

faith matters

The Roxbury Congregational Church
A Congregation of the United Church of Christ

Continuing Testament
Extravagant Welcome
Changing Lives



Vol. 277, Issue 12, December 2019

Church Office, 24 Church Street
Roxbury, Connecticut 06783-1703
Church Office: 860-355-1978
e-mail: office@roxburychurch.org

Join us during December at Roxbury Church!



Country Church Christmas Fair
Saturday, December 7, 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.



Victorian Christmas
Sunday, December 15, 5:00 p.m.



Christmas Caroling to Homebound
Sunday, December 22, Noon

Advent Worship

Sunday, December 8, 10:30 a.m.
With Receiving of
Santa Fund Gifts and Offerings

Advent Worship

Sunday, December 22, 10:30 a.m.
With Receiving of
Christmas Fund Offering



Tuesday, December 24
7:30 p.m. **A Service of Lessons and Carols**
11:00 p.m. **Candlelight Communion Service**

Wednesday, December 25
Christmas Day
& Thursday, December 26
Church Office Closed

Wednesday, January 1, 2020
Happy New Year!

Pastoral Reflections

The Reverend David F. Peters, Minister



My childhood friend Sue Foster, Pastor at East Woodstock couldn't sum up my thoughts this month any better than this:

“Whenever I hear people talk about Christmas, I hear the word stress. Even enthusiastic holiday-celebrators admit to a certain amount of dread this time of year. And with good reason – our society depicts Christmas as a set goal with pre-determined outcomes. There seem to be a lot of *shoulds* connected with Christmas. There *should* be a perfectly decorated tree with beautifully wrapped gifts. There *should* be delicious food for happy guests (who all get along) around a creatively decorated table. Carefully decorated cookies *should* be baked for happy, well-rested, non-whiny children. And everything *should* be perfectly prepared by this unmovable deadline. Is it any wonder that Christmas can feel like an overwhelming burden?”

The season of Advent, which begins on December 1st, is very different. While Christmas can feel like a marathon march to an exhausted finish line, Advent is the gift of a journey with an unknown destination. Christmas is about completion; Advent is about discovery and wonder.

Advent has a sense of mystery about it as we follow, search, wonder, and venture out in faith. It is an opportunity to trust as God leads us into an unknown future. The possibilities are as unlimited as our Creator. During Advent we remember those who said *yes* to invitations in the past. The shepherds hear Good News of great joy and go on a journey of discovery to *go and see* what God has done. The wise men respond to the flickering light of a star and place their faith in God out of the familiar and into the unknown. Mary begins her life-changing journey with an unshakeable faith. Joseph trusts that these incomprehensible events will reveal God's love and purpose. Into each journey is interwoven the theme of *do not be afraid*:

*although you venture into the unknown;
although you feel very alone;
although the end result is not clear.*

The season of Advent reminds us that God is *Emmanuel*, which means *always with us*. What new thing do you imagine or dream of? Where might God be inviting you to go? What unknown is placed before you and where is God in that? What do you need to leave behind in order to discover this new thing that God is doing?

Advent is about mystery and possibility and wonder. A candle glows to provide just enough light to take the next step. The promise of Advent is filled with possibility and new life.

Where will your Advent journey take you?

Susan joins me in wishing you the Christmas Spirit. And may there be in your life: Hope, Peace, Love and Joy!
Merry Christmas! *David*



*thank
you*

To those who came and helped on Fall Church Work Day including **Boy Scout Troop 65** who did a tremendous job raking the grounds. Thanks to **everyone** who cleaned windows, painted cleaned the kitchen stove and hood, and helped get our building ready for the winter.

To **Charlie Stauffacher & Ray Fitch** for organizing our recent Community Mindfulness Meditation Class that ran from October 6 through November 10. The class was led by Cheryl Anderson of Washington. (The group will continue to meet on Saturdays at 10:30 a.m.– 12:00 p.m. under the leadership of Charlie and Ray.)



From the Church Staff
David, Sandy, Nancy, & Bruce



***Family Service of Lessons & Carols
Tuesday, December 24
7:30 p.m.***

A traditional service of scripture readings, hymns and special music by our choir highlight this time-honored tradition. It is popularly associated with King's College in Cambridge, England but thought to have originated at Truro Cathedral in Cornwall.

***Candlelight Communion Service
Tuesday, December 24
11:00 p.m.***

A reflective service with communion and musical soloist. Many of our college-age folks come to this service and see their friends and families and catch up after worship.

New Addresses:

Sara Jane Bird
908B Heritage Village
Southbury, CT 06488

Elaine Matschke
has moved to
Port Charlotte, FL.



Country Church Christmas Fair Saturday, Dec. 7 9 a.m. until 2 p.m.

Roxbury Congregational Church will hold our 30th annual Country Church Christmas Fair on Saturday, December 7, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the church in Fellowship Hall.

The event will include a Country Store, Greenhouse, and a Silent Auction including original art, antiques, and gift baskets, a Nice Twice selection of donated items. We are happy to welcome St. Patrick's Women's Guild to the Fair.

Join us at the Country Church Christmas Café beginning with coffee at 9 a.m. Lunch will be served from 11:30 a.m. until 2 p.m. offering Charlie's Turkey Chili, Chicken-Cranberry-Walnut Wraps, Fresh Garden Salad, Susan's Amazing Lemon Meringue Pie, Hot Chocolate, Coffee and Donuts.

On Sunday, Dec. 8 from noon until 2 p.m., we will offer Nice Twice bargains and prepared food to go.

Be sure to make room in your schedule to partake of this wonderful holiday event!



Victorian Christmas Service Sunday, December 15, 5 p.m.

We will hold a special 45- minute Victorian-themed Christmas service on Sunday, December 15 at 5 p.m. The church will be decorated with greens and candles and the service will include the Christmas story, prayers and music and no sermon!

Cocoa, cider and sugar cookies will be served afterwards in Fellowship Hall.

This service is open to the community, regardless of affiliation or belief. Come share in the spirit of Christmas with us.



Christmas Caroling and Lunch Sunday, December 22

Join us on Sunday, December 22 as we spread the spirit of the season to those who are either homebound or in special circumstances. We will meet at the church at noon and carpool to about seven stops and then gather in Fellowship Hall hosted by **David Lincicome** for soup and bread. Carol books are provided and expert voices are not required. Your presence means so much.



Luminaries for Christmas Eve

We are looking for someone to place the Luminaries in front of the property for Christmas Eve. The candles, bags and sand are provided. If you (and family/friends) can help, please speak to Rev. David Peters, or call the Church Office, 860-354-1978.

Advent Candle Lighters

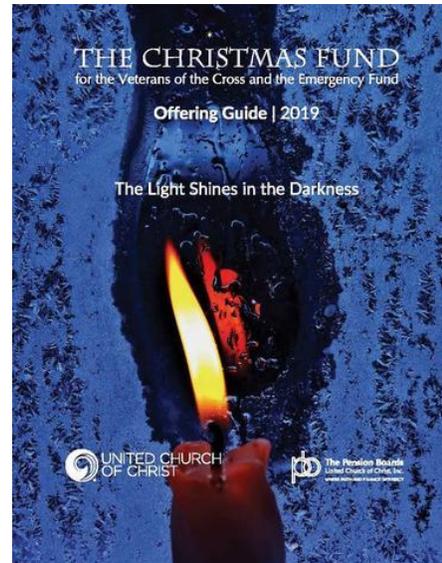
Families, individuals, or groups are needed to light the candles on Advent Sundays, December 1, 8, 15, 22, and 29th and on the 24th at the Christmas Eve services at 7:30 p.m. and 11:00 p.m. Please sign up on the Opportunity Table, See Rev. Peters, or call the Church Office if you would be willing to help. Scripts are provided.

Christmas Flowers

If you wish to purchase a poinsettia to help decorate the Meetinghouse for the holiday season, they can be purchased for \$15. Send your check to the church office by December 15. Include a notation of the person (s) to whom you would like the donation. They can be placed in someone's honor, which will be acknowledged in the bulletin. You may take them home after the service or we have a couple of homebound folks that they can be given to.

Santa Fund Gift Collection Sunday, December 8

Wrapped and tagged gifts are to be brought to today's worship service. They will be transported to New Milford Social Services to be distributed to needy children. There will also be a cash collection today for Christmas dinners.



Christmas Fund Offering Sunday, December 22, 10:30 a.m.

Your Mission Committee invites you to use the Christmas Card Tree in Fellowship Hall to make your donation to the Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross this year. Bring your signed Christmas card to display on the tree and place your offering in the donation box underneath.

For over a century, the Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund has been a tangible expression of God's love and light in the world. Year after year, United Church of Christ members and congregations have reached out in kindness, compassion and gratitude to those who have faithfully shepherded our Church in the past and who now find themselves facing unexpected financial needs.

The theme of this year's Christmas Fund Offering is ***The Light Shines in the Darkness***. The goal is to help those who have served the church for many years. In their time of need, you can be the church for them. On behalf of hundreds of clergy, lay employees and their families, thank you for your generosity.

www.christmasfund.org



Ideas for Christmas Giving

As you think about your Christmas gift-giving, we suggest you consider gifts with power! Gifts that not only convey your love but also pass some love on to others:

SERRV Handicraft Items

Many handmade crafts from third world and developing countries are available for sale. We have a SERRV Shop here at the Church, open on Sundays after worship. The price marked includes a higher percentage to the artisan than normally given... and they are lovely and in all price ranges. A great place for children to shop for adults! Questions: **Susan Zappulla-Peters**.



Cash for Causes – PLUS! Retail Gift Cards For the Holidays!

Cash cards make great gifts for the holidays!

All you have to do is pick out which cards you'd like

and **Heidi Neff** will order them for you.

A list is available of local retailers to choose from.

Some offer as much as 16 percent back for our church! Talk to Heidi after worship or call her at 860-354-3177 to get your cards.



mission matters

Christmas Day Meal Service at Loaves and Fishes

The fourth Wednesday of December falls on Christmas Day and we will continue our tradition of providing the meal and serving it that day to those who are homeless or are among the working poor. If you have not served before this might be a perfect opportunity to do this. Middle and high school are welcome to help with a parent. Rev. Peters will be there to coordinate. Please contact Rev. Peters if you can help.

Food Pantry Donations Needed

Food Pantry donations continue to be needed as we head into the colder seasons. You are encouraged as you do your shopping to fill an extra bag with nonperishable food items for Daily Bread. This Danbury pantry serves many working-poor and the homeless. Your donations can be placed in the basket in Fellowship Hall under the Opportunity Table and are one way to share God's love with the world. There is a list of needed items on the table.

There is a group who work at the food pantry monthly. When someone cannot make it, there are very few backup folks. Please consider volunteering to be a backup person when needed. It is only about three hours per month on the second Monday. Can you spare that? Thank you.

Please call **Sue Stauffacher** at 860-354-1274

Word & Sacrament for December 2019

Deacons of the Month: **Mike Wilcox & Pat Fraley**

Counter: Trustees

First Sunday: Communion – Food Offering

Second Sunday – Children’s Sermon

Third Sunday – Faith Story

Fourth Sunday – Mission Highlight

Underlined scriptures are for Lay Readers

Sunday, December 1

First Sunday of Advent

Psalm 122

Matthew 24: 36-44

Greeters: Doris Farrell & Barbara Biafore

Reader: Barbara Biafore

Advent Candle Lighters: Phil & Diana de Vries

Fellowship Hour:

Flowers:

Sunday, December 8

Second Sunday of Advent

Psalm 72: 1-7, 18-19

Matthew 3: 1-12

Greeters:

Reader:

Advent Candle Lighters:

Fellowship Hour: The Racz Family

Flowers:

Sunday, December 15

Third Sunday of Advent

Psalm 146: 5-10

Matthew 11: 2-11

Greeters:

Reader:

Advent Candle Lighters:

Fellowship Hour:

Flowers:

Sunday, December 22

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Christmas Fund Offering

Special Music – Glenn Roth

Psalm 80: 1-7, 17-19

Matthew 1: 18-25

Greeters:

Reader:

Advent Candle Lighters: **Choir**

Fellowship Hour:

Flowers: **Christmas Flowers**

Tuesday, December 24

Christmas Eve

Psalm 96

Luke 2: 1-14, (15-20)

7:30 p.m. Advent Candle Lighters:

11:00 p.m. Advent Candle Lighters:

Sunday, December 29

First Sunday after Christmas

Psalm 148

Matthew 2: 13-23

Greeters:

Reader:

Fellowship Hour:

Flowers: **Christmas Flowers**

stewardship matters



Stewardship for 2020

The heart and generosity of our God is reflected back by our love and generosity to others beyond ourselves.

We are now receiving the financial pledges for the work of our congregation, both here and beyond for 2020. Please prayerfully consider your generous pledge.

Stewardship Letters and Pledge forms were mailed out recently. If you did not receive one or misplaced it, there are extras on the Opportunity Table in Fellowship Hall.

Questions: Speak with Colby Kalisher or Mike Wilcox.

IRA Charitable Rollovers

In December 2015, Congress enacted a permanent extension of the IRA Charitable Rollover. Under the new law, if you are 70 ½ or older and have an IRA, the IRA Charitable Rollover provides you with a unique opportunity to make charitable gifts to the charitable organization of your choice, with the advantage that you do not pay income tax on the gift amounts. If interested, you should speak with your plan administrator.

Contribution Opportunities

There are several ways to contribute financially to our church: the weekly collection plate, by using offering envelopes, by sending checks or by having your pledge automatically deducted from a bank account. If you have questions or would like to more information, please speak with one of the members of our Stewardship Committee: **Colby Kalisher or Mike Wilcox**. Pledges enable our Trustees to set the budget for our next year. Every pledge is important, no matter the amount.

Pledge Statements

The Church Office recently sent out Pledge Statements for those who either pledged or gave to the church this year. Statements reflect funds received through November 30th. We ask you to please bring your pledge up to date *as we do have some year-end expenses to meet*. Thank you! You will receive a statement after Dec. 31 reflecting your financial gifts to the church for 2019 . Questions: **Cathy Racz** (860-799-0180)



Parish Register

Funerals

David Sherman Hunicke, 63, died November 4, 2019, in Woodbury, CT. A service was held in the Meetinghouse on November 23, 2019 with Rev. Peters officiating. Our prayers go out to his family, including mother Barbara and sister Sara. Barbara's mailing address is 268 West St. Berlin, MA 01503

December Birthdays & Anniversaries

- 2 Dick Callahan
- 14 Rebecca Racz
- 16 Dale Pinchbeck
- 16 Sterrett Kelsey
- 19 Kevin & Diana Dumas (A) (1992)
- 22 Bill Fredericks
- 27 Phil & Diana de Vries (A)
- 31 Steve & Linda Ross (A) (1987)



Groups and Gatherings

Mindful Meditation

Saturdays 10:30 a.m. - noon

Men's Group Breakfast

Second Saturday, November 9

8:00 a.m.

All open to the community

AmazonSmile

Do you shop on Amazon.com? If so, eligible purchases can generate 0.5% back to our church. Go to smile.amazon.com to find out more! There is also a link on the eFaith Matters emails and the church's website: roxburychurch.org

So Your Minister Can Help / Support

If you are hospitalized and desire pastoral support, you or your family should notify our minister of the hospitalization as soon as possible, by calling 860-355-1978. With the new federal regulations, he is not able to find this information from the hospital.

**Silver Lake Conference Center
Our United Church of Christ
Camp and Retreat Center
in nearby Sharon, CT.**
www.silverlakeect.org



**Christmas at Silver Lake
December 6-8 \$115
Grades 5 & 6 and 7 & 8**

Celebrate Christmas, Silver Lake-style! Join your friends and make new ones as we anticipate Christ's birth at Silver Lake, with or without snow! We will get busy and creative with Christmas crafts, outdoor play, baking, worship, and lots of singing of Christmas songs around the fire.

There will be two retreats this weekend: one for 5th and 6th graders and one for 7th and 8th graders. Each age group will stay in its own winterized building with deans and counselors.

**Looking Ahead at Silver Lake
2020 Counselor –in-Training Weekend**

March 6-8, 2020 for 15-and 16 year olds, \$130

Maple Sugaring a weekend for 6-8th graders
March 20-22, 2020, \$115

Women's Yoga and Music Spirit Retreat
April 3-5, 2020, \$190

Spring Action Work Weekend for Grades 9-12
April 24-26, 2020, \$45

2019 Environmental Justice for All!
May 17-19, 2020, \$145. Grades 9-12

Learn, connect, play and take action! Join us at beautiful Silver Lake Conference Center for a weekend of exploring how justice and faith intersect, learning about current environmental justice issues, and discovering how we can utilize our gifts and talents to help create the world we want to live in!

We will play and work together to reach new heights on the ropes course, and have fun in the organic vegetable garden as we plant seedlings and facilitate for the season's abundance. We will also play, worship outside, and have s'mores by a campfire.

Information: jenn@ctuucc.org or call 860-364-5526
www.silverlakeect.org

Did You Know???

That on January 1, 2020, the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ will become part of the new Southern New England Conference including the Massachusetts and Rhode Island Conferences.

We will retain Michael Ciba as our Regional Minister and all the of the current "services" of the Conference but will be able to do more outreach through this combined ministry. www.sneucc.org

information matters



Church Master Calendar

Because the church is busy, and use of the buildings by community groups has also increased dramatically, we have posted a master calendar of activities in the Church Library. Before you schedule a meeting or change a date, please check this calendar to be sure the space will not be occupied at the time.

And please write your meeting on the calendar, or remove it if your plans change.

LaBonne's Receipts

A continuing thank you to everyone who contributes LaBonne's receipts to the church. This has been an on-going source of revenue to add to our mission funds. Please save your receipts and place them in the wooden box on the table in Fellowship Hall. Questions to **Sue Stauffacher** at 860-354-1274.

Roxbury Congregational Church Relational Covenant:

Every one of us is an essential part of our church community.
We will open our hearts and minds to one another.
We will let God's love flow through us.
We will focus on God's word.
We will speak honestly and respectfully.
We will speak to principles rather than personalities.
We will seek to do God's work.

A few ways to be informed about the life of your church here in Roxbury:

Faith Matters

Our church newsletter is mailed monthly to those who subscribe. Or you can pick it up in the Narthex (entrance) or in Fellowship Hall. It is also available at the Roxbury Market.

eFaith Matters

We send out an email each Monday with the latest announcements, prayer requests and an inspirational piece and a Call to Worship on Fridays. Subscribe by sending an email to david@roxburychurch.org.

Church Website

The Church's website, roxburychurch.org, is chock-full of information and events. There are resources for the journey of life as well as pictures of our common life and links to related sites.

Facebook

Our church's presence in social media is on facebook.com/roxburychurch

Here you will find another source of information and news as well as shared topics of religious and spiritual interest.

Meeting Minutes & Reports Board

This special bulletin board is on the landing just outside the Office Library area. On it are posted the latest minutes and reports for all committees as well as financial reports.

December 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 ■ 6:00 AM Shelter Bkst ■ 9:15 AM Choir Rehearsal ■ 10:30 AM Worship, Church School ■ 11:30 AM Refreshments ■ 12:00 PM Fair Tent	Fair Set up					7 ■ 6:00 AM Shelter Breakfast ■ 9:00 AM Country Church Christmas Fair
8 ■ 6:00 AM Shelter Bkst ■ 9:15 AM Choir Rehearsal ■ 10:30 AM Worship, Church School ■ 11:30 AM Refreshments	9 ■ 9:00 AM Daily Bread Food Pantry team	10 ■ 3:30 PM RSH Holiday Gathering	11 ■ 8:00 AM Minister's Coffee ■ 6:00 PM Cub Scout Dens ■ 7:00 PM Boy Scout Troop 65	12 ■ 4:00 PM Piano Lessons (Sandy) ■ 6:30 PM Cub Scout Pack 465 meeting ■ 7:00 PM Deacons	13 ■ 10:00 AM Roxbury Congregational /CBS	14 ■ 6:00 AM Shelter Breakfast ■ 8:00 AM Men's Breakfast ■ 10:30 AM Mindful Meditation
15 Newsletter Deadline ■ 6:00 AM Shelter Bkst ■ 9:15 AM Choir Rehearsal ■ 10:30 AM Worship, Church School ■ 11:30 AM Refreshments ■ 5:00 PM Victorian	16	17	18 ■ 8:00 AM Minister's Coffee ■ 6:00 PM Cub Scout Dens ■ 7:00 PM Boy Scout Troop 65	19 ■ 4:00 PM Piano Lessons (Sandy)	20	21 ■ 6:00 AM Shelter Breakfast ■ 10:30 AM Mindful Meditation
22 ■ 6:00 AM Shelter Bkst ■ 9:15 AM Choir Rehearsal ■ 10:30 AM Worship, Church School ■ 11:30 AM Refreshments	23 Hanukkah	24 Christmas Eve ■ 7:30 PM Lessons & Carols ■ 11:00 PM Candlelight Communion	25 Christmas Day ■ 3:00 PM Loaves & Fishes Meal	26 Kwanzaa Church Offices closed ■ 4:00 PM Piano Lessons (Sandy) ■ 7:30 PM Choir Rehearsal	27	28 ■ 6:00 AM Shelter Breakfast ■ 10:30 AM Mindful Meditation
29 ■ 6:00 AM Shelter Bkst ■ 9:15 AM Choir Rehearsal ■ 10:30 AM Worship, Church School ■ 11:30 AM Refreshments	30	31 New Year's Eve	1 New Year's Day ■ 8:00 AM Minister's Coffee ■ 6:00 PM Cub Scout Dens ■ 7:00 PM Boy Scout Troop 65	2 ■ 4:00 PM Piano Lessons (Sandy) ■ 7:00 PM Deacons	3	4 ■ 6:00 AM Shelter Breakfast ■ 10:30 AM Mindful Meditation

Leadership Listing (All 860- unless noted)

Ministers: The Congregation
 Moderator: Brian Neff, 354-3177
 Clerk: Patricia Fraley, 868-0051
 Treasurer: Beverly Wolmer, 355-3343
 Collector: Cathy Racz, 799-0180
 Deacons: Charlie Stauffacher, 354-1274
 Trustees: Charlie Meade, 354-1274
 Stewardship: Colby Kalisher, 355-8012
 Missions: Barbara Biafore, 799-6501
 Fellowship: Jeanne Steers, 354-7484
 Pastoral Relations: Pat Fraley, Colby Kalisher or
 Tina Brockett

Men's Group: Charlie Meade 354-1274
 Youth Group: Barb Cover, (203) 788-5823
 Historian: Dale Pinchbeck, 355-4297
 Librarian: Joan Temple, 350-0529
 Secretary/Newsletter: Nancy Glover, 355 -1978
 Minister of Music: Sandra Kleisner, 868-9040
 Custodian: Bruce Rossiter
 Pastor: The Rev. David F. Peters,
 office: 355-1978 home: 355-8830
 david@roxburychurch.org

Roxbury Congregational Church, UCC
24 Church Street
Roxbury, CT 06783

Address Service Requested

faith matters

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NEWSLETTER – DECEMBER 2019

Victorian Christmas – December 15 – 5:00 p.m.

Christmas Eve 7:30 & 11:00 p.m.

Worship – Sundays 10:30 a.m.

Church School with Nursery

We Are A Community Seeking To Share God's Love!

No Matter Who You Are, or Where You Are On Life's Journey, You Are Welcome Here!