

UNITED COMMUNITY CURRENT



DECEMBER 2022

Email: Unitedcommunitychurchucc@gmail.com

Website: UCCSTJ.com



Pastor's Ponderings

The Best Present is Your Presence

I have overheard in many settings concerns about how tight money is as we approach this holiday season. I think inflation and other concerns might actually present us an opportunity as people of faith. As we continue to reconnect or build new relationships for the first time, I think we are all aware of the gifts we are to one another. Isolation resulting from necessary lockdowns and cancelled plans over the past few years proved that the people we love and are called to love are more important and meaningful than things. Staying at home and taking on many different tasks and projects could be fun at times, but we always sensed the missing space in our souls resulting from our being apart.



For this Christmas think less of the gifts we might acquire at a store, but focus on the gift that is you. The best present is your presence. The way to be the most generous this Christmas is with your time and your sharing of your spiritual gifts and talents with this congregation and our community. This Advent season will present many opportunities for you to share your presence from our Building Rededication during

worship on December 4 to our weekly Advent Study Tuesday mornings, we will rejoice together in our being together.

Blessings,

Rev. Andrew Ponder-Williams



Church Council Members

Phil Brown, Moderator
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Alice Kitchel, Assistant Moderator
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Kris Norris, Stewardship

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Alice Kitchel, Outreach

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Last Minute Instructions



Warming up the Rolls

Kitchen Crew Hard at Work!



Happy New Year!

As we enter the season of Advent we also begin a new Liturgical year. It seems like a good time to take stock of what we've accomplished as a congregation in the past few months and the initiatives that your Church Council is taking as we move forward.

MODERATOR



- ◆ Although COVID remains a concern, our church building is now fully open with regular office hours and in-person Worship every Sunday in addition to our online and recorded offerings.
- ◆ Our kitchen and dining area/fellowship hall are completely recovered from the February 2021 flood. The kitchen has new insulation and interior walls, new stove and griddle and new flooring in addition to extensive cleaning and painting. The dining area has new flooring and new tables and chairs. After First Night, we will be needing volunteers to help finish painting the dining room walls.
- ◆ Wednesday Community Lunch was reactivated in September with volunteer and dining participation increasing every week. In addition, a weekly Friday “sandwich” lunch began in November with plans to continue through the winter.
- ◆ The community is returning to our building as well. The October 1st Yard Sale raised at least \$2000 to support the dining room renovations. We welcomed over 2000 visitors to the “Haunted Sanctuary” on Halloween. St. J. Town Band returned with their annual Veterans’ Day and Holiday concerts, St. J. Players presented summer and holiday programming and there is a full program of performances planned for our sanctuary space on First Night.
- ◆ With all this renewed activity the Council is in the process of finalizing an updated Building Use Policy. This policy includes a fee schedule for use of church spaces along with specific guidance, particularly for use of the sanctuary and kitchen.
- ◆ The Council approved a Safe Church Policy in May of 2020. Copies of this policy are now posted in the church office as well as on each floor of the building. We are asking all volunteers to review this policy and sign the acknowledgement form. As part of our Safe Church program, background checks are being done for all staff and regular volunteers.
- ◆ One challenge with re-opening the building has been controlling access to areas that are not generally available to the public. As a result, we have found it necessary to lock the kitchen area when it is not in use. The church office, custodian and leadership are able to provide access when needed.
- ◆ There have been significant expenses with recovery from the flood and reopening the building for ministry and community use. In addition, the parsonage and the food shelf buildings have needed repairs as they have been returned to active use. We are using grants and asking community users to help support our building(s). We ask friends and members of the congregation to consider how they can most appropriately support the ministry of United Community Church as we move into the year ahead and a future of ministry together.

Blessings for our ministry together,
Phil Brown

Putting up 150 Take Out meals



Setting the tables

Bus Boys—
Elijah and Andre



Pies from St.
Johnsbury Academy
Culinary Students

Ministry Reports

Worship & Care

Advent is here and we begin a new season. Plans are being made for worship. Come Home for Christmas is the theme for this special season. On December 4th we will be having a building rededication as the spiritual home United Community Church. December 11th we will dedicate the poinsettias that will be taken to those in our family who are not able to attend. If you can help deliver, one or more poinsettias, contact the office.

Christmas Eve service will be Saturday, December 24 at 7:30 pm. Invite a friend or family member to join us in this service of Lessons and Carols. Christmas Day falls on a Sunday and we will be having worship, consisting mostly of Christmas carols. Plan on joining us as we celebrate Jesus' birth.

Looking ahead, we will be swinging into Epiphany with Swing North Big Band's Swinging Epiphany program on January 6, 2023 from 7—8:30 pm here at United Community Church.

As always, there is a need for readers and ushers/greeters. A big thank you to everyone who has volunteered. The sign-up is available on Google docs if you are technological or a sign-up sheet is also available each Sunday at church. Please consider signing up for these parts of the service. Acolytes also are needed each week – people of all ages are welcome to light the candles during the Prelude!

Outreach



As a ministry, we want to thank all who have been helping us with our Outreach projects. The Haunted Sanctuary was a wonderful success with the many people who enjoyed themselves walking through our "scary" sanctuary. We also had many who stopped to have their picture taken by Barry Hayes who shared his profits with us to the tune of \$70 for the discretionary fund (used mostly to buy gas cards to help people get to dr. appointments) and also to watch the Halloween shorts playing in the fellowship hall and eat popcorn.

Thanks to Beth and Kris Norris for spearheading the Community Thanksgiving Meal. We had many volunteers from UCC and the community who put up 150 take out meals and served almost 90 in person meals. KCS and Beth-el Synagogue will be working together to provide a Christmas Day meal for the com-



munity to be served out of our kitchen. Volunteers are needed especially for making desserts.

Spiritual Formation & Nurture



Advent Bible Study is beginning on Tuesday November 29th at 10 am. Rev Andrew Ponder Williams will be leading the Bible study in the tower Chapel on Tuesday Mornings

We will be working on special candles for Christmas eve. This project will be worked on during December fellowship times after church. Our Christmas pageant will be a readers theater. No rehearsals and all are invited to be involved.

Confirmation classes will be together with the Littleton UCC and led by both pastors. Look for more information in the new year.

We want to publicly thank Newcomb for his contributions to our ministry through covid and transition of pastors. Your involvement was appreciated.

Stewardship

Stewardship continues to be involved in many projects and have meetings with staff every other week. Much needed maintenance has recently been completed in the food shelf building. New supports have been added to level the building, new floors have been installed and new windows replaced to winterize the building. Much of this was supported by a KCS grant.

Paul is continuously working on repair issues in both the apartments and the church building. Many overlooked issues seem to be improved in both places, but some projects are still looming over us such as the roofing and mortar work. We will be working on bids and grants for some of the heavier issues in upcoming months.

The council has been very supportive working with stewardship on many issues relating to worship, as well. Phil has worked on our worship presentations and video setup. Currently we are working on a method of providing listening aide to all of our hearing impaired members. Many thanks to Phil for all his work in providing an improved worship experience for all of us.

Reach Out



We now have a new gas card policy. Assistance is being spread out over a longer time frame. Donations for the fund are greatly appreciated. We also could use donations for

(continued on page 4)



Have you visited our Facebook page? [UnitedCommunityChurchUCC](https://www.facebook.com/UnitedCommunityChurchUCC)

When was the last time you checked out the website? UCCSTJ.com



REACH OUT *(continued from page 3)*

Frannie and Ted's cupboard are also needed. This past month we assisted with 3 gas cards, 4 diaper requests, and 1 visit to Frannie and Ted's Cupboards

Rentals

The boilers have all been cleaned and started up for the winter. Please remember to move cars for the plow after storms.



Projects from staff:

- Lollipop Wednesday
- Assisted Worship and Care with coverage and planning services.
- Meeting with stewardship.
- Helping Andrew settle in to the church and parsonage
- Helped people with questions about building use and scheduling
- Staff development
- Exploring new apps to help organize meetings and tasks.
- presentation making part of the worship service
- website/ facebook
- Contacting contractors for bids on various projects.
- Supporting and advertising community lunch
- Marketing
- Gas cards
- Assist with planning of installation service
- Maintaining and opening of chapel.
- Thanksgiving Dinner organization
- Helping with Hospice Service of Remembrance

Offerings

	Nov.	July-Nov. (YTD)
Offering	4,118.00	24,086.00
In Kind offerings	0.00	0.00
Loose Offerings	297.13	1,074.58
VANCO Offerings	300.00	1,690.00
Total Offerings	4,715.13	26,850.58
Directed Donations	12,411.75	44,356.82
Wider Mission	135.00	467.00
Local Mission	115.00	1300.00
Total Mission	250.00	1767.00
	Mission	Offering
2023	\$4,780.00	\$70,000.00
% of budgeted amt	37.0%	38.4%

Mission Statement

As one body in communion with God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit, we, the members of United Community Church covenant with one another to care for and love each other as Jesus Christ loves us, and to maintain, support, and foster a compassionate ministry in our community and throughout all God's creation

Gift Alternatives

(especially for those who have "everything")

Co-op Christmas Gifts

Kingdom Community Services' Co-Op Christmas tags listing presents for a needy senior or a child not covered by the town's Santa Fund are available from the office. Please return unwrapped gifts by December 11th.

Christmas Fund

Remember our "Veterans of the Cross" with the Christmas Fund The Christmas Fund helps provide pension and health premium supplementation to low-income retirees, emergency assistance to the families of clergy and lay employees and Christmas "Thank You" gift checks. The Christmas Fund provides a lifeline of hope to many lower-income active and retired clergy and lay employees in the United Church of Christ.

Church World Service

While you are out shopping consider purchasing a item or two and donating it for clean-up buckets, hygiene kits, or school kits. Give a card to family member, friend, or acquaintance telling them of your donation and how it could be used. More information is at www.cwsglobal.org

Heifer International

Choose a gift from their catalog to honor friends and/or family. These gifts help struggling families lift themselves out of poverty. Go to heifer.org/catalog for more information.

Kingdom Community Services Food Shelf

The KCS Food Shelf has a real need for canned vegetables and fruit at this time. Besides food items, household products such as toilet paper, paper towels, toiletries, detergent, dish soap, etc. are also needed. We appreciate your help in this on-going effort of feeding our neighbors.



UNITED COMMUNITY CHURCH

CHURCH APPAREL ORDER FORM



Cathedral T-Shirt (\$25)

Women's

Men's

Small

Medium

Large

XL

XXL



St. J Scale T-Shirt (\$25)

Women's

Men's

Small

Medium

Large

XL

XXL

Thanksgiving Dinner Volunteers: Beth & Kris Norris, Chef Josh Lyford, Reinetta, Jim, Lauren, Erika, Vicki, Ashley, Elijah, Jessica Dwayne, Ken, Heidi, Anna & family, Daisy, Betty, Jonathan, Sarah, Sam, Neil, Jackie, Lance, Andre, Becca, Nick, Larry, Rick, Rhonda, Chef David Hale & SJA Culinary Students, Barbara. *(I apologize if I missed someone)*



Hoodie (\$35)

- Small
- Medium
- Large
- XL
- XXL



Hat (\$20)

Add up your total:

Your Name

Phone

Email

Please make out a check to United Community Church and put "apparel" in memo line. If paying in cash please put in an envelope and label it "apparel order" and provide your name. Please submit this form and payment to Church Office.

YOUNG AND THE YOUNG AT HEART PAGE

Children's bulletins are available at our worship services as well as downloadable from the Constant Contact with the worship materials and on the website: uccstj.com.

Puzzle!

Take a break from Christmas preparations to complete this seasonal crossword.

DOWN

- song
- keeper of sheep
- Angelic One
- a gift of the magi
- red plants
- coming
- Jesus _____
- 12th month (abbrev)
- BBB
- a form of holly
- heavenly messengers
- to be ordered the slaughter of the innocents

ACROSS

- wise men
- author of the most famous Christmas account
- red-suited gift-giver
- of Ephrothah
- angels
- Gabriel came to her
- has a red nose
- "Messiah" composer
- northern Bible helpers
- patron saint of children
- made flesh
- home for Mary
- tree decorations
- crib
- he was a carpenter
- a town



Answer: DOWN 1. carol, 2. shepherd, 3. Messiah, 8. gold, 9. poinsettias, 11. Advent, 13. Christ, 14. dec, 18. inn, 20. mistletoe, 22. angels, 26. Herod; ACROSS 3. magi, 4. Luke, 5. Santa, 6. Bethlehem, 7. gifts, 10. Mary, 12. Rudolph, 15. Handel, 16. elves, 17. Saint Nick, 19. incarnation, 21. Nazareth, 23. ornaments, 24. manger, 25. Joseph, 27. star

PUZZLE



Seeking the story

Angels joyfully announced a special arrival in Bethlehem at Christmas.

Directions: Find the words listed below. Then unscramble the intersecting letters to complete Luke 2:11, NIV.



WORD BANK

Shepherds
Child
Nazareth
Census
Baby
David
Mary
Travel
Town
Register
Born
Night


T	B	W	Y	A	Z	K	E	S	H	N	G	D	J	K
Q	O	Y	A	P	R	A	L	B	F	P	I	C	Q	L
N	R	W	X	B	E	Y	R	M	B	D	M	O	E	E
S	N	O	N	W	G	A	I	B	A	C	D	O	T	D
R	G	X	J	F	I	W	M	V	B	R	R	C	E	O
P	S	C	E	N	S	U	S	H	Y	U	Y	F	P	N
O	T	P	I	G	T	Q	C	N	T	G	M	U	S	T
O	A	N	D	B	E	C	H	I	L	D	N	Z	F	A
A	T	B	A	U	R	W	H	G	F	V	A	B	U	M
T	R	A	V	E	L	J	C	H	V	O	Z	G	N	H
F	B	Q	I	W	D	X	P	T	E	N	A	O	L	Q
Z	C	R	D	Q	S	H	E	P	H	E	R	D	S	V
R	U	V	Y	K	N	I	R	T	K	G	E	Y	I	R
K	V	A	Z	X	L	S	H	Y	T	P	T	J	S	K
L	L	E	S	M	J	Z	L	Q	R	U	H	V	W	X

"Today in the town of David a _____
has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord."

LUKE 2:11, NIV

Answer Savior

Story Stones










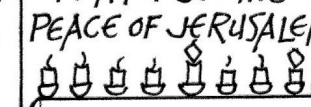



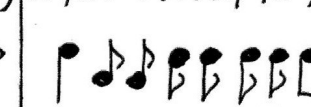




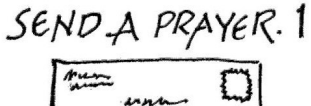
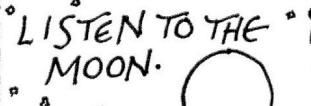


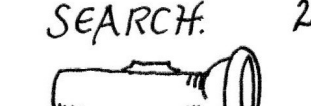
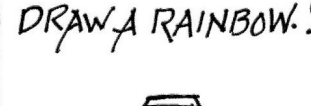






Share the good news of Jesus' birth in a creative way.

What you need:

- Newspaper
- Bible
- Smooth, clean stones
- Pencil
- Oil paint pens
- Adult help

What you do:

1. In a well-ventilated area, cover a work surface with newspaper.
2. Read Luke 2:1-20 and choose key people and places to draw.
3. In pencil, sketch one drawing on each stone.
4. Follow directions on paint pens to fill drawings with color. Let dry.
5. Hide stones for younger siblings to find, set out a new stone each day or order them in a row and tell the Nativity story.

SUN	<p>KEEP AWAKE. 27</p>  <p>LIGHT ONE CANDLE. MT. 24: 36-44</p>	<p>RECALL YOUR 4 BAPTISM.</p>  <p>LIGHT TWO CANDLES. MT. 3: 1-12</p>	<p>BE PATIENT. 11</p>  <p>LIGHT THREE CANDLES. JAS. 5: 7-10</p>	<p>FEEL SURPRISE. 18</p>  <p>LIGHT FOUR CANDLES. IS. 7: 10-16</p>	SUN
MON	<p>BE READY. 28</p>  <p>ROM. 13: 11-14</p>	<p>SEE THE STRANGERS. 5</p>  <p>IS. 49: 12, 13</p>	<p>SHOW LOVE. 12</p>  <p>JN. 13: 31-35</p>	<p>PRAY FOR THE PEACE OF JERUSALEM.</p>  <p>PS. 122</p>	MON
TUE	<p>CAN YOU SEE IT? 29</p>  <p>IS. 43: 18, 19</p>	<p>GIVE SECRETLY. 6</p>  <p>ST. NICHOLAS FMT. 6: 3, 4</p>	<p>LIFT A BURDEN. 13</p>  <p>MT. 11: 28-30</p>	<p>HEAR "MESSIAH." 20</p>  <p>IS. 9: 2-7</p>	TUE
WED	<p>LISTEN. 30</p>  <p>1 KINGS 19: 11, 12</p>	<p>PRAY FOR PEACE. 7</p>  <p>IS. 2: 1-4</p>	<p>INVITE A GUEST. 14</p>  <p>HEB. 13: 1, 2</p>	<p>WELCOME WINTER. 21</p>  <p>PS. 148</p>	WED
THU	<p>SEND A PRAYER. 1</p>  <p>COL. 1: 9, 10</p>	<p>LISTEN TO THE MOON. 8</p>  <p>PS. 19: 1-4</p>	<p>HANG GREENS. 15</p>  <p>JOSH. 24: 15</p>	<p>DREAM. 22</p>  <p>MT. 1: 18-25</p>	THU
FRI	<p>SEARCH. 2</p>  <p>MT. 7: 7, 8</p>	<p>DRAW A RAINBOW. 9</p>  <p>GEN. 9: 8-17</p>	<p>SHOW JOY. 16</p>  <p>IS. 55: 12</p>	<p>READ ALOUD. 23</p>  <p>LK. 2: 1-20</p>	FRI
SAT	<p>SHINE LIGHTS. 3</p>  <p>JN. 1: 1-5</p>	<p>TASTE SWEETNESS. 10</p>  <p>PS. 34: 8</p>	<p>REMEMBER. 17</p>  <p>DEUT. 32: 7</p>	<p>AND THE WORD BECAME FLESH. 24</p>  <p>JN. 1: 14</p>	SAT
<p>THE STARRY SPLENDORS OF THE NIGHT REVEAL CREATION'S BIRTHING LIGHT WHEN GOD FIRST CLEAVED THE NIGHT FROM DAY AND FORMED US FROM THE EARTHEN CLAY. THOUGH WOUNDED BY OUR THOUGHTLESS CARE, CREATION, BURDENED, YET WILL SHARE GOD'S LIGHT OF HOPE AND HEALING POWER THROUGH THOSE WHO HEED THE CALL THIS HOUR: TO BEAR THAT LIGHT WHICH BURNS WITHIN, OF CHRIST WHOSE BIRTH WE GREET AGAIN AND WHOSE RETURN WE HELP PREPARE WITH EV'RY LOVING GESTURE SHARED. THROUGH TENDER CARE THAT HEALS THE EARTH WE PRAISE THE ONE WHO GAVE IT BIRTH. SO MAY OUR LIVES, LIKE STARS ABOVE, BEAR WITNESS TO THE MAKER'S LOVE.</p>					



- 12/2 Jean Pulsifer
- 12/4 Bill Tobin
- 12/6 Donna Goodhue
Sam Lynch
- 12/9 Mark Russell
Lonnie Horn
- 12/21 Dennis Waldner
- 12/23 Christina Potter-
Jacobus
- 12/24 Evelyn Mulliken
- 12/26 Carew Magnus
Joan Knutsen
- 12/27 Bryan Sayles
Pam Smart
- 12/28 Shawn Locklin
Eamon Roosa
- 12/30 MacKenzie Beck
Greg Brown

- 12-24 Nancy & Jay Sprout
- 12-27 Marcial & Marie-Helene
Belanger Rodriguez-Arenal
- 12-30 John & Karen Colgrove

**Choir Rehearsal
December 4 & 18**



**Christmas Dinner
Sunday, December 25
United Community Church
Fellowship Hall**



Jean Rose Francis
June 10, 1945 - October 21, 2022

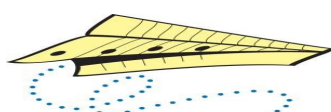
Thomas James Francis
September 1, 1944 - July 29, 2022

Lori Ann Parsons
August 12, 1962 - October 29, 2022

Amanda Cochrane's Father
November 26, 2022

In our Thoughts and Prayers

- | | | |
|-----------------------|--|-------------------------|
| Julie Brisson | | David Sargent |
| Bob Chapman | | Lorraine Scherer |
| Mary Feron | | Pam Smart |
| Joan Knutsen | | Trenholme family |
| Ed Magnus | | Jane Vinton |
| Parson/Kellogg family | | Gail Warnaar and family |
| Raser family | | |



If we have missed your birthday or anniversary **please** let either Barbara or Erika know at 802-748-2603 or UnitedCommunityChurchUCC@gmail.com

United Community Church

United Church of Christ
1325 Main Street
St. Johnsbury, VT 05819



Just a reminder:

Although we don't require mask wearing we ask you respect one another's choices to stay safe



SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICES 10am

In- person and
Facebook Live /Zoom

Zoom etiquette:
<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?ref=saved&v=209599687060439>

STAFF

<i>Pastor</i>	Rev. Andrew Ponder-Williams
<i>Music Director /Organist</i>	Barbara Connelly
<i>Handbell Director</i>	Phil Brown
<i>Virtual Worship Director</i>	Phil Brown
<i>Virtual Technicians</i>	Sean Cavanaugh, Betty Keller
<i>Secretaries</i>	Barbara Connelly, Erika Thompson
<i>Building Manager</i>	Paul Bergeron

CONTACT INFORMATION

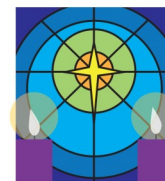
United Community Phone number 748-2603
Email UnitedCommunityChurchUCC@gmail.com

**December
Lectionary**



December 4

Isaiah 11:1-10
Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19
Romans 15:4-13
Matthew 3:1-12



December 11

Isaiah 35:1-10
Psalm 146:5-10
James 5:7-10
Matthew 11:2-11



December 18

Isaiah 7:10-16
Psalm 88:1-7, 17-19
Romans 1:1-7
Matthew 1:18-25



December 25

Isaiah 52:7-10
Psalm 98
Hebrews 1:1-12
John 1:1-14

