

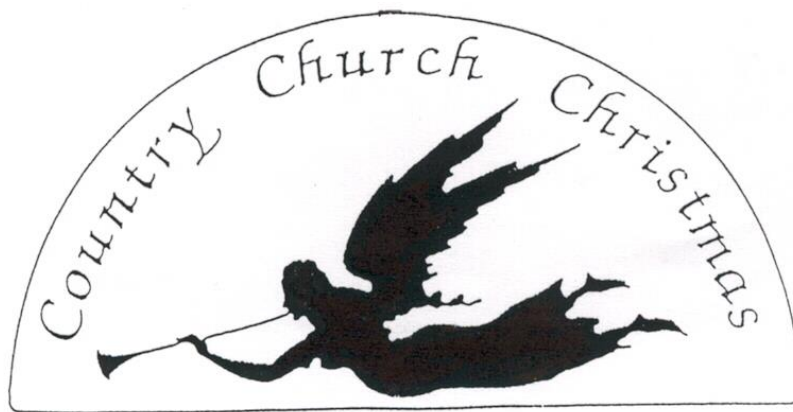
faith matters

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

Vol. 280, Issue 11, December 2024

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

December at Roxbury Church



Country Church Christmas Fair

Saturday, December 7
9 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Country Store
Pantry
Baked Goods
Wreaths
Twice Nice
Café
Silent Auction
And so much more...



Sunday, December 22
11:45 a.m.
to shut-ins & home-bound



7:30 p.m.
Lessons & Carols

11 p.m.
Candlelight
Communion



Olde Tyme Christmas Service



Sunday, December 15 – 5:00 p.m.
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.
Refreshments follow



From the Church Staff
David, Sandy, Luanne & Bruce

Pastoral Reflections

The Reverend David F. Peters, Minister

I remember a number of years ago, **Pat Mulcahy** attending a Christmas Family Workshop sporting a button that I hadn't seen before: "*Jesus is the Reason For the Season.*"



At first, it struck me as a kind of in your face statement. But the more it rolled around in my mind, the more truth and conviction, it aroused within me.

Here, as I write this, Christmas decorations are all around, the Christmas movies are premiering, and the newspapers, tv and internet ads are speaking about Christmas. And I am beginning to feel my stress levels rising. There is the pressure to find the right present for my loved ones, the decorating of the Christmas tree and house, the cards to be sent out, in addition to the church Advent and Christmas activities.

So maybe I need, and we all need to consider having a simpler Christmas celebration. To bring the reason for the season into focus and put into place some changes this season. Here are some possibilities:

1. Plan ahead.
2. Purchase from SERRV for goods which are "fair trade", goods which are not marketed by profit oriented third world mail order firms. Or make a donation to Heifer Project, World Central Kitchen or Church World Service in honor a loved one.
3. Get plenty of sleep
4. Shop from catalogs, buy stamps now
5. Read a holiday story with your children – this slows the pace and keeps family time.
6. Participate in activities that help others.
7. Come along on the Christmas Caroling – Dec 22, 12 noon.
8. Don't forget to be a child – look at the lights, the decorations as if seeing them for the first time.
9. Invite guests for just dessert – not a full 7-course dinner
10. Allow time to reflect on the spiritual aspects of the holidays.
11. Attend worship during the holidays. Without that, your perspective cannot be focused.
12. Celebrate the Birth of our Savior. God with us, Emmanuel!

On behalf of my family, Susan, Kirby and Kyla, Sean and Archer, I wish you and yours a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

With Love and Appreciation,

David



Giving to Others

Toys & Books for Daily Bread

We are Collecting Toys & Books for distribution at Daily Bread Food Pantry in

Danbury on Dec 16th

Items can be new or clean and gently used. They can be placed in the specially-marked box in Fellowship Hall.

If you would like to be there to enjoy the distribution speak with Ray.

Questions? Contact Ray Fitch or Barbara Biafore.



Santa Fund 2024

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 1 when they will be delivered to New Milford Social Services. Please speak with Diana deVries with questions.

Readers Needed for Christmas Eve

If you are willing, please let Rev. Peters know or sign up on the Opportunity Table. We need 9 readers for the 7:30 p.m. Lessons and Carols Service and 4 for the 11:00 p.m. Candlelight Communion Service.

Christmas Poinsettias

If you would like to place Poinsettias in the Meetinghouse for the service of December 15 through Christmas Eve, please let us know by signing up on the Opportunity Table in Fellowship Hall. You have two options for getting the plants: you can purchase your own and bring them in OR you can purchase them through the Church for \$15 each.

Deadline for ordering is December 18. Checks to Roxbury Congregational Church.

The Christmas Fund Offerings received December 22nd



Blessings

Among the many letters and notes the Pension Boards receives from recipients of gifts made possible by contributions to the Christmas Fund were these words:

As I have been blessed, I hope that this gift will be a blessing to the many faithful servants in the United Church of Christ - especially widows and clergy families - in perpetuity.



- Lydia Morrow
Annapolis, MD

Thanks to your generosity, last year the Christmas Fund provided over \$1.9 million in pension and health benefits, emergency grants, and thank-you checks to retired church servants and their families.

Every gift came from people like you. This year, please give what you can to continue supporting those who've devoted their lives to serving others.

This Christmas, celebrate the blessings in your life by making a gift to our ministers, church workers, and their families.

Visit christmasfund.org to learn more and donate online.



This offering supports the National United Church of Christ's Pension Board for retired clergy relief and support.

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.**

Alternative Gift Giving

If you are thinking of what you can give to someone who has everything they need already, maybe you should consider giving an "Alternative Gift."

There are a number of options including

1. Heifer Project heifer.org where you can pick an animal to purchase in the person's honor. The recipient of the animal, typically in the third world, is asked to give away the first offspring to another deserving person, thus multiplying the gift.

2. Church World Service - Best Gift

Program cwsbestgift.org This program has specific ways you can share your love with worldwide neighbors of the greatest need that they have right now. and honor your loved one.

3. You could give a financial gift in their honor to one of our Mission Partners such as Simply Smiles, Church World Service, Holy Joes Cafe, or others. A listing is on the Mission Committee Bulletin Board in Fellowship Hall.

See information about some of these programs on the Opportunity Table.

(The link remains the same each week)
There will be a bulletin posted for each week posted by late Saturday.

Guest Book: [LINK](#)

Online Offering: [LINK](#) or point your smartphone camera at the image:



3 Ways to Join Us For Worship:

1. In-Person worship We are now worshipping in person! Mask-optional for those fully vaccinated (2 shots and boosters)

2. Zoom on your computer, tablet, or smartphone: [Zoom LINK](#)

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/623572023?pwd=SjBxelI1b3BQZmRjTmM3alc0QnE0dz09>

Meeting ID: 623 572 023



Password: 718688

NOTE: We ask that you keep your computer microphone MUTED, except for the virtual coffee hour, or to share a prayer concern or celebration at the beginning of worship. Thanks!

3. Worship Using Facebook Live [Facebook LINK](#)

(You do not have to have a Facebook Account to watch) Be patient, the FB feed is turned on after prayer concerns and celebrations are shared - for privacy reasons... typically by 10:35 a.m.

www.facebook.com/RoxburyChurch

Worshipping Virtually



Sundays at 10:30
a.m.

Worship Where
You Are At
in -person or
virtually!

You are invited to
worship this Sunday.

Bulletin: [LINK](#)

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1qdK1MKsus47-A2-vZMJqIyoC4TOqz3t8/view?usp=share_link

Prayer List Submissions can be communicated by emailing Rev. Peters, during the welcome at the beginning of worship. If speaking during the worship, use only first names to protect privacy.

Unofficial printed Prayer List guidelines: for non-member names - one week, which can be requested to remain on for one month, renewable. Deaths - are listed for 1 month;

December Birthdays & Anniversaries

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

Men's Group Breakfast and Meeting

The meeting will be on Saturday, December 14th 8:00 a.m. They meet each second Saturday of each month.

All men of the congregation and community are invited to join together for breakfast in Fellowship Hall.

We have a light discussion with a hearty breakfast. There is a free-will offering for the breakfast with the remainder combined for special church projects. All are invited. Please speak with Charlie Stauffacher or Charlie Meade with questions.

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.

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



Steeple Lighting



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

Lighting Schedule:
December 2024:
Luanne and Tom

Awlasewicz

In memory of their son, Joey

January 2025 Linda Gillette

in memory of her daughter, Tracey.

February 2025: Joan & Mike Temple

In memory of his mother

March 2025: Judy Larson & Joan Temple

In memory of their mother

April 2025: Available

May 2025: Available

June 2025: Pat Mulcahy

In memory of her husband, Ken

We ask for a \$25 donation to the Memorial Fund.
Contact Rev. Peters for arrangements.

Thank You

...to our Country Church Christmas Fair planning team and all the workers, those who donated, and attended. It was a rainy day, but a great success.

... To those who donated to the various mission partner campaigns this year for food, clothing, games and toys.

... to **Mark Lowe** and **Earth Artist Excavating (Roxbury Garage)** for plowing snow.

...to **Dale Pinchbeck** for the Holiday Wreaths on the Meetinghouse and side entrance doors.

...to **Frank White** for his donation of the fall cleanup around the church properties.

...to those who helped on the Fall Work Day

...to **Sue Stauffacher** and the **Food Pantry Team** who faithfully bring our food donations to Danbury twice a month when they work on donation days.

LaBonne's Receipts

Many of you contribute your LaBonne's receipt for the LaBonne's Cash For Charities Rebate Program Your receipts can be deposited in the wooden box in Fellowship Hall.

LaBonne's gives the church 1/2 of 1% of the total as a gift.

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 **Susan Zappulla-Peters** 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 Susan after worship or call her at



860-355-8830 to get your cards.

It is simply easy, and it only costs you the time it takes to see Susan Zappulla-Peters 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%

There are also 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. To order them, talk with Susan and she can point you to the website to do them AND benefit the Church!

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

Used Toner & Printer Cartridges

The church collects used toner cartridges to return to Staples for church credit.

There is a box for them in the coat closet in Fellowship Hall.

Word & Sacrament for December 2024



Deacon of the Month: Pat Fraley - assisted by Mark Wolmer

First Sunday: Communion – Food Offering

Third Sunday – Faith Story

Fourth Sunday – Mission Highlight

Underlined scriptures are for Lay Readers

Sunday, December 1

First Sunday of Advent

Jer 33:14-16, Psalm 25:1-10

Luke 21:25-36

Advent Candle Lighting: **Diana & Phil deVries**

Greeters: **Diana & Phil deVries**

Reader: **Patty Metzger**

Flowers:

Refreshments: **Charlie Stauffacher**

Zoom Tech: **Barb Cover**

Fourth Sunday of Advent Christmas Fund Offering

Mic 5:2-5a

Luke 1:39-45, (46-55)

Advent Candle Lighting:

Greeters: **Joan Temple and Pat Fraley**

Reader: **Joan Temple**

Flowers: Christmas Poinsettias

Refreshments:

Zoom Tech: **Barb Cover**

Sunday, December 8

Second Sunday of Advent

Bar 5:1-9

Luke 3:1-6

Advent Candle Lighting: **Patty & Paul Metzger**

Greeters: **Patty & Paul Metzger**

Reader: **Patty Metzger**

Flowers:

Refreshments: **Genie Jayne and Barb Cover**

Zoom Tech: **Barb Cover**

Tuesday, December 24

Isa 62:6-12, Psalm 97

Luke 2: (1-7), 8-20

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

Advent Candle Lighting:

Greeters:

Christmas Eve, 11:00 p.m. Communion

Advent Candle Lighting:

Greeters:

Sunday, December 29,

First Sunday after Christmas

Isa 61:10-62:3

Psalm 148

Galatians 4:4-7 Luke 2:22-40

Greeters: **Beverly & Mark Wolmer**

Reader: **Mark Wolmer**

Flowers: Christmas Poinsettias

Refreshments:

Zoom Tech: **Charlie Stauffacher**

Sunday, December 15

Third Sunday of Advent

Zeph 3:14-20

Luke 3:7-18

Advent Candle Lighting: Sue & Charlie Stauffacher

Greeters: **Vail Barrett and Carol Goodwin**

Reader: **Vail Barrett**

Flowers: Christmas Poinsettias

Refreshments:

Zoom Tech: **Charlie Stauffacher**

Sunday, December 22

SAVE THE DATE

December 15 Advent 3

Olde Tyme Christmas Service 5:00 p.m

December 22 Advent 4

UCC Christmas Fund Offering

Christmas Caroling 11:45 a.m.

December 24 – Christmas Eve

7:30 p.m. Lessons & Carols

11:00 p.m. Candlelight Communion

stewardship matters

Pledge Statements

The Church Office is offering to email out Pledge Statements now for those who either pledged or gave to the church this year. Statements reflect funds received through the date printed. 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 2024 statement after Dec. 31 reflecting your financial gifts to the church in 2024. The deadline for

Financial Pledges for 2025

Letters and pledge forms have been mailed out requesting our members and friends to submit their financial pledges for 2025. There is also an online pledge form. If you wish to make a single yearly payment in 2024 for 2025 for tax purposes it must be received by the church by December 31.

Online Pledge Form and Letter:
roxburychurch.org/give

If you wish to give a one-time gift or set up a reoccurring giving, you can go to the Church's Electronic Giving Portal:

<https://secure.myvanco.com/L-Z252/home>

Bequests Received – Benefiting Ministry

Last year, 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% tithed 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. 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

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 Giving

We are being told that if you have to take a mandatory distribution from your pension/you can give it straight to the church and it will not be a taxable event for you. Something to consider. As always, please consult a tax professional before making any investment distribution decision.

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

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.

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.

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.

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.



Nominating Committee

Our Nominating Committee will begin to look for capable and reliable people to take on leadership roles beginning in February 2024.

Among the positions to be filled:

Deacon

Church Officers

Stewardship Committee

Nominating Committee

Christmas Fair Planning Team

We invite you to prayerfully consider if God is calling you to be a leader! You can speak with either member of the Committee: Chris Childs or Sue Stauffacher.

December 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 = 9:15AM Choir Rehearsal = 10:30AM Worship In-person & Virtual = 11:20AM Refreshments = 11:45AM Fair Tent Setup	2 Fair Setup	3 Fair set-up Rev. Peters Day off = 1:00PM Choir Rehearsal = 3:30PM Piano Lessons (Sandy)	4 Fair set-up = 4:00PM Charlie Meade = 6:00PM Cub Scouts = 7:00PM Boy Scout Troop 65	5 Fair set-up	6 Fair set-up	7 = 9:00AM Country Church Christmas Fair
8 New Member Reception = 9:15AM Choir Rehearsal = 10:30AM Worship In-person & Virtual = 11:20AM Refreshments = 11:45AM Fair After	9 = 9:00AM Daily Bread Food Pantry team	10 Rev. Peters Day off = 3:30PM Piano Lessons (Sandy)	11 = 6:00PM Cub Scouts = 7:00PM Boy Scout Troop 65	12	13	14 = 8:00AM Mens Breakfast = 10:30AM Mindful Meditation
15 = 9:15AM Choir Rehearsal = 10:30AM Worship In-person & Virtual = 11:20AM Refreshments = 11:45AM Misslon = 5:00PM Olde Tyme	16	17 Rev. Peters Day off = 3:30PM Piano Lessons (Sandy)	18 Newsletter Deadline = 6:00PM Cub Scouts = 7:00PM Boy Scout Troop 65	19 Poinsettia Order Deadline	20	21 = 10:30AM Mindful Meditation
22 = 9:15AM Choir Rehearsal = 10:30AM Worship In-person & Virtual = 11:20AM Refreshments = 11:50PM Christmas Caroling	23 = ... Christmas Caroling	24 Rev. Peters Day off Christmas Eve = 3:30PM Piano Lessons (Sandy) = 7:30PM Lessons & Carols = 11:00PM Candlelight	25 Christmas Day = 6:00PM Cub Scouts = 7:00PM Boy Scout Troop 65	26 Hanukkah (1st day) Kwanzaa	27	28 = 10:30AM Mindful Meditation
29 = 9:15AM Choir Rehearsal = 10:30AM Worship In-person & Virtual = 11:20AM Refreshments	30	31 Rev. Peters Day off New Year's Eve = 3:30PM Piano Lessons (Sandy)	1 New Year's Day = 6:00PM Cub Scouts = 7:00PM Boy Scout Troop 65	2 = 7:00PM Deacons	3	4 = 10:30AM Mindful Meditation

Church Newsletter Deadline for the January 2025 issue: December 15th

Leadership Listing

(All 860- unless noted)

Ministers: The Congregation

Moderator: Brian Neff, 354-3177

Clerk: Patricia Fraley, 868-0051

Treasurer: Dale Pinchbeck 355-2497

Collector: Beverly Wolmer 203-405-6795

Deacons: David Lincicome 203-948-2008

Trustees: Bill Steers 354-7210

Stewardship: Brian Neff Sue Stauffacher, and Mike Wilcox

Missions: Charlie Stauffacher 354-1274

Fellowship: Jeanne Steers, 354-7484

Pastoral Relations: Pat Fraley 868-0051

Men's Group: Charlie Stauffacher, 354-1274

Historian: Dale Pinchbeck, 355-4297

Librarian: Joan Temple, 350-0529

Secretary/Newsletter: Luanne Awlasewicz, 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 2024

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

Worship – Sundays 10:30 a.m. in person & 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)

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

