



Vestry News

DECEMBER 2024



Fred B's penguin donations at the Children' Table were a huge hit with children and adults.



The Howie's grandchildren pose with Santa.

Merrie Christmas Fair 2024

Thank you to everyone who worked to make this year's fair such a tremendous success. On a dreary day in dark November, UCC Boxborough created an event full of joy, energy and community. Crowds flowed in and out all morning long, wearing big smiles and carrying their new-found treasures. The Sugar Plum café was full of festive music and lively chatter as neighbors connected over the delicious food. The Greens flew off the shelf in the lobby, as the Gathering Room above bustled with people, filling smaller bags with ornaments and jewelry, and gazing at the penguin ornaments with delight. Online bidding continued on phones as the Silent Auction goods on display inspired fairgoers to keep up the bidding! The sanctuary was full of high-pitched energy around the busy Children's Table. The stuffed penguins, toys and crafts kept many families happy on a rainy day. You could hear the awe as people looked at the gorgeous handmade items on Men's and Knits/Gifts tables. Across the street, a morning crowd lined up in the wet and filled the room immediately, and it stayed filled with crowds all day, happily finding those affordable treasures. And the trees were out front too, adding that extra element of Christmas is truly here!

Thank you to the table chairs, many of whom have been creating all year, and all of whom have devoted incredible amounts of time these past few weeks to make their tables something extraordinary special. Thank you to those involved in setting up, including putting up signs, moving tables and chairs, packing and unpacking and then returning everything back to normal.

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Pastor's Letter

“There'll be some changes made”

Initially written in 1921, *“There'll be some changes made”* (or sometimes known as *“Changes”*) became a jazz standard of the 20th century. It made its debut with Ethel Waters singing. Among the 400 plus recordings are covers by Fats Waller, Benny Goodman, Billie Holiday, Tony Bennett, and, yes, Ann Margret. There is even a western swing cover by Bob Wills. The energy of Jimmy Rushing singing with the Dave Brubeck Quartet in 1960 is infectious and a personal favorite.

The original lyrics speak of a lover who has made *“a change and said I would not do, so now I'm going to make some changes, too.”* But over the century, that introductory stanza dropped out as the lyrics emphasized the inevitability of change and our need to change. By the time Jimmy Rushing sang with the Dave Brubeck Quartet, the lyrics were spare:

For there's a change in the weather
There's a change in the sea
So from now on there'll be a change in me
My walk will be diff'rent my talk and my name
Nothin' about me is goin' to be the same,
I'm goin' to change my way of livin' if that ain't enough,
Then I'll change the way that I strut my stuff,
'cause nobody wants you when you're old and gray
There'll be some changes made.

Advent is a spare time. The leaves have dropped, the light is fleeting, and the cold has arrived. *“For there's a change in the weather.”* Our vulnerability as humans is revealed, our mortality is evident. Rather than collapsing before change that is inevitable, there comes the resolve, *“from now on there'll be a change in me.”*

Advent and Christmas are often celebrated as changeless. Try changing the lineup of Christmas carols or having Christmas dinner without Aunt Sally's Noel Casserole. But the promise of Advent and Christmas is that *“there'll be some changes made.”*

The designated scripture lessons for each Sunday in Advent are all about an impending change. And, of course, we gather on Christmas Eve to witness the birth of hope that has arrived in flesh and set in motion to change the world.

Celebrate this impending change with us at worship on **Sundays at 9:30am** and on **Christmas Eve at 7:00pm**. Give God praise, for the resolve *“from now on there'll be a change in me.”*

Grace and peace,
Richard & Jill Edens, Interim Co-Pastors



Advent

- Dec 01 First Sunday of Advent - HOPE** Rev. Richard Edens preaching
- Dec 08 Second Sunday of Advent - PEACE** Rev. Dr. Jill Edens preaching
After worship with Liz Rust from the Concord Prison Outreach
Longest Night Service on Wednesday, December 11, 7pm
- Dec 15 Third Sunday of Advent - JOY** Rev. Richard Edens preaching
Advent Music Sunday with the Senior Choir and the Ding-a-Ring Choir
Cookie Swap after worship
- Dec 22 Fourth Sunday of Advent—LOVE** Rev. Dr. Jill Edens preaching
Senior Choir and the Sounds of Peace
- Dec 24 Christmas Eve, 7pm**
- Dec 29 1st Sunday after Christmas**
- Jan 05 Epiphany observed this Sunday** Rev. Catherine Michael preaching
Magi arrive



UCCB's Annual Bluegrass Christmas Concert is back!

Saturday December 7, 7:30 pm. Doors open at 7:00 pm , In the Sanctuary



Many people consider the annual Christmas In New England (CINE) concert in the UCCB Sanctuary to be an important part of their holiday season. We're thrilled to have the CINE performers back! Join us in the Sanctuary for a fabulous Christmas tradition at the UCCB! General admission – come early for best seating! To learn more, visit www.christmasinnewengland.net.

Here's our chance to offer an extravagant welcome to music lovers in our community!

We'd love your help with baked goods or other snacks to offer during intermission. All food items should be ***individually wrapped and ready to easily distribute***. Please contact Peter Senghas at psenghas@yahoo.com or 978-505-5398 with any questions or to offer assistance.

Longest Night

Wednesday, December 11, 7PM

The early church chose to celebrate the birth of Jesus against the backdrop of the winter solstice when the darkness lengthens, and the cold deepens. Even so, Christmas has become not just commercialized but a projection of life perfected – brimming with satisfaction, bursting with more, and always teeming with promise. This is a service for those for whom this may not be “the most wonderful time of the year,” those for whom pain, loss, isolation, or grief is acute.

During this service, we acknowledge our suffering and the suffering of the world while affirming the dawning light of God's love. Organist Joe Camara will be playing and Sounds of Peace, directed by Gloria Roe, will be singing. You will have an opportunity to express your faith by requesting healing prayer or by lighting a candle. Following the service, you are invited to stay for cider and cookies.



SERMON SHAPING or TUESDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY

On Tuesdays at 10am, you are invited to a lively and far-ranging conversation with the Pastors on the scripture for the coming Sunday.

On Tuesday, Dec 3, No Bible Study

On Tuesday, Dec 10, we will discuss the lessons for Sunday, December 15
3rd Sunday of Advent: **Zephaniah 3:14-20, Isaiah 12:2-6; Philippians 4:4-7; Luke 3:7-18**

On Tuesday, Dec 17, we will discuss the lessons for Sunday, December 22
4th Sunday of Advent: **Micah 5:2-5a; Luke 1:46b – 55; Hebrews 10:5-10; Luke 1:39-45**

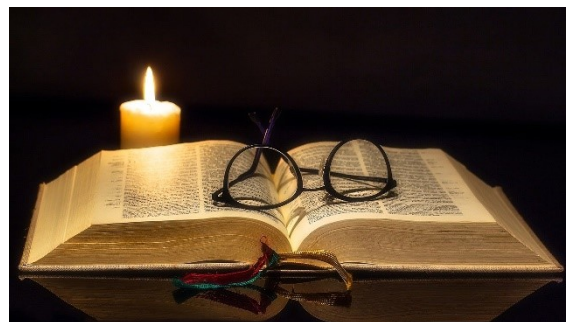
Then we will take a break and not resume until Tuesday, Jan 14, 2025.

The meeting opens at 9:45 for visiting. **Please join us.**

The Zoom link is:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81402428901>

Passcode: 7387



OUR SERVICES ARE SUNDAY MORNINGS AT 9:30 IN PERSON OR ON ZOOM

To worship via Zoom:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88306753408?pwd=VlgwZUtYU05jeVU2WklHWGtUWExGdz09>

Meeting ID: 883 0675 3408

Passcode: 7387

Please note: our worship services are streamed live via Zoom, and recorded for posting on YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UChIayswOH7Ta7LYVK-BcAyA>).

Zoom offers closed captioning subtitles) for those who find that helpful.



Poinsettias

The Christmas Eve service at our church is a beautiful experience, filled with light and hope. We decorate the alter with poinsettia plants for the service. If you would like to take a poinsettia home to enjoy on Christmas and the days after, please contact Laurel Dickson-Bull in person or at laureldave@verizon.net by Dec. 17th. They are \$15 each.

Continued from page 1—Merrie Christmas Fair

This year we had additional community helping, especially with cleanup. Some FreeBee volunteers worked in Attic Treasures and helped sort and sell. The Boy Scouts and Boxborough Minutemen came at the end to close down Attic Treasures and move tables. The dance group that uses our space was prepared to dance for us outside, but had to cancel due to the weather, but those families could be seen shopping away on fair day. We reached out for help and the community reached back to us.

In total, as of November 27, we earned \$30,000! Ten percent of our fair earnings will go to Central Northeastern Massachusetts Habitat for Humanity.

Thank you to everyone who created this magical day that really started the season for so many!

With gratitude and admiration,

Laurel and Mary

More photos on pages 6 and 7.



Singer Phyllis Fallon who has performed for us a few years in a row.



Here is a wonderful picture of the Tihomirova family with Heidi and Marcia at the Children's table.

Hallelujah Chorus Sing!

During the Dec. 15th service, the Sr. Choir will be singing the Hallelujah Chorus! Anyone who would like to join us, please do so. We sing it one step down from the original if you have your own music, just an fyi 😊

We will rehearse it Tuesday, Dec. 10th at approx.. 7:30pm and then again on the 15th at 9am.

Would love to have you join in!

Cindy



Children of the Church!

During the Dec. 15th service we will also have children singing a wonderful song along with the Sr. Choir and bell ringers!

If your child would like to join us, please reach out to our Sr. Choir Director, Cindy Blanchard at capetoyork@hotmail.com as soon as possible so she can send you the music and recordings along with the rehearsal times. This will be wonderful!



Gorgeous Greens by Anne.



Elaine, Teresa, Chris, Bunny and Suzanne selling the delicious homemade baked goods.

Merrie Christmas Fair 2024



Avery, Marlee and Barbara with the lovely Gifts & Knits table



Ginny H. greets at the entrance of the very popular Attic Treasures.



Such intricate detail in these beautiful lamps made by the Men's Table.



Flo and Nicolette having a laugh in the kitchen.



Glynis manning the bins for recycling.



Diane, Mary, and Heidi getting ready for the rush at the jewelry table.



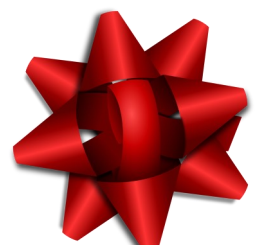
Left: And the winners are ...Heidi K. will give Santa the basket full of names to pick the winners for the giant penguins.



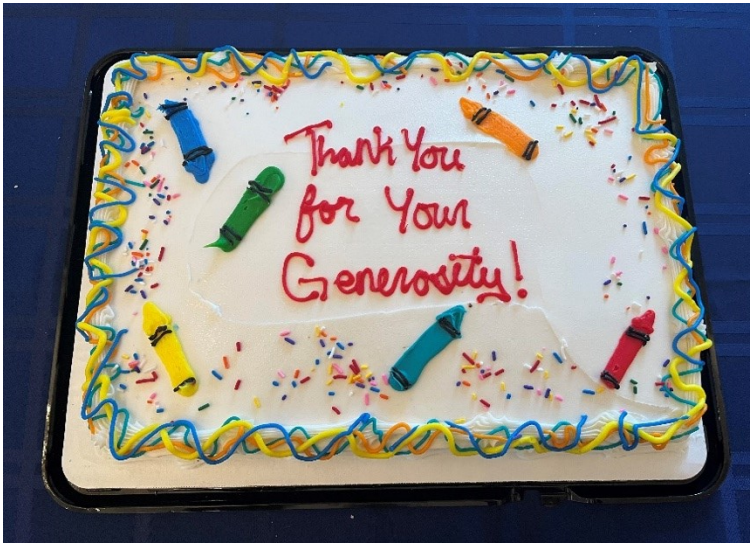
Above, Griet is dishing out delicious lunch at the Sugar Plum Café.



Pastor Rick enjoys a hot drink as he roams the buildings.



Generosity



Thank you to all who have pledged and provided financial support to UCCB to keep our ministries strong in 2024, and as we look ahead to 2025. These financial gifts complement all the other ways you contribute to this faith community with your hearts and hands – thank you!

As we reflect on the past year and look ahead, we **imagine together** the ways we will combine our spirit, energy, and resources to Welcome All, Care for the World, and Grow in the Spirit.

As we plan for 2025, we look forward to:

- Welcoming a new pastor to our vibrant congregation,
- Collaborating with and caring for our neighbors and tending to the earth in all ways,
- Bringing ages together to worship and grow together spiritually,
- Continuing to Open Doors and hearts faithfully in the community as we grow God's love in the world

What will this faith community **imagine together** as we are called to learn, to act, and to support in the new year?

If you would like to pledge your financial support to UCCB and are viewing this electronically, you may click [here](#) to submit your pledge directly to the church office. Alternatively, you may speak to a member of the generosity team or contact Nikki in the church office, boxborochurch@verizon.net.

New to the practice of pledging? We invite you to participate in the practice of gratitude by making a yearly pledge of financial support to our daily life and ministries. Your commitment in response to God's blessings makes a tangible impact on our worship, community life, and outreach to our neighbors. Thank you!

Are you looking to complete your financial pledge for the 2024 year or simply donate before yearend? You can do so by:

- **Check:** You may mail a check directly to the church or drop it off in person.
- **Give+ Text:** Text the amount of your donation to 978-776-3110. You will then be asked to enter your debit or credit card information.
- **Online:** You may donate funds online through our church's website, either with a one-time donation or by establishing an automatic, recurring charge directly from your financial institution or to your debit/credit card. There is a processing fee in either case, but it is lower for payments made directly from your financial institution.
- **Bill Pay:** If you pay your bills online, you can set up a recurring monthly payment through your bill pay service that can be mailed automatically to UCCB. Please have the payment mailed to UCCB. This option has no fees for you or the church.

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Continued from page 8—Generosity

Questions or suggestions? Please contact a member of your Generosity Team: Jeff Glidden, Kellie Senghas, Rev. Dr. Jill Edens or Rev. Richard Edens.

Thank you for all the ways in which you give generously to this faith community, including with your financial gifts, as we look ahead to 2025 and beyond.

Advent Christmas Cookie Swap & Sale



The Fellowship Ministry Team's annual Christmas cookie swap and sale will be held on **December 15th**. Please join us and take home an assortment of delicious home-made cookies for the holidays!

Participate as a "swapper" by donating a minimum of four dozen home-made cookies and receive one dozen free cookies in return. The remaining cookies will be available for purchase by the congregation. If you're interested in being a swapper, please see the sign-up in the Gathering Room or contact Deb Simmons (508-439-2891 or dllmcgrath@comcast.net for more information.

The sale will be held in the Gathering Room immediately following worship. Proceeds from the sale will be used to fund future Fellowship events.



Christmas Stars

All of the Christmas Stars have been spoken for. Please place gifts in a large bag/box with your star's #/name in the Gathering room by Sunday Dec. 08 (or sooner). Any questions?

Contact Darcy Sidwell darcysidwell@gmail.com.

Sit and Sew

Sit and sew is canceled for December. However, we will keep the room reserved for Wednesday, January 8, 2025



Liam and Laurel ring the bell before the service.

United Church of Christ, Congregational
723 Massachusetts Avenue
Boxborough, Massachusetts 01719

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

December 2024

www.boxboroughucc.org

978-263-7387

boxborochurch@verizon.net

Vestry News articles, ideas and submissions are welcome and due the 24th of each month. The Vestry News is published prior to the first Sunday of each month.

Please submit to:

hmatthew25@verizon.net

