\$24.00 - 2 adults and 2 children





The Blue Christmas Service

a quiet, reflective service

Friday, December 20, 2013

7:00 pm

Columbia Congregational Church

All are welcome to this service of readings,

gentle prayers, and lighting of candles.

**The Advent/Christmas season can be a difficult time for people who have suffered loss, experienced dramatic family changes, worried about family or friends, or have been struggling with financial or health issues.**

**Hope and joy may seem distant stars above the dark landscape of life.**

**Empty seats at the table are especially poignant at family gatherings.**

**On one of the longest nights of the year, we gather to nurture our souls and find comfort in each other's company.**

## **WAIM EVENTS**

### **ADOPT-A-FAMILY HOLIDAY PROGRAM**

Donor applications are now being accepted. Application forms can be found on the credenza in the Parish Hall.

### **WAIM GIFTS FOR TEENS PROGRAM**

Gift Certificate Program, Donate funds so that WAIM can purchase the certificates. All sizes of donations are very welcome. An average certificate of \$25-30 will buy a gift for one teen.  
**Deadline for donations is December 14th.**

### **FOR KIDS ONLY PROGRAM**

WAIM is looking for gently used or new items for children to choose for their parents. Men's items are particularly needed.  
**Deadline for donations is December 14th. Please see Anthony White, Sr. with any questions concerning WAIM.**

**CARE TEAM** – Looking for a rewarding, caring volunteer activity? How about serving as the coordinator for our church Care Team? Please see John Polglase for details.

**GREEN TEAM** – We are looking for members to serve on our Green Team. The focus of our Green Team is to empower and motivate people to make a difference environmentally. If you are passionate about our environment and are willing to share your efforts with our congregation, please see John Polglase to volunteer.

**The Board of Christian Concern is running a program called FLOWER POWER.** We are offering a wide variety of bulbs for sale and 50% of the profits come back to the church. You can review all of the bulbs on our website or contact Dixie, Holly, Denise, Tony or John Polglase to place your orders. The funds raised will go to help support our mission work with “Simply Smiles” Wounded Warriors, Restavec and others. Thank you for participation in this effort.

**John Polglase**

**Chair BOCC**

**SIMPLY SMILES COFFEE IS BACK!**

Simply Smiles Coffee is available in the Parish Hall. Purchase of the coffee helps support Simply Smiles missions in Oaxaca, Mexico and Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe Reservation in South Dakota. For more details on the mission, see their website <http://www.simplysmiles.org>

**FOODSHARE VAN**

The mobile FoodShare Van now has a stop at the Baptist Fellowship Church on Route 6 in Columbia. **The van will be stopping every other Thursday from 1:00 pm - 1:30 pm in the lower church parking lot.** Upcoming distribution dates: Please be sure to circulate the word to people you know. The program needs a minimum of 50 people participating. **The FoodShare Van will continue to stop at the Andover Congregational Church on Route 6 every other Wednesday.** Please bring your own grocery bags.

**The Advent Workshop is looking for a nice 5-6" diameter log or two.** Enough to make several dozen 3" thick slices to use for advent wreaths next December. We would like white birch logs, if possible. **Please contact Jackie Kittle if you have some logs.**

**The Rev. Betsey Polglase, PASTOR**

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