

The Beacon

First United Methodist
Church Of
North Andover

JANUARY 2024

From the Pastor's Desk

The beginning of a New Year is always a time for reflecting, for taking stock of the past and preparing for the future. The passing of 2023 and beginning of 2024 are significant milestones. For many of us, there are parts of 2023 that we will be glad to leave behind. Certainly the last few months have been challenging, as we have grappled with continuing price inflation and high interest rates. We will be glad to leave behind extreme summer heat and wildfires, floods and other manifestations of climate change in 2023, though they may be just a taste of what is to come in future years.

Yet we know that the turning of a New Year is just that – we simply turn to a new page on a new calendar, this one with "2024" at the top. Much of what we wish to leave behind us from 2023 will follow us into the New Year. The wars in Ukraine and Gaza continue, as do our bitterly divided politics as we move into a presidential election year. Not everything changes just because the date says "2024."

But what can certainly change in the New Year is how we approach our world. The New Year is traditionally a time of New Year's resolutions, decisions we make about how we will live our lives. That tradition suggests that deep down we believe change in possible. In fact, there is something very Christian about leaving the past behind and beginning again. It is called God's grace. God forgives the past and welcomes us into the future. It is the message we celebrate during the coming Epiphany season. And it is the hope that sustains us in these difficult times.

You and I may not change the great events and forces in our world such as war and the world economy. But with God's help we can change one person – ourselves. May this be the year when you resolve to face whatever is coming with faith and hope, through the God who sent Jesus Christ to secure our future forever.

Rev. Mack

First
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Rev. A. Mack Hagins, Pastor

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Worship with us:

Youth Christian Education 8:45 AM
Service Time 10:30 AM
in Sanctuary or via Zoom
Child Care available during worship

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HAPPY**	*

WORSHIP IN JANUARY/COVID INFORMATION

COVID UPDATE — As COVID is still with us, while we are not requiring masks, those who prefer to wear them are welcome to do so. We continue to ask that you stay home if you are not feeling well, until you are better or have a negative COVID test. The service will still be offered on Zoom if you choose to remain at home. The same Zoom login will be used every week at 10:30 AM.

HOW TO PARTICIPATE REMOTELY

Join Zoom Meeting

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84390216459

Or dial 301 715 8592 Meeting ID: 843 9021 6459



We will share in Holy Communion on January 7. In the church we will receive by safe and distanced intinction. Those who are worshiping at home are invited to prepare some bread and juice for yourself and your family.

SPECIAL NOTE ABOUT YOUTH CHRISTIAN ED: For the next couple of months (or more) the Sunday Christian Education Class will be **held in the Nursery**. PLEASE BE SURE to call or text Carrie Mazza at 617-257-1780 before your first week of attendance.

Child Care Attendant Still Needed!



We are very fortunate to have families with children who come to our church, and we are blessed to have a wonderful childcare attendant, Paige Coffill. We need two people in the Nursery every Sunday, however, and so we are still looking to hire a second attendant. If you know of anyone who would like to earn a little money every week working from 10:00 - 12:00 on Sunday mornings during worship, let them know about this opportunity. Must be eighteen, legally eligible to work in the USA and willing to have

a criminal records check. In the meantime, volunteers are filling in. **Volunteers are still needed as well,** see Valerie Zablocki if you are willing to volunteer.



Christian Education News

For the First Sunday of Advent, we used a lesson from the Faithweaver curriculum about the angel who appeared to Joseph in a dream and told him Mary's child was conceived by the Holy Spirit and he need not be afraid to marry her. We also examined the symbolism of the candles in the Advent wreath. The craft was a mini advent wreath made from pipe cleaners and buttons.











The next Sunday, we did a religious escape room called "Seeking the Manger." This was a big logic puzzle with several layers. The youth had to first hunt for 17 clue/puzzle pieces and 8 doors, which had been hidden in 2 classrooms. (Thank you to Barb for helping set this up!) Then, using the clues and solving the puzzles, the youth needed to number the doors and figure out which inn (out of eight) contained the manger for baby Jesus. Congratulations to the youth for determining the correct answer! Our youth really enjoy this type of activity, and they work very well together to figure it out.

The lesson for the Third Sunday of Advent was "The Word Made Flesh," a Faithweaver lesson based on John 1:1-18. We played a game called "Christmas Chaos" to illustrate how we can get so caught up in the flurry of Christmas preparations that the focus on the birth of Jesus can get lost. We made a manger out of craft sticks, a section of a carboard tube, and construction paper.







Christian Ed classes were not held on December 24 and 31 due to the Christmas and New Year holidays.

- Carrie Mazza



COFFEE AND CONVERSATION AT PANERA

You are invited to join the monthly gathering at the corner table at the Panera across the street from the church for Coffee & Conversation. This informal time of sharing is held on the **second Tuesday of each month**, so our next gathering will be **from 10:00 a.m.-12:00 noon on January 9.** Stop by to exchange ideas or just to visit.



HAPPY JANUARY BIRTHDAYS



In January we have 3 birthdays that we know of:

4 - Shirley Massey

13 - Jean Mizer

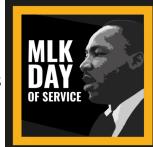
23 - Rory Moser

Happy birthday to all! If you also are celebrating a birthday or anniversary this month, congratulations and best wishes to you.

If we don't have your birthday/anniversary and you'd like to have it published in the *Beacon*, please send or phone your special day(s) into the office ASAP but certainly by January 27 for the February newsletter. Thank you!

MLK DAY OF SERVICE JANUARY 15

Taking place each year on the third Monday in January, the Martin Luther King, Jr., Day of Service (MLK Day) is the only federal holiday that is also designated by Congress as a national day of service – a "day on, not a day off." Participation in service activities has grown each year as more Americans are encouraged to provide meaningful change in their communities. Whenever service meets a tangible need, such as fixing up a school or senior center, serving meals at a soup kitchen, or helping clean up a



neighborhood, it builds a sense of community or mutual responsibility. Even in a COVID and flu environment, service can take on the form of sending a meal through a meal delivery service, serving as a virtual mentor, or donating money to a charitable cause to help those who lack basic essential items. We encourage you to think about how YOU might observe this special day by helping out.

—Mission Team

HUMAN RELATIONS DAY OFFERING JANUARY 14

Human Relations Sunday Listening Hearts: Responding to the Prophetic Call



Human Relations Day is a denomination-wide Special Sunday that celebrates and raises awareness about the strength of human relationships.

A special offering will be received on the Sunday, January 14th, 2024. This is the day before Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday and contributes to building his vision of "the beloved community" through programs such as the Better Community Development, Inc. Better Community Development, Inc. prioritizes the restoration of a neglected community through the Theressa Hoover Memorial United Methodist Church in Little Rock. The Hoover Treatment Center is a faith-based substance abuse treatment center that provides a safe, drug-free environment for participants and their families.

On Human Relations Day, we celebrate stories of success. For example, one of the BCD's current faith leaders struggled with

addiction for her entire life before finding the Hoover Treatment Center. Not only did she find success in recovery, but she also found Jesus. She works with women who have exited the inpatient program to prevent relapse and nurture spiritual growth as an avenue for recovery. "When you strive to be the best version of you that you can be, you start to embrace who God created you to be," she said, "because you start to get proud of yourself, and God truly shows you he's proud." (excerpt adapted from a story by Caroline Loftin, contributing writer, Theressa Hoover Memorial Church)

One of six churchwide Special Sundays with offerings of The United Methodist Church, Human Relations Day calls United Methodists to recognize the right of all God's children to reach their potential as human beings in relationship with one another. The special offering benefits neighborhood ministries through Community Developers, community advocacy through United Methodist Voluntary Services and work with at-risk teens through the Youth Offender Rehabilitation Program.

There will be offering envelopes in the bulletin on January 14, or you may bring or send a check to the church or give directly on line from a link at https://www.umc.org/en/content/human-relations-day -sunday-ministry-article

Submitted by Paul Carlotto, Mission Team member



Hot Chocolate Collection for People's Pantry

As the new year starts, we're reaching out with a request to support the People's Pantry, a crucial resource for the Merrimack Valley community, hosted at the North Parish Unitarian Universalist. For the collection drive this January and February, we're focusing on gathering hot chocolate to offer a bit of comfort during the cold months.

Since its inception in 1992, the People's Pantry has served as a source of food for those in need, operating twice each month. This past year was a milestone for the Pantry as they served nearly 5,000 families which is more than ever before. Their efforts have been strengthened through partnerships, like the one with the Giving Garden at Rolling Ridge and with Boston Gleaners who help them bring fresh produce to the tables. Communities Together (collected diapers through the Lenten season) and Neighbors in Need who provide diapers for families with little ones.



The People's Pantry now opens its doors earlier to help people get food before they go to work. It seems like a small change, but it has made a big difference, allowing them to serve 363 people just last week. The support from the food bank is a great help, but they often find themselves needing to buy more food to meet the growing demand. None of this would be possible without the heart and hard work of the volunteers over 45 strong, as well as all the people who generously donate food.

Your support means everything to those that are served. Every packet of hot chocolate you bring in is more than just food—it's a sign that our community looks out for one another.

Sincerely, Andrea EK Vannett, formerly on the Board Of Directors for People's Pantry

Thank You for Your Support of Misisons

CHRISTMAS OFFERING: Thank you for your gifts of \$506 so far to help support our church's ministries through our General Fund. If you would still like to give there will be envelopes in the narthex on December 31.

QUILTS: Our 68 beautiful and warm quilts and blankets donated and blessed on November 12 all have gone to Fina House and Heading home. All the children at Fina House received a quilt/ blanket. At 3 Heading Home locations 51 quilts are being distributed to children 5 and younger. An additional 12 quilts medium or larger sized were also provided to be distributed. In addition, one new Pop Up Shop family has 6 children and was given quilts, and 3 infants new to Pop Up Shop families received blankets. Thank you, Lynn Satriale

POP UP SHOP: A big thank you to everyone who helped serve the 22 families with 56 children and who donated toys and money, as well as those who made purchases the Sunday following the Shop.

January 2024 Church Activity Calendar

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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat		
	1	2	3	4	5	6		

7 Epiphany Sunday Choir Rehearsal 9:30 a.m.	8 Missions Team 7pm via Zoom	9 Coffee & Conversation @ Panera 10am-12noon	10	11	12	13		
SPRC meets after coffee fellowship		Church Council 7pm						
14 Baptism of Jesus Human Relations Day Offering	15 MLK Day of Service	16	17	18	19	20		
Choir Rehearsal 9:30 a.m.								
3rd Sunday after Epiphany Choir Rehearsal 9:30 a.m.	22	23	24	25	26	27		
28 4th Sunday after Epiphany Choir Rehearsal 9:30 a.m.	29	30	31					
CALENDAR SUBJECT TO CHANGE								

January 2024 Building Use Calendar

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat		
	1 HAPPY** ********************************	2	3 IMC Senior Lunch 10-2 WH 5:00-8:00PM AA Room 500	4	5 10:00AM ICM Prayer Service Room 500	6		
7 11:00AM—3:00PM Intercultural Mission Church Worship Service WH Rooms 500 & 400	8 6:00-8:00PM AA Room 500	9 7:00-9:00PM GA Room 500	10 5:00-8:00PM AA Room 500	11	10:00AM ICM Prayer Service Room 500	13		
14 11:00AM—3:00PM Intercultural Mission Church Worship Service WH Rooms 500 & 400	15 6:00-8:00PM AA Room 500	16 7:00-9:00PM GA Room 500	17 IMC Senior Lunch 10-2 WH 5:00-8:00PM AA Room 500 6:00-8:00PM Girl Scouts Room 200	18	19 10:00AM ICM Prayer Service Room 500	20		
21 11:00AM—3:00PM Intercultural Mission Church Worship Service WH Rooms 500 & 400	6:00-8:00PM AA Room 500	7:00-9:00PM GA Room 500	5:00-8:00PM AA Room 500	25	26 10:00AM ICM Prayer Service Room 500	27		
28 11:00AM—3:00PM Intercultural Mission Church Worship Service WH Rooms 500 & 400	6:00-8:00PM AA Room 500	7:00-9:00PM GA Room 500	31 5:00-8:00PM AA Room 500					
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January 2024



New England Conference

The United Methodist Church

Connected is a publication of the New England Conference of The United Methodist Church. This monthly insert is designed put Conference news directly into the hands of our local



Online training for SPRCs

Join Bishop Peggy A. Johnson and District Superintendents Rev. Jill Colley Robinson and Rev. Nizzi Santos Digan for an online training for members of the Staff-Parish Relations Committee (SPRC) from 7-8:30 pm Jan. 17, 2024.

Some topics will include:

- Roles/duties of the SPRC
- Keys for effective and healthy SPRC ministry
- Creating a monthly SPRC ministry calendar
- Resources for staff-parish relations

We'll talk about all this and more. You will be able to submit your questions and possible topics in advance of the training when you register.

This training is part of the annual series offered by the NEAC for local church leaders. The session will be recorded.

Register at www.neumc.org/events

Bishop's 2024 Days on the Districts



Bishop Peggy A. Johnson and members of the General/Jurisdictional Conference Delegations will visit each district to share information as we begin this important year in the life of the New England Conference and The UMC.

Lay and clergy are urged to attend one of these events to learn about proposed plans for the New England Conference and for the denomination. The General/ Jurisdictional Conference delegation will offer its report. You are invited to attend any

event that is convenient. Each Saturday event will begin at I pm and be followed by a light reception.

At II am at each location Bishop Johnson will be available to speak to those interested in lay or clergy ministry.

Schedule

Feb. 3 - Green Mountain - Shelburne UMC

Feb. 10 - Seacoast - Hazardville **UMC**

Feb. 17 – Commonwealth West – St. Matthew's UMC Acton, MA

Feb. 24 - Commonwealth East -Holy Trinity UMC, Danvers, MA March 2 - Granite - First UMC,

Gilford, NH March 9 - Katahdin - Columbia Falls UMC

March 16 - Many Waters -**Brunswick UMC**

All events will be in person, but there will be virtual options. In case of inclement weather, the event will be held exclusively online via Zoom. Information about such plans will be disseminated closer to the time.

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

Join Bishop for webinar Jan. 25

Join Bishop Peggy A. Johnson and members of the NEAC Committee on Christian Unity and Interreligious Relationships to pray for Christian Unity during a webinar beginning at 7 pm on Thursday, Jan. 25.

Guest speaker will be our very own Clare J. Chapman, Conference Treasurer and Director of Administrative Services.



gious Concerns. An attorney, she was also the Deputy General Secretary and General Counsel for the National Council of Churches.

General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreli-

Bishop urges NEAC to take part in Week of Prayer for Christian Unity — This event will come at the conclusion of the 2024 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (Jan. 18-25). www.geii.org

Bishop Johnson encourages all NEAC clergy and laity to take this time to be in prayer and solidarity with other Christians from around the world. This year's theme is from Luke 10:27: "You shall love the Lord your God ... and your neighbor as yourself."

No registration required.

Get the webinar link at neumc.org/events

Clare has served as Associate General Secretary for the

Special Sunday

Human Relations Day is Jan. 14

The Human Relations Day offering supports social justice and outreach ministries that empower all God's children to realize their full potential as human beings in relationship with one another.

This fund helps encourage that potential through ministries like the Community Developers Program, multiethnic ministries, and countless other projects across the United Methodist connection. These funds are administered by Global Ministries in collaboration with the General Board of Church & Society. Learn more at

www.resourceumc.org





Check out cross currents

December 2023: How does that work?

This issue of the online magazine produced by the NEAC Communications Team answers the question "how does that work?" for topics from calculating Mission Shares to General Conference. neumc.org/crosscurrents

Let's Connect

Do you have a story to share? A feature idea? A question to ask? Contact Beth DiCocco, Conference Director of Communications, at communicate@neumc.org or (978) 682-8055 ext. 150



First United Methodist Church

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Office Hours: Tues., Wed., Fri. 8:30AM - 11:30AM

Youth Christian Education Sundays 8:45 AM—Please call or text Carrie at 617-257-1780 before your first week of attendance

Choir Practice 9:30 AM in the Sanctuary

Sunday Worship 10:30AM in the Sanctuary and via ZOOM

Child Care available during worship











A Reconciling Congregation