

Spire

Barre Congregational Church, UCC

Welcoming & Serving the Quabbin Area

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2015

Pastor's Pondering

Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. ~ John 14:23

Advent is the first season of the church year. It's call to quiet reflection and deep inner preparation for the rebirth of the Christ in our heart stands in contrast to the hubbub and noise of the commercial so-called "Christmas Season," the frantic, materialistic grab so that we can gather around a tree (or menorah or other seasonal centerpiece) for our annual "indulgence from the cornucopia of avarice" so aptly described in the movie "A Christmas Story" by Jean Shephard.

Christians, however, sing hymns with haunting tunes reminiscent of the ancient Middle East, with lyrics that capture our longing for a new way of being and living, for the love of God to rule this world. We sing: Come, Thou Long Awaited Jesus; Come, O Come, Emmanuel. We sing "Let all mortal flesh keep silence, and with fear and trembling stand; ponder nothing earthly minded for with blessing in his hand, Christ our God to earth descendeth, our full homage to demand."

I'm not going to take up more of your time with *my* pondering but rather invite you to ponder "nothing earthly minded." Put aside concerns about getting the house decorated, the cookies baked, the gifts bought and wrapped, the cards written or anything else that distracts you from giving Christ our God your full attention and homage for 5 minutes each day of Advent.

Think instead about Henri Nouwen's profound observation that Jesus is God's most radical attempt to convince us that everything we long for is indeed given to us, abundant blessings coming to fruition each in its appropriate season. What God asks of us is to have faith in the love that we most long for God asks us to have faith that offers us freely does come to us when we trust and believe that unreservedly, we are loved by God.

*I rediscovered this prayer in an Advent reflection booklet.
Pray with me:*

O God, help us not only to know you better, but to love you, and desire to spend time daily in your presence. Forgive us for so often failing to recognize and trust wholeheartedly in your redemptive love poured out through Jesus, our Savior. Amen.

May your life be changed through prayer and pondering the themes of Advent ~ hope, peace, joy and love, and may the greatest gift you receive this Christmas be a deeper sense of God's presence and love in your life.

Arthur and I wish you all a Merry Christmas and many blessings in the New Year!

With love,

Pastor Deborah

Inside this Issue	
Pastor Pondering/ Advent Devotional	1-2
Concerns/Prayers	3
Fair News/ Holiday Services	4
Sunday School News / CFS/Barre food Pantry	5
Healing Quilt/Results of Special Meeting/ Gordon Cooley Giving Tree	6
Treasurer's Report / Collector's Report	7
Calendar/Lectionary	8/9

Much More than Words

by **Kenneth L. Samuel**

Taken from the Still Speaking UCC Daily Devotional

"For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance . . ." - 1 Thessalonians 1:5

As we approach the celebration of the incarnation of God in Christ at Christmas, our ears are already filled with the festive, majestic words of the season. "Shalom," "Glad tidings to all," "Peace on earth," "Wise men still seek him," "The greatest gift of all," "For unto us a son is born; a child is given," "Silent night, Holy night," "Behold the star," "Joy to the world!"

But despite the beloved choruses of our holiday hymns, scriptures and salutations, the Apostle Paul suggests that what God has given to us through Christ Jesus can never be adequately proclaimed through words alone. For in Christ, God has given us much more than a good word or a good sentiment or a good idea. In Christ, God has given us the power of word made flesh. In Christ, God shows us the awesome power we have when we take lofty principles and incorporate them into everyday human practices. In Christ, the concept of good is realized and personified in a human character to which we can all relate. In Christ, God invites us to simultaneously embrace the full humanity and the full divinity that is in each of us.

Such Good News can never be conveyed in words alone. This Good News requires a passionate presence among people, the strength to forgive and the humility to be forgiven, the faith to keep searching for light despite the darkness of night, and, oh yes . . . the willingness to approach grown-up things through the eyes of a child.

Much more than the words we speak, we must seek to become the incarnation of Advent this season.

Prayer

Dear God, in addition to the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart, give me the will and the capacity to act out the meaning of Advent through Christ who animates me. Amen.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kenneth L. Samuel is Pastor of Victory for the World Church, Stone Mountain, Georgia.



Annual Church Fair

Saturday, December 5, 2015

10:00 am— 2:00 pm

This year's fair includes:

Raffles, Baked Goods & Country Kitchen Items, Greens, & Craft Tables, Wreaths will be available.

Come & Have Tea & Luncheon - Luncheon includes: Soup, Sandwiches & Deserts all for \$8.00.

Children are always welcome for lunch

After enjoying our fair make sure you visit the various other activities around the common!!!!

Holiday Schedule

November 29th—First Sunday of Advent— Hope

December 5—Second Sunday of Advent - Peace

December 13—Third Sunday of Advent—Joy

December 20—Fourth Sunday of Advent—Love

Sunday, December 13th at 9:30 a.m. will be a Holiday Service of Remembrance . Holiday Service of Remembrance (aka "blue Christmas") for those experiencing a sense of loss, loneliness, or sadness during the holiday season. This gentle service includes music, candle lighting, people speaking briefly about loved ones or memories, and uplifting poems or readings. If you would like to speak about a loved one or participate in some other way, please speak with Pastor Deborah. Open to the community. Mixed Company will be providing music .

Sunday, December 20th at 9:30 a.m. we will celebrate a Family Christmas Service, the children & the adult choirs will sing, the bell choir will play. We will join together to celebrate as we anticipate the coming birth of the baby Jesus. Time with the Children will be *Mortimer's Christmas Manger*.

Thursday, December 24th at 7:00 p.m. Families are welcome to join us as the children present the Christmas reading. Time with the Children story will be *Room for a Little One*.

Thursday, December 24th at 11:00 p.m. A traditional Candlelight Service presented through scripture and song.

Heifer Farm Holiday Open House

Heifer International,
216 Wachusett Street, Rutland, MA
December 5, 6, 12 & 13, 2015

Sunday School News

Thursday December 3- Make your own gift basket with Lynn Hartman at Hartman's Herb Farm starting at 4:30. If you are unable to attend Thursday and would like to make a basket, she will also be available Friday, just let her know! [978-355-2015](tel:978-355-2015). Just bring your items for the basket, she will supply the basket and wrapping.

Sunday December 6- Communion Sunday. Children are welcome to stay in church and take communion before going to Sunday school, if they wish.

December 5, 6, 12 & 13 10:00am-4:00 pm Heifer Farm's Holiday Open House 216 Achiest St. Rutland Free admission with canned good donation.

December 12 & 13 Mesa Farm "The Living Nativity" 67 Muschopauge Rd Rutland. Performances at 4:00 pm and 5:30 pm free admission (Please bring plate of cookies to share)

Sunday December 20 -Sunday school Christmas party. Snack donations will be appreciated!

- Children's choir will sing in church-please arrive at 9:00 for rehearsal

Thursday December 24 Children's Christmas Eve service at 7:00. Please see Sue Musnicki (smusnicki@hotmail.com) if you are able to participate-there are parts for all ages!

Sunday December 27 NO SUNDAY SCHOOL

Thank you

Soctober was a great success. Thank you to all who donated socks. The Sunday school children collected about 150 pairs of socks, to be given to a local shelter.

Community Friendship Suppers

Spaghetti Dinner

The Community Friendship Suppers are from 5:30 pm to 6:30 pm. on the third Thursday of each month. Come for good food, for good fellowship, for goodness sake! Bring friends or make new ones. Everyone needs a break from cooking once in a while! Suppers are free and open to the public. Free will offerings are added to our Missions income to help those in need close to home and far away. All are welcome!!!

Next Supper is December 17th!!!!

Barre Food Pantry

Barre Food Pantry volunteer opportunity.

The Barre Food Pantry at the Barre Congregational Church on the common in Barre center welcomes volunteers between 6:30 pm and 8:30 pm. Volunteers are needed to help set up the room and sort, date and pre-bag donated groceries for free distribution the next day.

Note: We are back to needing donations of clean, heavy paper one-dozen egg cartons, so that our volunteers can repack the bulk eggs we get each month into client-appropriate dozens. Cartons can be dropped off at the Barre Congregational Church, the Barre Senior Center, or the Woods Memorial Library. For more information call Sonja @ (978) 355-6921 or Chuck @ (978) 355-6463.

Wednesday, December 9th, 2015

Barre Food Pantry volunteer opportunity.

The Barre Food Pantry at the Barre Congregational Church on the common in Barre center welcomes volunteers from 9:30 am to 12:00 noon to help staff the tables, help clients "shop" the food bank offerings and help carry groceries to clients' cars.

Note: We are back to needing donations of clean, heavy paper one-dozen egg cartons, so that our volunteers can repack the bulk eggs we get each month into client-appropriate dozens. Cartons can be dropped off at the Barre Congregational Church, the Barre Senior Center, or the Woods Memorial Library. For additional information call Sonja @ (978) 355-6921 or Chuck @ (978) 355-6463.

Barre Food Pantry monthly distribution to clients.

People in need of food assistance are welcome at the Barre Congregational Church on the common in Barre center from 10:00 am to noon for free monthly distribution of fresh, frozen and canned food made available through local and regional donations and state and federal government programs.

Note: We are back to needing donations of clean, heavy paper one-dozen egg cartons, so that our volunteers can repack the bulk eggs we get each month into client-appropriate dozens. Cartons can be dropped off at the Barre Congregational Church, the Barre Senior Center, or the Woods Memorial Library. For additional information call Sonja @ (978) 355-6921 or Chuck @ (978) 355-6463.

Items needed to for the December distribution:

**Canned Carrots
Beef Stew**

**Canned tomatoes
Baked Beans**

The Healing Quilt

At a special meeting on Sunday, November 15, 2015 it was voted to hire Margaret Keyser, an independent consultant. She will work with individuals and committees to create a safe environment for leaders, the pastor, and the congregation.

A generous donation of \$1,000.00 has secured her services which will begin after the holidays. Her fee is \$4,500.00 and the UCC will give us \$1,500.00 to help defray the cost.

The church committee has asked to conduct a fundraiser for \$2,000.00 balance. The fundraiser will begin in January and end the last day of March.

Each family will receive a 4 inch square of material in January. The squares will be returned with a donation and will be sewn together to form a quilt around the center squares which will be a picture of our church. All the squares need to be returned to complete the quilt pattern.

Do not write on the material but send the square back with your name and donation.

Checks should be made out to Barre Congregational. Donations can be put into the collection plate, dropped off at the church office or sent to Shirley Lewis, 42 Dana Rd., Barre, MA 01005

Results from the Special Meeting

On 11/15/15 a special meeting was held at 11:00 to discuss the 2016 budget as proposed by the Church Committee. After much discussion, the proposed budget was voted on by the 52 members that attended.

The votes to accept the proposed budget were concluded with 26 in favor of accepting the proposal and 24 opposed the proposal.

The proposed budget passed with the majority in favor.

The newly accepted budget will take effect on January 1, 2016. At this time, Barre Congregational Church will have voted to include the salary for a part time minister as well as the employees that have already had reduced workhours. There has been information regarding the possible changes sent via email and letter to all members.

A motion was made and vote was taken to accept the proposal of Margaret Keyser as a consultant to the church. The vote was unanimous and the motion passed.

Sincerely,
Janice Handrahan
Clerk

The Gordon Cooley Giving Tree

If you have taken a tag from the Gordon Cooley Giving Tree, gifts should be returned as soon as possible (12/6/15 would be wonderful) as the school will be distributing the gifts during the week of December 14th.

There should be tags for the residents of Stetson School.

Thank you in advance, for your participation in this opportunity to help those that are less fortunate than we are. *Janice Handrahan*

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you and your family a Merry Christmas and a Blessed Holiday Season. Thank you for all your love and support over the past year. Wendy Isgro, Church Secretary

Collector's Report

Loose	734.00
Current	6,702.00
Missions	363.00
Music Fund/ Florence Avery	150.00
coffee	55.00
Tues. AA	20.00
Thurs. AA	40.00
PIF	100.00
Music Fund	30.00
Organ Fund	800.00
Margaret Keyser	100.00
Lawrence Mason Baptism	50.00
Total	\$9,144.00

⁶ For a child has been born for us,
a son given to us;
authority rests upon his shoulders;
and he is named
Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of
Peace. Isaiah 9:6



Treasurer's Report

Expenses: 1/1/15-11/30/15

Payroll	90,496.00
Office Supplies	4,634.00
Telephone & Internet	2,573.00
Equipment Maintenance	854.00
Christian Education	287.00
General Maintenance	2,581.00
Cleaning Supplies	205.00
Miscellaneous	1,581.00
Flowers	324.00
Water & Sewer	806.00
Heat & Gas	3,109.00
Insurance	10,280.00
Snow Removal	1,535.00
Piano/Organ	260.00
Alarm	480.00
Total	\$128,625.00



Income	
Loose	4,514.00
Pledges	67,654.00
Other	8,978.00
Investment Interest	23,000.00
Total	\$104,146.00

Transferred from savings for ordinary expenses: \$18,200

Operating deficit \$24, 479

(Balance in checking account on 1/1/15: \$2,236.41)

December 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 9-1 Wendy's hours 5:30 PPRCF 7:00 Narcotics Anonymous 7:00 Choir	2 9-1 Wendy's hours 6-8 Maplewinds 6:30 Church Committee 7:00 Boy Scouts	3 9-1 Wendy's hours 7:00 AA	4 Fair Set-up all day	5 9-2 Church Fair 7:00 AA
6 8:30 Choir warm-up 9:30 Service/ Communion / Sunday School 11:00 Bell Choir 11:00 Church Council	7 6:00 Girl Scouts	8 9-1 Wendy's hours 9:00 Food Pantry set-up 6:00 Food Pantry set-up 7:00 Narcotics Anonymous 7:00 Choir	9 Wendy's off 10-12 Food Pantry	10 9-1 Wendy's hours 7:00 AA	11	12 7:00 AA
13 9:30 Holiday Service of Remembrance/ Sunday school 11:00 Memorial Service 2:00 Concert Maplewinds	14 6:00 Girl Scouts	15 9-1 Wendy's hours 7:00 Narcotics Anonymous 7:00 Choir	16 Wendy's off Office closed 6-8 Maplewinds 7:00 Boy Scouts	17 9-1 Wendy's hours 5:30 Community Friendship Supper 7:00 AA	18	19 7:00 AA
20 8:30 Choir warm-up 9:30 Service	21	22 9-1 Wendy's hours 7:00 Narcotics Anonymous 7:00 Choir	23 9-1 Wendy's hours	24 7:00 Family Christmas Service 11:00 Candlelight Service	25 Christmas Day 	26
27 9:30 Service/ with Rev. Laura Friedman	28	29 9-1 Wendy's hours	30	31 New Year's Eve		
Pastor Deborah will be on vacation on the following days: December 14, 16, 21, 23, and 12/26-30. Please contact Kevin Fogarty, Diaconate Chairperson or one of the deacons for Pastoral care.						

Daily Lectionary Scripture References

December 2015 (Year C)

Tues., Dec. 1

Psalm 90
2 Samuel 7:18-29
Revelation 22:12-16

Wed., Dec. 2

Psalm 90
Isaiah 1:24-31
Luke 11:29-32

Thurs., Dec. 3

Luke 1:68-79
Malachi 3:5-12
Philippians 1:12-18a

Fri., Dec. 4

Luke 1:68-79
Malachi 3:13-18
Philippians 1:18b-26

Sat., Dec. 5

Luke 1:68-79
Malachi 4:1-6
Luke 9:1-6

Sun., Dec. 6

Second Sunday of Advent
Baruch 5:1-9 or Malachi 3:1-4
Luke 1:68-79
Philippians 1:3-11
Luke 3:1-6

Mon., Dec. 7

Psalm 126
Isaiah 40:1-11
Romans 8:22-25

Tues., Dec. 8

Psalm 126
Isaiah 19:18-25
2 Peter 1:2-15

Wed., Dec. 9

Psalm 126
Isaiah 35:3-7
Luke 7:18-30

Thurs., Dec. 10

Isaiah 12:2-6
Amos 6:1-8
2 Corinthians 8:1-15

Fri., Dec. 11

Isaiah 12:2-6
Amos 8:4-12
2 Corinthians 9:1-15

Sat., Dec. 12

Isaiah 12:2-6
Amos 9:8-15
Luke 1:57-66

Sun., Dec. 13

Third Sunday in Advent
Zephaniah 3:14-20
Isaiah 12:2-6
Philippians 4:4-7
Luke 3:7-18

Mon., Dec. 14

Isaiah 11:1-9
Numbers 16:1-19
Hebrews 13:7-17

Tues., Dec. 15

Isaiah 11:1-9
Numbers 16:20-35
Acts 28:23-31

Wed., Dec. 16

Isaiah 11:1-9
Micah 4:8-13
Luke 7:31-35

Thurs., Dec. 17

Psalm 80:1-7
Jeremiah 31:31-34
Hebrews 10:10-18

Fri., Dec. 18

Psalm 80:1-7
Isaiah 42:10-18
Hebrews 10:32-39

Sat., Dec. 19

Psalm 80:1-7
Isaiah 66:7-11
Luke 13:31-35

Sun., Dec. 20

Fourth Sunday of Advent
Micah 5:2-5a
Luke 1:46b-55 or Psalm 80:1-7
Hebrews 10:5-10
Luke 1:39-45 [46-55]

Mon., Dec. 21

Psalm 113
Genesis 25:19-28
Colossians 1:15-20

Tues., Dec. 22

Psalm 113
Genesis 30:1-24
Romans 8:18-30
Hebrews 10:32-39

Wed., Dec. 23

Psalm 63
Isaiah 42:14-21
Luke 1:5-25

Thurs., Dec. 24

Christmas Eve
Isaiah 9:2-7
Psalm 96
Titus 2:11-14
Luke 2:1-14 [15-20]

Fri., Dec. 25

Christmas
Isaiah 52:7-10
Psalm 98
Hebrews 1:1-4 [5-12]
John 1:1-14

Sat., Dec. 26

Psalm 148
2 Chronicles 24:17-24
Acts 6:1-7; 7:51-60

Sun., Dec. 27

First Sunday After Christmas
1 Samuel 2:18-20, 26
Psalm 148
Colossians 3:12-17
Luke 2:41-52

Mon., Dec. 28

Psalm 148
Isaiah 54:1-13
Revelation 21:1-7

Tues., Dec. 29

Psalm 147:12-20
1 Chronicles 28:1-10
1 Corinthians 3:10-17

Wed., Dec. 30

Psalm 147:12-20
2 Chronicles 1:7-13
Mark 13:32-37

Thurs., Dec. 31

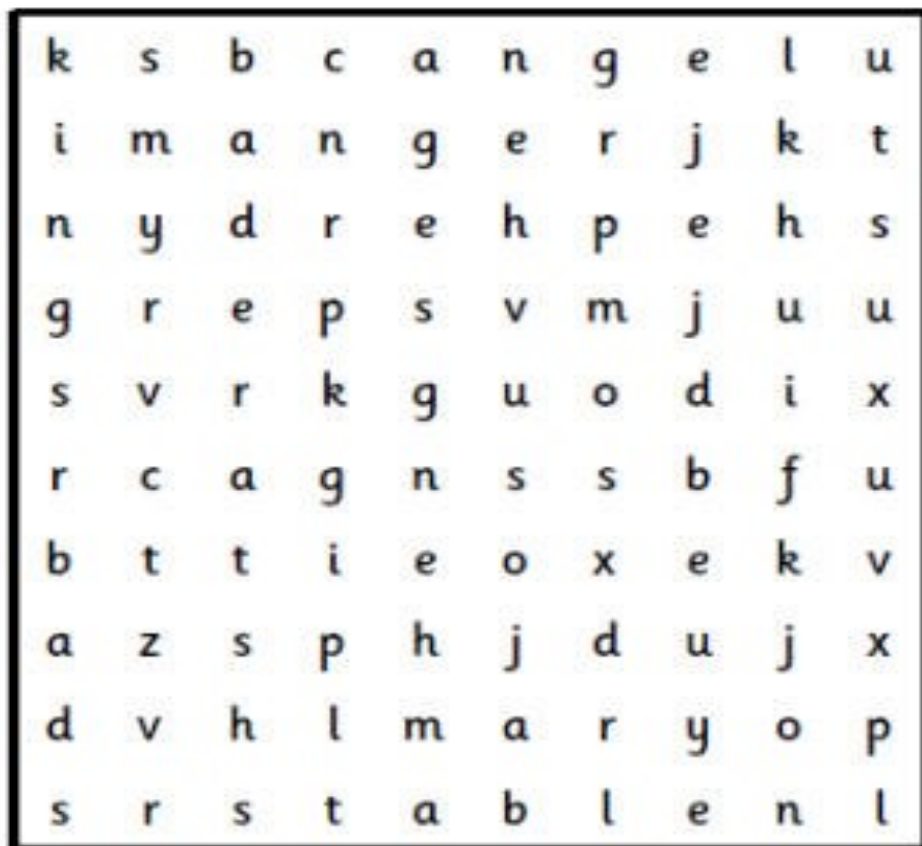
New Year's Eve
Ecclesiastes 3:1-13
Psalm 8
Revelation 21:1-6a
Matthew 25:31-46



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Nativity Wordsearch



angel

donkey

Jesus

Joseph

kings

manger

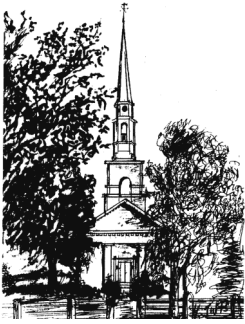
Mary

shepherd

stable

star





Barre Congregational Church

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*The world needs the distinct values, vision
and voice of the United Church of Christ–
Continuing Testament.*

Extravagant Welcome. Changing Lives.