

# *faith matters*

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

Vol. 279, Issue 11, December 2021

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

## ***December at Roxbury Church***



## **Country Church Christmas Fair**

**Saturday, December 4**

**9 a.m. – 2 p.m.**

Country Store  
Pantry  
Baked Goods  
Wreaths  
Twice Nice  
Café  
Silent Auction



*Christmas Eve  
Worship*

December 24<sup>th</sup>

7:30 p.m.  
Lessons & Carols

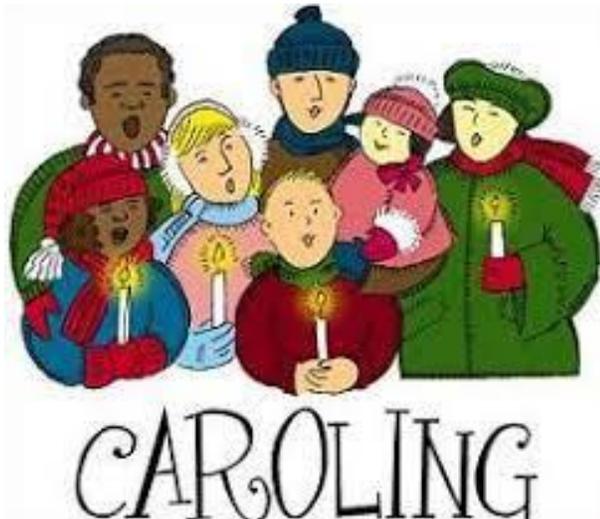
11 p.m.  
Candlelight  
Communion



~~Victorian Christmas~~

~~Sunday, December 12~~

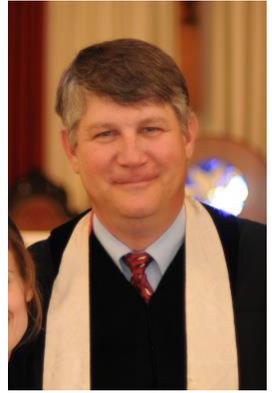
~~CANCELED~~ for this year due to higher  
Covid-19 numbers  
Step back in time, and recall the slower pace of  
yesteryear. Enjoy the wonder of this season, the  
telling of the Christmas story and seasonal music  
with a candlelight singing of  
Silent Night.



Sunday, December 19  
Noon  
to shut-ins & home-bound

## ***Pastoral Reflections***

*The Reverend David F. Peters, Minister*



At Christmas, is there room at the inn?

One of the most memorable parts of the Christmas story is that Mary, Joseph and the baby Jesus were hungry and homeless.

In the Gospel of Luke, it is written: "And Mary brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn" (Luke 2:7). It is hard to imagine that the first family of Christmas spent their Christmas morning, not huddled around their fireplace and opening the gifts under their tree drinking eggnog, but in a desperate state seeking housing and a warm meal.

I have spent most of my life living in upper-middle-income communities and, in such communities, I have always been insulated from the stark realities of how some people live. As a child, all my friends had nice homes and money to buy a Christmas tree and plenty of gifts, so the warm and fuzzy feeling of Christmas has been maintained in my thoughts.

However, the older I get, the more I find myself struggling to hang on to the quant and picture-perfect image of Christmas that was established when I was a child. I find myself focusing on the latter part of the scripture from Luke 2:7: "There was no room for them in the inn." Some people would say the older you get, the more you tend to focus on the negative aspects of life, but I don't believe my greater awareness of Mary, Joseph and Jesus' lack of housing and food on Christmas day is totally related to age. I tend to believe my state of deeper awareness is an indication I am growing in my faith.

I rear recently about a bishop who dressed as a homeless man and attended the worship service of his church, incognito. He was shocked at how some people in the church treated him. He said what bothered him the most was those people who neglected to even acknowledge his presence. He was shocked to see how some people went out of their way to ignore him and not make any eye contact with him. He noticed children were the ones who embraced him the most. He said, "I was impressed by the children. I could see in their eyes they wanted to do more." Jesus would not be surprised by the children's response to this homeless man. Jesus said: "Let the children come to me. Don't stop them! For the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to those who are like these children (Matthew 19:14).

The bishop said what he learned most from this experience that it is to be Christ-like begins with acknowledgment. I challenge you this Christmas to work on being more aware of the plight of others and acknowledge there are many -- like Mary, Joseph, and Jesus -- who are struggling, even here in western Connecticut, to buy Christmas gifts for their children and who would consider purchasing eggnog a real extravagance.

Why not take just a few moments to google some of the agencies that help others in the greater Danbury area; serve a meal at Loaves and Fishes with Mike Wilcox, or distribute food at Daily Bread with Sue Stauffacher, or find another yet-unknown mission to your liking. By reaching out in such loving ways, I guarantee you will not only become more aware of how your neighbors live but receive a tremendous blessing.

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

In addition to those of you who support the work of our beloved church week in and week out, those who help with worship leadership and committee work, we also want to recognize and thank those who organize and work at some of our special events and fundraisers. They include:

Chili Take Out Dinner: Charlie Stauffacher and crew for assembling and delivering the meals with a smile and netted nearly \$1,000.

Work and Cleanup Day – organized by the Trustees. Folks came together to work on small projects, cleaned up our building, our Boy and Cub Scouts raked leaves and branches. Air filters were replaced throughout the building, and readied our building for the winter weather with sand, salt and shovels in their places.

Trivia Night! Once again a fun time! Chris Childs, Joan Temple and Judy Larson with decorating by Janet Childs set the stage for our largest Trivia Night crowd yet! This event is a win-win as we not only raise money by provide a wonderful, fun community-wide event.

## **Congratulations Rev. Peters**

Monday, November 22<sup>nd</sup> marked the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the start of Rev. David Peters' ministry here at the Roxbury Congregational Church. He began on Sunday, November 22, 1986. We have come a long way since the first day when he and Susan arrived! A major building addition, marriages, births, deaths and a whole lot of ministry together! And we thank God for these years together!

## **Steeple Lighting**

The steeple can be lit in loving memory of someone or in celebration for a month.

We have commitments for January and March 2022 already.

We ask for a \$50 donation to the Memorial Fund. Contact Rev. Peters for arrangements.

## **Financial Pledges for 2022**

The timeline for receiving financial pledges has been changed to after Christmas running up to January 12, 2022. Letters and pledge forms will be mailed out after Christmas. There will also be an online pledge form. If you wish to make a single yearly payment in 2021 for 2022 to take a deduction for this year, it must be received by the church by December 31.



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



### ***Santa Fund 2022***

This year we will again be collecting new hats, mittens and scarves for the needy families of New Milford. We need them for all ages, both male and female. There's a basket in the narthex to place them in before Sunday, December 5 when they will be delivered to New Milford Social Services. Please speak with Diana deVries or Heidi Neff with questions.

### ***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.

### ***Christmas Flowers***

Sign up to donate poinsettias for Christmas services by December 15 on the Opportunity Table in Fellowship Hall. They are \$15 each. Checks to Roxbury Congregational Church.

### ***New Advent Candles***

A new wax-less candle set for our Advent Candle wreath has been purchased from the Memorial Fund. The Candles burn liquid wax and do not drip or burn down dangerously close to the wreath below.

### ***Meditation Group***

Mindfulness Meditation continues to meet on Saturday mornings at 10:30 a.m. Please contact Charlie Stauffacher at 860-354-1274 for more information. Check out the church's Mindful Meditation page for meeting links and further information.

### ***Parish Register***

#### *Deaths and Funerals*

November 1, 2021: **Ruth D. Piersall**, died October 27, 2021 in New Milford, CT, age 88. A graveside service was held in New Milford Center Cemetery, with Rev. Peters officiating.

November 6, 2021: **Donna (Nelson) Ocif**, died October 19, 2021 in Middlebury, CT, age 79. A graveside service was held in the New Milford Center Cemetery with Rev. Peters officiating.

November 13, 2021: **Jay Pinchbeck\***, died November 3, 2021 in Roxbury, CT, age 82. A memorial service was conducted in the Meetinghouse with Rev. Peters officiating. He was buried in the South Salem (NY) Cemetery.

November 21, 2021 **Thomas J. Nowicki**, died November 13, 2021 in Danbury, CT, age 79 A service was held in the Meetinghouse with Rev. Peters officiating. He was buried in Great Oak Cemetery, Roxbury.

November 22, 2021: **Charles MacMillian\***, died in New Milford, CT – Services are being scheduled for the late spring.

November 23, 2021: **Richard M. Serdjenian**, died November 18, 2021 in Roxbury, CT at the home of his daughter, Janet Childs, age 97. A Service was conducted in the Meetinghouse with Rev. Peters officiating. Burial was in Swan Point Cemetery, Providence, RI

November 27, 2021: **John Hays\***, died in Danbury, CT. Services will be in the spring of 2022.

## **December Birthdays & Anniversaries**

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

## **Current Visitation Policy at Danbury and New Milford Hospitals**

Effective October 5, visitors to Nuvance Health hospitals and facilities must provide proof of full vaccination or a negative COVID-19 test result taken within 72 hours in order to enter. This includes inpatient, Emergency Department, Nuvance Health Medical Practices, and ambulatory services.

Special Populations and visitors with extenuating circumstances may be asked to provide documentation but providing documentation is not required in order to visit for these groups.

Nuvance Health is permitting one support person per day for patients not suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19. This includes inpatient, Emergency Department, Nuvance Health Medical Practices, and ambulatory services.

Patients with suspected or confirmed COVID will be permitted visitation only for extenuating circumstances and special patient populations as described in this policy.



## **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 such as

### **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**.

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### **Nominating Committee**

Our Nominating Committee will begin to look for capable and reliable people to take on leadership roles beginning in February 2022.

Among the positions to be filled:

Church Collector

Trustee

Mission Committee (2)

Pastoral Relations Committee

Fellowship Committee

Stewardship Committee

Delegate – Southern new England Conference

Delegate – Litchfield South Association

We invite you to prayerfully consider if God is calling you to be a leader!



### ***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.

It is simply easy, and it only costs you the time it takes to see Heidi Neff and purchase a cash card.

No EXTRA money!!

Example Your \$100 gets you a full-value \$100 card  
- (church gets a %)

We have cards available most Sundays or in a few days for: Stop and Shop-6%, Big Y-6%, ShopRite-6%

Major Retailers including: LL Bean-16%, TJ Maxx & HomeGoods-7%, Home Depot-4%, Cabellas-11% Gap / Old Navy-14% and Restaurants, grocery stores across the country...and many more.

See the Kiosk in Fellowship Hall for a complete listing and contact Heidi Neff 860-354-3177 to purchase your card. There is also an online way to purchase and make repeated purchases easy.

Also **Stew Leonard's** Cash Cards are available from Ray Fitch only.

### ***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

### ***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.

### ***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 2021



Deacon of the Month: **Mark Wolmer**

First Sunday: Communion – Food Offering

Third Sunday – Faith Story

Fourth Sunday – Mission Highlight

*Underlined scriptures are for Lay Readers*

## **Sunday, December 5**

*Second Sunday of Advent*

Bar 5: 1-9 or Malachi 3: 1-4

Luke 3: 1-6

Advent Candle Lighting: Confirmands: **Lindsay Mulhare, Hailie & Autumn Collette**

Greeters: **Vail Barrett**

Reader: **Vail Barrett**

Flowers: Memory of Richard Serjenian

Refreshments: **Vail Barrett**

Zoom Tech: **Charlie Stauffacher**

*(Sunday, December 19)*

Advent Candle Lighting:

Greeters: **Carol Goodwin & Barbara Biafore**

Reader: **Barbara Biafore**

Flowers: Christmas Poinsettias

Refreshments:

Zoom Tech:

## **Friday, December 24**

*Christmas Eve, 7:30 p.m. Lessons & Carols*

Advent Candle Lighting:

Greeters:

Zoom Tech:

*Christmas Eve, 11:00 p.m. Communion*

Advent Candle Lighting:

Greeters:

Zoom Tech:

## **Sunday, December 12**

*Third Sunday of Advent*

Zephaniah 3: 14-20

Luke 3: 7-18

Advent Candle Lighting: **Mike Wilcox**

Greeters: **Andy Huber & Marilyn Huang**

Reader: **Andy Huber**

Flowers:

Refreshments: **Chuck & Doris Farrell**

Zoom Tech:

## **Sunday, December 26**

*First Sunday after Christmas*

1 Samuel 2: 18-20, 26

Luke 2: 41-52

Greeters: **Mark & Beverly Wolmer**

Reader: **Mark Wolmer**

Flowers:

Refreshments:

Zoom Tech:

## **Sunday, December 19**

*Fourth Sunday of Advent Christmas Fund Offering*

Micah 5: 2-5a

Luke 1:39-45 (46-55)

# stewardship matters

No – You haven't missed the annual letter from the Stewardship Committee... we have decided to delay the sending of the annual appeal until the week after Christmas to give our members some breathing room from the hustle and bustle and demands that come with today's Christmas celebrations.

Look for the letter to arrive in your mailbox around December 29<sup>th</sup>. We are asking that all financial pledges for the work of the Church in 2022 be in our hands by Sunday, January 9<sup>th</sup> so we can finalize the budget that is sent to the Annual Meeting for approval.

If you wish, for tax purposes make your 2022 giving in 2021, please feel free to mail that in the church to be received before midnight December 31.

We will be offering an electronic online form as an option for pledging this year. The link is:  
<https://forms.gle/tdY3TKbncfp2S6bX6>

## *Pledge Statements*

The Church Office sends out Pledge Statements in early December for those who either pledged or gave to the church this year. Statements reflect funds received through November 30<sup>th</sup>. 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 final 2021 statement after Dec. 31 reflecting your financial gifts to the church in 2021.

## *Bequests Received – Benefiting Ministry*

Recently we have received 2 bequests benefiting the church and its ministries.

The first was a \$100,000 bequest given by Betty Blyn.

She named the Church in her will and we received this generous gift and was deposited according to established policy: 10% tithe to the Mission Set-

aside in the Restricted Account; 45% was deposited into our Investment Account in the Consolidated Trust Fund at the Conference which we can use the growth and interest for our budget when needed. We have not in the past 2 years. Finally, 45% was deposited into the spendable Capital Reserve Fund.

The second is a bequest from Mary Elizabeth Peck. Her estate will be sending the Church a share of her estate in the amount of \$83,703.58 The policy would then show \$8,370 -10% Tithe to the Mission Set aside; \$37,666.79 into Investment Fund; and \$37,666.79 into Capital Reserve. Some of this Capital Reserve funding may be held locally for some foreseeable capital reserve expenses.

If you would like to know more about how to remember your Church in your will, please consult your tax advisor. Remember that everyone who does this becomes a member of the Canfield Society!

## *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: **Brian Neff or Mike Wilcox**. Pledges enable our Trustees to set the budget for our next year. Every pledge is important, no matter the amount.



Our United  
Church of Christ  
Camp and  
Retreat Center  
in nearby  
Sharon, CT.  
[www.silverlakeect.org](http://www.silverlakeect.org)

## **2021 Christmas at the Lake Family Day**

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Dates: 12/4/2021 - 12/4/2021

Cost: \$50/\$40 per person

Celebrate Christmas, Silver Lake-style!

Bring your family to camp for a day of fellowship by the fireside, games, crafts, hot cocoa, chili, and some Adventure games. Spend time outdoors with other families as we enter the season of Advent and prepare for Christmas.

To help keep this event affordable, tiered pricing is available. Choose the price that works best for your family.

Actual cost: \$50 per person

Discounted rate: \$40 per person

## **2021 Christmas at the Lake**

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### **Overnight Retreat: 7-8th grades**

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Dates: 12/10/2021 - 12/12/2021

Grade Level: 7 - 8

Cost: \$125

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.

Open to youth in grades 7-8.

To register – go to [silverlakeect.org](http://silverlakeect.org)

# information matters



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](mailto:david@roxburychurch.org).

## **Church Website**

The Church's website, [roxburychurch.org](http://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](https://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.

## **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.*

## **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.

# December 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
28 First Sunday of Advent ■ 10:30 AM Worship ■ 11:30 AM Refreshments	29 Hanukkah ■ 9:00 AM Wreath Decoration	30 David Peters' day off ■ 9:00 AM Wreath Decoration ■ 4:00 PM Piano Lessons (Sandy)	1 Fair Preparations ■ 6:00 PM Cub Scouts ■ 7:00 PM Boy Scouts	2 ■ 7:00 PM Deacons	3	4 ■ 9:00 AM Christmas Fair 9-2 ■ 10:30 AM Mindful Meditation
5 ■ 9:15 AM Choir ■ 10:30 AM Worship ■ 11:30 AM Refreshments ■ 11:40 AM Confirmation Class	6	7 David Peters' day off ■ 4:00 PM Piano Lessons (Sandy)	8 ■ 6:00 PM Cub Scouts ■ 7:00 PM Boy Scouts	9	10	11 ■ 8:00 AM Mens Breakfast ■ 10:30 AM Mindful Meditation
12 ■ 9:15 AM Choir ■ 10:30 AM Worship ■ 11:30 AM Refreshments ■ 11:45 AM Trustees Meeting ■ 5:00 PM Victorian Christmas	13 ■ 9:00 AM Daily Bread Food Pantry team	14 David Peters' day off ■ 4:00 PM Piano Lessons (Sandy)	15 Newsletter Deadline ■ 6:00 PM Cub Scouts ■ 7:00 PM Boy Scouts	16	17	18 ■ 10:30 AM Mindful Meditation
19 ■ 9:15 AM Choir ■ 10:30 AM Worship ■ 11:30 AM Refreshments ■ 12:00 PM Christmas Caroling	20	21 David Peters' day off ■ 4:00 PM Piano Lessons (Sandy)	22 ■ 3:00 PM Loaves & Fishes Meal ■ 6:00 PM Cub Scouts ■ 7:00 PM Boy Scouts	23	24 Christmas Eve ■ 7:30 PM Lessons & Carols ■ 11:00 PM Candlelight Communion	25 Christmas Day ■ 10:30 AM Mindful Meditation
26 Kwanzaa ■ 9:15 AM Choir ■ 10:30 AM Worship ■ 11:30 AM Refreshments	27	28 David Peters' day off ■ 4:00 PM Piano Lessons (Sandy)	29 ■ 6:00 PM Cub Scouts ■ 7:00 PM Boy Scouts	30	31 New Year's Eve	1 New Year's Day ■ 10:30 AM Mindful Meditation

*Church Newsletter Deadline for the January 2022 issue: December 15<sup>th</sup>*

## Leadership Listing

(All 860- unless noted)

Ministers: The Congregation

Moderator: Brian Neff, 354-3177

Clerk: Patricia Fraley, 868-0051

Treasurer: Dawn Collette, (203) 947-1098

Collector: Cathy Racz, 799-0180

Deacons: Mike Wilcox 354-8821

Trustees: Charlie Meade, 354-1274

Stewardship: Brian Neff and Mike Wilcox

Missions: Barbara Biafore, 799-6501

Fellowship: Jeanne Steers, 354-7484

Pastoral Relations: Pat Fraley 868-0051

Men's Group: Charlie Stauffacher, 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 2021**

**Christmas Eve Services 7:30 & 11 p.m. Masks Required for all.**

Worship – Sundays 10:30 a.m. online

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

Worship In-Person or on Zoom (link on web site) or Facebook Live ([fb.com/RoxburyChurch](https://fb.com/RoxburyChurch))

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

