

# Spirit & Sparks

DECEMBER 2011



The Congregational Church of Weston, UCC, 130 Newton Street, Weston, MA 02493  
www.congwestonucc.net 781-899-5417 781-647-1165-fax

## PASTOR & TEACHER REFLECTIONS FOR DECEMBER

Advent invites us to seek to live not only in time but with a sense of timelessness, by which I suppose I mean God's time. Advent's call to watch, to wait, and to expect also ties past and future time together into timeless presence. Henri Nouwen writes in his *Genesee Diary*:

*The expectation of Advent is anchored in the event of God's incarnation. The more I come in touch with what happened in the past, the more I come in touch with what is to come. The Gospel not only reminds me of what took place but also of what will take place. In the contemplation of Christ's first coming, I can discover the signs of his second coming. By looking back in meditation, I can look forward in expectation. By reflection, I can project; by conserving the memory of Christ's birth, I can progress to the fulfillment of his kingdom.*

How different is this participation in a sensibility for *kairos* time, God's fulfilling time, from the frenzied demands of living in *chronos* time, especially the demands of consumerist Christmas. For instance, I am writing this editorial on what has been coined as Black Friday, the day when maniacal Christmas spending sprees hopefully tip the fiscal calendar out of red ink and into the black for the fiscal year. Enter John the Baptist inviting us all to repent and have our sanity saved!

The narrow spirit of Black Friday is best redeemed by a deepened spirit of Purple Sundays, when we seek to read the signs of Christ's heather-hewed inking into the world, long ago but not yet; forever arrived and yet forever coming.

How might we dwell not just in frenzied time but in quieting timelessness? Purple Sundays! Quiet Thursday morning communings! An advent

meditation book upon the bedside stand! A quiet walk on a pinewoods trail! -Moments when one simply chooses to shut it all down, all the busyness outside and the infernal noise within, just to "be still and know that God is God." -To cease all the doing for those restorative moments of just being, until you and I sense the great and finally unfathomable mystery of God's timeless time in your and my most precious time, the great gift of each of our own finite life times. And thus to be alive not only in body, but in spirit!

Faithfully,

Joe Mayher  
Pastor and Teacher



# ADVENT

## The Congregational Church of Weston, UCC

130 Newton Street, Weston, MA

*"How silently, how silently the wondrous gift is given.  
Let us be expectant, that we may receive the gift we need,  
so that we may become the gifts others need." - Ted Loder*

- Sundays - 10:30 am Worship and Faith Discovery with Children
- Thursday Morning Communions in the Meditation Room  
December 1, 8, 15 and 22 at 7:30 am
  - Trim-a-Tree - December 3 from 4:00 to 7:00 pm  
Crafts, Potluck Supper and Carol Sing
  - Christmas Pageant Sunday - December 18 at 10:30 am  
A special Christmas story brought to life by Faith Discovery children
  - Moravian Love Feast - December 24 at 4:00 pm  
Unique service designed especially for children who receive a sugar cookie and a cup of hot chocolate during singing of traditional carols, closing with all rising with lit beeswax candles singing "Morning Star" as a large Moravian star is illuminated
  - Festival of Lessons and Carols - December 24 at 8:00 pm  
Lighting of Advent sconces and communion table candles to scripture, lessons of the Christmas story with anthems and carols, and closing with "Silent Night" by candlelight
  - Christmas Morning Family Worship at 10:30 am  
A Christmas story for all ages, carol sing and communion in the round

All are invited to join us for a meaningful Advent season!

For more information call 781.899.5417 or visit our website at [www.congwestonucc.net](http://www.congwestonucc.net)

## WORSHIP FOR DECEMBER 2011

### December 4 – 10:30 A.M. Second Sunday in Advent & Communion

*Preparing the Way*

Isaiah 40: 1-11 & Mark 1: 1-8

### December 11 – Third Sunday in Advent

*Announcing the Way*

Isaiah 61: 1-3 & Luke 1: 26-38

### December 18 – Fourth Sunday in Advent & Pageant Sunday

*Celebrating the Way (with Claude the Camell!)*

Psalm 89: 1-4 & Micah 5: 2-5a

### December 24 – 4:00 P.M. – Moravian Love Feast

A service for children and families that includes traditional Christmas carols accompanied by a trombone trio, the distribution of sugar cookies and hot chocolate during worship, and the lighting of a Moravian star over the chancel as a child sings “Morning Star” and all hold their lit candles to the star. A very special tradition brought to us by Dr. Ralph (Skip) and Shirley Earle, based on Skip’s boyhood experience at the Central Moravian Church in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

### 8:00 – Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Our own traditional service of lessons, carols and anthems sung by our Senior Choir.

The Christmas Story is narrated from the King James Version, and the service concludes with the congregation forming a circle around the sanctuary with candles lit from the Christ candle and all sing “Silent Night.”

### December 25 – Christmas Day Worship & Communion

*Lighting the Way*

Isaiah 52: 7-10 & John 1: 1-14



### ADVENT COMMUNING

Half hour services will be held on **Thursday mornings, December 1, 8, 15 and 22 at 7:30 am** in our lovely Meditation Room behind the Sanctuary. These simple services will feature an Advent reading, a scripture lesson, recorded music, communion, and silence. Come, and empty yourself, that you might the more be filled with that peace which passes all understanding.

# Faith Discovery for Children



We enter now the quiet waiting that is Advent, the start of a new church year. It's hard to keep that quiet when we are faced with so many holiday "must do's", but try we do! Faith Discovery for Children offers a wonderful opportunity for family centering during this season. The purple booklet, **Advent-Christmas-Epiphany at Home**, offers a weekly Bible verse and a question that invites family members to share with one another. A lit candle and a short prayer your family knows, and you've got the makings for a meaningful Advent, a blessed counter-balance to external busyness.

And this year, you can also pick up a **Be A Blessing Advent Chain**. Each day suggests a different way to be a blessing. The image can be colored and instructions are included for linking the days together into a chain. Find them on the Faith Discovery table

Pageant preparations are well underway. In this year's pageant, *Bethlehem Road*, the pageant animals, Sheila Sheep, Shaggy Donkey and Claude Camel each contribute to the story as told in the Bible. And there's even a roll for the congregation!



Here is the schedule for classes and pageant preparation:

**December 4: Pageant Preparation BEFORE worship: 9:30 - 10:25** in the library. We'll continue learning the song. Then move to the Pathfinder room to read through the script and begin fitting costumes. There is regular class this Sunday after Time with Children.

**December 11: Pageant Preparation starting at 10:30 AM.** Children will go directly to the Explorer's room. We'll practice our anthem, finish fitting costumes if necessary, and read through the pageant. After class, there's a **Pageant run-through in the sanctuary, 11:45 AM- 1 PM.** We will, as in past years, offer a non-sweet snack IN the sanctuary for the children before we run the entire service, including the anthem and the pageant itself.

There's a lot to squeeze in, and it's really helpful to have the highest attendance rate we can muster! Call if you have any questions. And let's pray for no snow!

**December 18:** Children arrive at 9:30 AM SHARP for run-through in the Sanctuary.

**December 25:** Intergenerational worship at 10:30 AM. There will be NO nursery care for First Steppers this Sunday.

## YOUTH MINISTRY NEWS FOR DECEMBER

**Middle & Senior High Youth Groups** – No special gatherings this month, but stay tuned for important information about programming in the new year! And we hope to see all at Trim-a-Tree on Saturday, December 3!

**Confirmation Class** – Our four Confirmands will meet with advisors on December 11 at 4:30 in the afternoon, at a place yet to be announced (so watch

those emails). The Session will begin with a reflection about the meaning of Advent, and conclude with a Christmas sharing. This will include the exchange of gifts that are not purchased, but the giving away of a personal item by which all can share a little part of one's life story.

### HOLIDAY GIFT BAZAAR AT CCW - After worship on December 11<sup>h</sup>!



**Invite** your favorite shopping friends to the CCW Holiday Gift Bazaar! The Bazaar will take place after worship on Sunday,

December 11, the perfect time for picking up teachers' gifts, stocking stuffers, that something special for someone special and more!

**Share** your talents and handiwork with others! Are you a photographer? Jewelry maker? Knitter? Sewer? Crafter? Painter? Baker?

#### How can you help?

**\*Donate** arts, crafts, baked goods, etc. Drop off at the Church, Tuesday thru Friday, 8am-noon; Sundays, 9:30-10:30am.

**\*Shop** until you drop on Sunday, December 11 from 11:30am to 12:30pm and bring a friend!

**\*Clean-up** from 12:30-1:30pm on December 11

For more information, please contact Robin Gunderson at [robin@thegundersons.com](mailto:robin@thegundersons.com) or at 978-443-0211.

**Vera Rubin-violin & Yevgenia Semeina- piano**

Present a new program

*All time favorites: violin encores and vocal masterpieces*

*Guest artist Stephen Ng –tenor*

**Saturday, December 17, 2011 7.00P.M.**

The Congregational Church of Weston, UCC  
130 Newton St., Weston, MA

A Reception will follow

**Tickets at the door Adults- \$25.00, Students and seniors- \$10.00  
Order tickets by phone: 617-320-2340, group discount is available**

## CONGREGATIONAL ENVISIONING

Your input is vital to the Congregational Envisioning process! Thank you to the many who have completed the congregational survey, the youth survey and the children's survey. If you have not yet done so, please email Robin [robin@thegundersons.com](mailto:robin@thegundersons.com) for a form or go to Survey Monkey today at [www.surveymonkey.com/s/RYQNJK9](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/RYQNJK9) We will share the results with all in the coming weeks.

Our thanks also to those who gathered at Catherine's and Larry's to discern together the thirsts we have as individuals and those we perceive as a faith community and in the larger community. If you were unable to attend and are interested in gathering in this way, please sign-up on the bulletin board outside the Church office and we will work to find a date that works for all who wish to do so. We will share notes from these gatherings, as well.



## OUTREACH NEWS

It is that time of year again when we support the **City Mission Society Christmas Shop**. In the past, over 4,000 individuals have been helped through your generosity of donating new items like clothing and toys. **Our collection day will be Sunday, December 4th, the day after Trim-A-Tree.** It is not necessary to wrap your contributions because the CMS Christmas Shop allows individuals in need to purchase new items for their families below market value. If you are able to donate this year, please consult the information below for the desired items.

**CMS Gift Suggestions:** **NEW** items only. Items are listed by priority:

- Size large winter coats, sweaters, & sweatshirts
- Hats, mittens, gloves, & scarves
- Socks & underwear
- Blankets and backpacks
- Toys, games, & books for all ages

This month, Priscilla, Ann Marie and Robin are reaching out to community leaders to invite them into the process. We are asking three questions: What impressions, if any, do you have of our congregation? What trends and challenges are you seeing in our community / with those you serve today? What unmet needs do you see in our community / with those you serve? If you have suggestions for leaders you think we should reach out to, please let us know.

The Stewards are committed to communicating throughout the Envisioning process and hope that all will share their input, comments, questions, concerns and ideas. Please reach out to the Stewards Council at any time: Larry Carr, Priscilla Claman, Robin Gunderson, Ann Marie Kreft, and Tom Nicholson.

With appreciation,

Robin Kampmann Gunderson  
Cell: 617-283-7952

- A gift card from Target, Walgreens, CVS, Kohl's Wal-mart, Stop & Shop, and Shaw's as well as other merchants.

All CMS Gifts will be delivered by Paul and Jessica Schendel who already have volunteered. Thank you, Paul and Jessica.

Another thank you goes to Cathy Liddell and the Higgins family for shopping, cooking, and serving at Bristol Lodge on Thanksgiving weekend.

Watch your mail for information about our special **Christmas collection for WATCH**, the Waltham Alliance to Create Housing. This monetary collection will be received on Christmas Sunday, December 18, and at the Christmas Eve services.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!! From all of us on the Outreach Committee,  
Rebekah Lord Gardiner

## DECEMBER 2011 REMINDERS

<u>Date</u>	<u>Altar Flowers</u>	<u>Ushers#</u>	<u>Fellowship Hour#</u>	<u>Light Bearer</u>
12/4		Bonner		Kai Townsend
12/11	Baron(P)	Sikes & Smith		Mikayla Higgins
12/18 Pageant		K. Wilkins & Baron		Daniel Brown
12/24 Moravian 4pm	Bjorkman			n/a
12/24 8pm	Bjorkman	Baron & _____		n/a
12/25	Bjorkman	Bjorkman	Von Lichtenberg	Hannah Brown

Please sign up to help in the Events Binder on the Information Station or call the church (781-899-5417).

# Instructions for Ushering or hosting Fellowship Hour are in the Events Binder.

(P) Perennial Donor

## STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN REPORT

Thanksgiving is a time to reflect and be thankful for all the good in our lives. It is of course a time to Count Our (spiritual) Blessings. As members of a kind and caring church community, we are thankful for the Congregational Church of Weston, and for the blessings bestowed upon us through our congregation.

This year I am thankful for the many Stewardship pledges we have received already, and for the generosity of those who have made those pledges. It

is through our Stewardship that the CCW will continue its mission of inward and outward giving. If you have not yet had a chance to complete your Stewardship pledge for the coming year, then please take a few moments **now** to Count **Your Blessings** and be as generous in spirit, time, and money as you are able.

Alex von Lichtenberg  
Chair, Stewardship Campaign

## COUNTRYSIDE PLAYSCHOOL ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR 2012-13

Countryside Playschool, founded in September 1986, is a wonderful transitional program for two year olds. There are only nine children in the program with a staff of two teachers. All the toys, books and playground equipment are developmentally appropriate for 2 year-old children. Each child's continual need to grow is encouraged through:

- Access to a rich environment;

- Stimulating social interactions;
- Support, recognition, and affection;
- A safe and protected atmosphere in which to separate, explore and grow more independent;
- Daily reports to parents augmented by conferences..

For more info and to schedule a tour, send an email to the Director, Melissa Adler at: [countrysideplayschool@gmail.com](mailto:countrysideplayschool@gmail.com)

## FAITH COMMUNITY NEWS

### *Birthdays*

December 4 Kristen Reeder  
4 Marianne Fricke  
8 Betty Whitney  
18 Connie Carter  
21 Sukie Dickie



December 22 Isabel Ramsey  
22 Rob Fricke  
23 Daniel Brown  
23 Cindy Mayher  
25 Jack Salerno

### *Anniversaries :*

December 29 Mary Cross & Jack Salerno



### *Joys shared are doubled!*

**Congratulations** to Nick & Amy (nee Schendel) Miller on the birth of their daughter, Sage, on November 18.

### **May we include...**

...your birthday, anniversary, celebration, announcement, and concerns for prayer in our monthly Faith Community News? Please forward your information to Susan Kuhr (781-899-5417 or [skuhrccw@comcast.net](mailto:skuhrccw@comcast.net).)



## **HOSPITALITY MINISTRY UPDATE!**

All are invited to help live out the 2011-12 church-wide goal adopted by the Church Council:

***To extend an extravagant welcome to one another and others to join us in worship, hospitality and service.***

### **Ways to Welcome:**



**Don your nametag** on Sunday mornings! If yours is missing or needs updating, please fill out the nametag request/change form located on the hallway information station and leave on Susan's desk in the main office.



**Extend at least one invitation** to an upcoming gathering or special worship service. Look for a list of Advent gatherings and special worship services in your Sunday bulletin and on the hallway information station. Watch for easy-to-forward e-mail invitations and consider who to invite to join you!

Do you have an idea for a welcoming event? Where there is energy, interest, and leadership, there is hospitality...an opportunity to connect with one another and others! Contact Robin ([robin@thegundersons.com](mailto:robin@thegundersons.com) or 978-443-0211.)

### **Coffee, Tea or Juice?**

Please consider **hosting one Sunday morning this month**. Connect with another family and share the fun! Beverages, simple foods, and a smile are all that is needed. Look for the new "How To" sheet in the front of the binder on the information station. Sign up in the binder or contact the church office ([skuhrccw@comcast.net](mailto:skuhrccw@comcast.net) or 781-899-5417.)

### **Find us on Face book and at weston.patch.com!**

And in the *Town Crier*, at [www.congwestonucc.net](http://www.congwestonucc.net), and on the roadside! Add your comments at [weston.patch.com](http://weston.patch.com). If you have additional ideas for inviting one another and others, please contact Robin (978-443-0211 or [robin@thegundersons.com](mailto:robin@thegundersons.com).)



## DECEMBER 2011

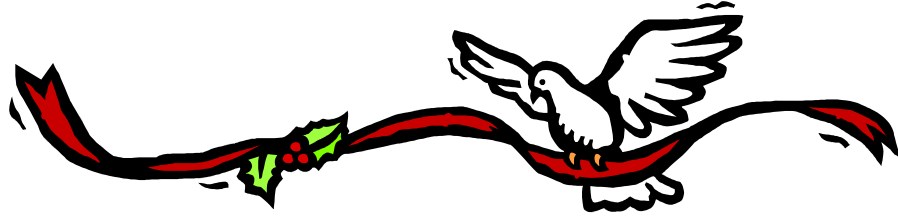


<b>Thu Dec 1</b>	7:30am	Advent Communion
	4:00pm	WWS Learning Center
	7:15pm	Women's Spirit
	7:30pm	Council's Stewards
<b>Sat Dec 3</b>	9:00am	Kreynes Violin Lessons
	11:00am	Organist Rehearsal - Sanctuary
	4:00pm	Trim-A-Tree & Potluck
<b>Sun Dec 4</b>	9:30am	Pageant Preparation - Explorer's CE Classroom
	10:30am	2nd Sunday in Advent & Communion – CMS Gift Collection
	4:00pm	Spirit of Life Catholic Service
<b>Mon Dec 5</b>	1:30pm	Music Lessons - CE classrooms
	2:30pm	WWS Learning Center
<b>Tue Dec 6</b>	3:00pm	Photo Shoot
	7:00pm	Deacons
<b>Wed Dec 7</b>	2:00pm	Hammil Chorus
	4:00pm	Kreynes Violin Lessons
<b>Thu Dec 8</b>	7:30am	Advent Communion
	11:00am	Meditation Room in Use
	12:00pm	Seniors' Luncheon - Gathering Space
	4:00pm	WWS Learning Center
<b>Sat Dec 10</b>	9:00am	MA Music Therapists - Gathering Space
	9:00am	Kreynes Violin Lessons
	11:00am	Organist Rehearsal - Sanctuary
	4:00pm	Piano Recital - Sanctuary
<b>Sun Dec 11</b>	10:30am	3rd Sunday in Advent Worship
	11:30am	Holiday Gift Bazaar - Gathering Room
	11:45am	Pageant Rehearsal - Sanctuary
	4:00pm	Spirit of Life Catholic Service
	4:30pm	Confirmation Class - TBD by email
<b>Mon Dec 12</b>	1:30pm	Music Lessons - CE classrooms
	2:30pm	WWS Learning Center
<b>Tue Dec 13</b>	10:00am	Clergy Team - Library
	1:00pm	Spiritual Direction
<b>Wed Dec 14</b>	8:00am	Spiritual Direction
	2:00pm	Hammil Chorus
	4:00pm	Kreynes Violin Lessons
<b>Thu Dec 15</b>	7:30am	Advent Communion
	10:00am	MACUCC New Clergy
	3:00pm	Spiritual Direction - Meditation Room
	4:00pm	WWS Learning Center

<b>Sat Dec 17</b>	9:00am	Kreyne's Violin Lessons
	11:00am	Organist Rehearsal - Sanctuary
	7:00pm	Organ & Violin Concert - Sanctuary
<b>Sun Dec 18</b>	10:30am	4th Advent & Pageant Sunday
	4:00pm	Spirit of Life Catholic Service
<b>Mon Dec 19</b>	1:30pm	Music Lessons - CE classrooms
	2:30pm	WWS Learning Center
<b>Tue Dec 20</b>	8:00am	S&S Article Deadline
<b>Wed Dec 21</b>	4:00pm	Kreyne's Violin Lessons
<b>Thu Dec 22</b>	7:30am	Advent Communion
	4:00pm	WWS Learning Center
<b>Fri Dec 23</b>	9:00am	Poinsettia Decorating
<b>Sat Dec 24</b>		WATCH Collection
	11:00am	Organist Rehearsal - Sanctuary
	4:00pm	Moravian Love Feast
	5:30pm	SOL Catholic Service
	8:00pm	Lessons & Carols
<b>Sun Dec 25</b>	10:30am	Intergenerational Christmas Worship
<b>Mon Dec 26</b>	1:30pm	Music Lessons - CE classrooms
	2:30pm	WWS Learning Center
<b>Wed Dec 28</b>	8:00am	Spiritual Direction
	4:00pm	Kreyne's Violin Lessons
<b>Thu Dec 29</b>	4:00pm	WWS Learning Center
<b>Sat Dec 31</b>	9:00am	Kreyne's Violin Lessons
	11:00am	Organist Rehearsal - Sanctuary
	7:00pm	SOL Catholic Service - Sanctuary

For the latest listings, [www.congwestonucc.net](http://www.congwestonucc.net)





A

*Blessed & Holy  
Christmas  
to All*

