

THE STEEPLE CHIMES

Columbia Congregational United Church of Christ

DECEMBER

2012

Pastor Betsey Polglase

Church: 860.228.9306

Pastor Betsey's

Office Hours:

Mon. – Thurs.:9:30-12:30

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Church Office

Contact Information

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Mon. – Fri.:9:30–1:00

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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

December - The sun, which had started out the day shining brightly, is now pushing its light through the layer of pewter clouds that have moved across the sky. No longer a blinding orb, it is a blurry circle, its outer edges melting into the gray expanse. The air is cold and still and there is a silence that bespeaks of snow.

I love snow – the dancing flakes, the crunch under foot, the drifts of white; childhood memories of building snowmen and snow forts, and sledding, and yummy maple syrup candy; and waking to the stillness that tells of a world that has been changed.

I write from a position of privilege where warm clothes and boots and a cozy home protect, and steaming food and crackling fire chase the chill away on the long nights of winter. A consciousness of those less fortunate moves us to reach out and give generously to help bring change.

December –A month of increasing darkness, as our daylight hours grow steadily shorter. Yet in Advent worship, the dark gives way to increased light. Each Sunday we light another candle on the Advent Wreath as we draw closer to the bright light of the star of Bethlehem leading the way to where the Christ child was born: the love of God coming into the world, Immanuel. Long ago, suddenly, the people of the world were offered change.

Prepare and wait. Behold and rejoice. Joy to the world, the Lord has come, is come, will come: the infant Jesus, the Holy Presence, the future fulfillment.

December - For many these are busy days: shopping and wrapping, concerts and pageants, parties with friends and family gatherings. For some these are hard days: unrealized dreams, shattered relationships, diminished financial health, deteriorated or critical physical health, the loss of a loved one.

In a world heavy laden with fears and distress, the Advent story carries the gathered community toward the light of hope, peace and love. I hope you can plan to worship with us. The various services and events can be found further in the Newsletter.

In the midst of all the happenings during this Advent and Christmas time, I pray the light of Christ will shine in your lives and the true peace, which can only come from Jesus through the Holy Spirit, will settle upon you.

On the journey together, **Pastor Betsey**

December 2012

Sunday 10:00 AM Worship**DECEMBER 2**

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Communion Sunday

Worship Leader: Pastor Betsey Polglase

Deacon: John Polglase

Lay Reader: John Polglase

Greeters: John Polglase, Charlotte Sabine, Jack Sabine,

Kathy Chapman, and Millie Ramsey.

Loaves and Fishes Fellowship Hour follows Worship Service in the Parish Hall.**DECEMBER 9**

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Worship Leader: Pastor Betsey Polglase

Deacon: John Polglase

Lay Reader: John Polglase

Greeter: John Polglase

Loaves and Fishes Fellowship Hour follows Worship Service in the Parish Hall.**DECEMBER 16**

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Worship Leader: Pastor Betsey Polglase

Deacon: John Polglase

Lay Reader: John Polglase

Greeter: John Polglase

Loaves and Fishes Fellowship Hour follows Worship Service in the Parish Hall.**DECEMBER 23**

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Worship Leader: Pastor Betsey Polglase

Deacon: John Polglase

Lay Reader: John Polglase

Greeter: John Polglase

Loaves and Fishes Fellowship Hour follows Worship Service in the Parish Hall.**DECEMBER 30**

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS

Worship Leader: Pastor Betsey Polglase

Deacon: John Polglase

Lay Reader: John Polglase

Greeter: John Polglase

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

FAMILY SUNDAY will continue to be Loaves and Fishes Fellowship Hour EVERY Sunday for the remainder of the year. Each family is asked to bring in one appetizer/finger food to share on our buffet table (cookies, cheese & crackers, veggies & dip, mini sandwiches...nothing that needs to be warmed or eaten with a utensil). Bring ONLY enough servings to feed 8-12 people.



SUNDAY, DECEMBER 2ND – Advent Workshop with Soup & Bread Luncheon, and Hanging of the Greens. Assistance will be needed.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 16TH – Cookie Exchange follows worship service. 2PM Handbell Choir Christmas Concert!

MONDAY, DECEMBER 17TH – 7:00PM Blue Christmas Service.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 22ND – 10AM – 1PM Christmas Pageant Rehearsal/Sanctuary

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 23RD – Christmas Pageant during Worship Service.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 24TH – 7PM and 10:30PM CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICE

December 2012



LAY READER – Anyone wishing to share in the leadership of worship by being a LAY READER and 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 – John Polglase

TRUSTEE OF THE MONTH

DECEMBER – Dave Pearce

GREETERS AND USHERS

December 2 - Deacons: John Polglase, Charlotte Sabine, Jack Sabine, Kathy Chapman, and Millie Ramsey

December 9 – Volunteers

December 16 – Volunteers

December 23 - Volunteers needed

December 30 – Volunteers needed

PARISH NOTICES

The return of Pledge Cards to support the budget for 2012 – 2013 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 2013 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 craftsperson 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.

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~CHRISTIAN EDUCATION NEWS~

Church School is looking forward to the Joy of the holidays. We are busy preparing for the Christmas pageant. It is our wish that each one remembers why we celebrate the season.

A baby brings us joy and hope, and he brings us peace that calms our fears and a love that is everlasting. Our faith lets us believe that through Christ all things are possible. These gifts are the true gifts of Christmas.

Christmas Pageant: "The Twelve Days of Christmas"

We hope that you will enjoy the significance of this popular Christmas song. We will share with you the beginning of the song and then ask you to figure out the others.

The song begins: "On the first day of Christmas my True Love gave to me a Partridge in a pear tree."

My true love is the Lord God Himself - Who is the giver of all good gifts. Look up Jeremiah 31:3 "I have loved you with an everlasting love..." The Partridge in a pear tree is Jesus and the wooden cross on which he died. A partridge will give its life to protect its chicks. Look up John 3:16 "For God so loved the world..."

Come join us and learn how the rest of the song represents God's love.

We keep shining our light by reaching out through our **Nickels for Nets** program. We have presently raised enough to purchase twenty nets and we are still receiving donations. Thank you for all your donations towards this life saving mission.

Make a Joyful Noise: Church School will sing December 2nd and again on December 23rd. We sing because it makes us happy!

JOY TO THE WORLD,

Jean Murphy

December 2012

Worship Schedule - December 2012

(subject to change at Pastor's discretion)

Date	Scripture	Sermon Title	Worship notes
Dec. 2	Psalm 25:1-10 Luke 21:25-36	"Predictions"	1 st Sunday of Advent Candle of Hope Communion
Dec. 9	Malachi 3: 1-4 Luke 3:1-6	"Prepare Ye"	2 nd Sunday of Advent Candle of Peace
Dec. 16	Philippians 4: 4-7 Luke 3: 7-18	"He Who Comes"	3 rd Sunday of Advent Candle of Joy
Dec.17	Various	A meditative service 7:00 p.m.	Blue Christmas
Dec. 23	Micah 5:2-5a Luke 1: 39-45	The Christmas Pageant	4 th Sunday of Advent Candle of Love
Dec. 24	various	Christmas Eve Lessons and Carols	7:00 p.m. & 10:30 Candle Light
Dec. 30	Psalm 148 Luke 2:41-52	TBA	

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The Blue Christmas Service

a quiet, reflective service

Monday, December 17, 2012

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.

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Sheets and Pillow Cases Needed!

Darien Parmenter, a senior at Bolton High School, will be collecting gently used pillow cases and sheets. These will be used as part of her senior project to help support missions in Haiti, by supplying them with diapers, pillowcases, and sun dresses for the children in need. Donations can be left in the Parish Hall or given to Darien before or after service. Thank you!

THANK YOU! To all who participated to make our annual Holiday Craft Fair a success! With your efforts we raised \$3,100.00, a welcome increase over past years.

OUR CARE TEAM

**“I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you show love to one another.”
John 13:34-35**

We seek to be a loving and caring church community, contributing our time, our resources, and our love to help and support each other in times of need. This is the goal of our Care Team.

We have a group of approximately 12 members of our congregation that have signed up to offer their help with transportation, meals, short term chores or just a presence offering concern and fellowship. These volunteers do not replace Pastoral visits or calls.

Should you or anyone that you know need a little TLC from our Care Team, please contact Dixie at **860-228-8480** or email **dixiesilvestri@hotmail.com** New volunteers are always welcome.

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*A big thank you to Lynn Sharpe and Denise Parmenter for making Care Cards and baking quick breads for the Thanksgiving food baskets on **Activity Night!** Thanks for caring.

*The Annual Cardless Holiday collection is underway. The donation form was attached to the back page of the Columbia Crossroads November edition. Additional forms can be obtained from Holly Weston. Our annual **Cookie Exchange** will be held on December 16th after worship. Please consider baking a couple dozen cookies of your choice and wrap in packets of 6 cookies per packet. All cookies will be sold at \$2.00 per pack. The money raised goes toward our Cardless Holiday Fund.

*The Board of Christian Concern thanks all those that have donated coats and socks for the Willimantic **No Freeze Shelter** the donation bin will be set up until February 1st.

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The **United Church of Christ Christmas Fund** offering will be taken during the Christmas worship services. The generous gifts of UCC congregations and individuals to the Christmas Fund enabled the Pension Boards' Ministerial Assistance program to provide the following gifts:

- Some form of Ministerial Assistance will be provided to approximately 1,600 persons during **2012**.
- Christmas Gift checks were sent to approximately 900 persons in **2011**. Of those who received checks, 20 are over 100 years of age. The oldest person is 107. One person has received Christmas checks continuously since 1976. The 900 gifts total \$270,000.
- Monthly pension supplementation is being provided to 395 persons. These gifts total \$110,121.25 per month. A significant part of annual total of \$1,255,885.20 comes from the Christmas Fund. **(2012 data)**
- Quarterly health premium supplementation is being provided to 235 families, totaling \$138,783.25 per quarter. All of the funding for health premium supplementation is derived from the Christmas Fund. **(2012 Data)**
- Emergency Grants totaling \$48,636.73 were provided to 34 individuals and families from January 1 through October 31, 2012.

These statistics reflect annualized projections as of October 31, 2012. The numbers of persons receiving assistance and the totals of assistance payments fluctuate on a monthly basis.

December 2012

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.

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 7th. Please see Anthony White, Sr. with any questions concerning WAIM.**

WAIM WORKDAY

Saturday December, 15th Columbia Congregational Church will participate in it's annual WAIM Workday 9AM – 12PM. This event will take place at the WAIM headquarters in Willimantic.

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ADVENT WORKSHOP
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 2ND
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**

December 2012

The Rev. Betsey Polglase, PASTOR

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