



Christ Congregational Church, UCC An Open and Affirming Congregation *Creating Beloved Community*

Volume 40 No 12

Be The Church

December 2020

WORSHIP AND PROGRAMS:

Worship: Remotely on our website, Facebook page, or Nearly Weekly

Sundays, 9:55AM
(Music starts at 9:50)

Regular: Remotely

Bible Study: Wednesdays, 10AM

Hymn Sings: Wednesdays, 6:45PM

Fiber Fellowship:
2nd & 4th Tuesday, 5:00PM



Board Meetings: ZOOM

Christian Ed: Dec. 2, 6:30PM

Council: Dec. 17, 7PM

Deacons: Dec. 3, 7PM

Finance/Property: Dec. 10, 7PM

Media/Tech: Dec. 10, 6:15 PM

Missions: Dec. 1, 6:30PM

Music: Dec. 13, 11:30PM

OCC: TBD

Vitality: Dec. 10, 7PM

PASTOR'S PAGE

It's hard to believe that it's already been a month since I started as your senior pastor. During that time I've learned A LOT about our church. I've met with all of the different committees and task forces of the church, I've talked with the staff and volunteers who help us to run our day to day life, and I've had the chance to meet some of you after worship and through virtual office hours. Through it all one thing is abundantly clear to me already – the people of Christ Congregational Church are committed to the work of building beloved community!

Over the past year everything we do has been made exponentially harder by COVID-19. Even simple things, like buying groceries or having coffee with a friend, have become almost impossible. The work of building Beloved Community is no different. It seems obvious that one part of building Beloved Community is inviting people in – and right now with COVID-19 that seems to be the LAST thing we're supposed to do. We have our work cut out for us, to be sure, but I've seen how determined we are to do this work. The members of the Deacons board are still working hard at maintaining connections with our home-based members. The CE board sent home Sunday school kits with families, and they're working on new ones for Advent. The missions board are still collecting hats and gloves and food for those in need. Finance and Property are still working hard at creating a budget that will help us to achieve our future goals and be good stewards of our resources. Finally, a new group called the Strategic Pathways Task Force began meeting to focus on ways for us to engage with our two strategic pathways: confronting racial injustice and working at community engagement. Friends, it may SEEM as though the church is closed due to COVID-19 but I can whole heartedly confirm that the church is as open and active as it's ever been!

In some ways this is a good analogy for what we hope to capture in the season of Advent. Some theologians will say that during this season we wrestle with the idea that God's kingdom is "already, but not yet". Just as it is with our church right now, it can sometimes seem like God's kingdom is not at work in our midst – because there are too many other negative things that obstruct our view of it – but if each of us does even a small bit for our part of the kingdom the whole picture can be far more incredible than we think.

I am hopeful for the future, but I am also glad to be in the "right now" with all of you. As we wander into the wonder of Advent, let us embrace the uncertainty by placing our hope in the signs that we can already see.

Blessings and Peace,
Pastor Jeff



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION YOUTH NEWS

Sunday School

Sunday Schoolers spent October and November exploring what kind of neighbor God is calling us to be with *Won't You Be My Neighbor?*, our inaugural session of Sunday School at home. The Board of Christian Education has been adapting Sunday School for pandemic-time by creating and delivering kits that contain everything a family needs for five or six weeks of activities, paired with video Sunday School Lessons.

The next session focuses on spiritual practices for Advent, Christmas and Epiphany. In addition to six weeks of activities, each kit comes with a copy of Traci Smith's book, *Faithful Families For Advent and Christmas* – a wonderful resource with a plethora of easy-to-do holiday practices and traditions-in-the-making that are accessible for families of all shapes and sizes. Advent Sunday School kits have been assembled and are being delivered. If you would like a kit for your family, please reach out to the church office (508-586-3022).



Pageant

As we all know too well, the pandemic has led to the cancellation of many events this year. However, the Christmas Pageant will not be one of them! The pageant is going virtual this year for safety's sake, creating some exciting opportunities for us to tell a beloved, old story in new and transformational ways! In that spirit we are opening the pageant up to people of all ages. No tech wizardry skills are required... if you can snap a selfie or find your way onto a zoom meeting (with assistance), then you will have no problem participating. There are parts large and small, with room for actors, musicians, readers and pageant enthusiasts. We'll be putting the pageant together over the coming weeks and will share the finished product with the congregation during worship

on December 20th. If you're interested in participating, please contact the church office or Associate Pastor, Ann-Marie Illsley (am.illsley@gmail.com).

Youth Group

Get ready for some awesome Youth Group fun this December! We're kicking off the month with an **Outdoor Christmas movie on Saturday, Dec. 12th from 4:30-6:00pm**. Bring a chair and blanket and we'll have hand (and toe) warmers ready to keep everyone cozy! On **Saturday, Dec. 19th from 11:00am-12:30pm** we're continuing the fun with an **Outdoor Christmas Party**. We'll have fun games (remember the plastic wrap ball from last year?!) and a White Elephant Gift exchange. If you'd like to participate in the White Elephant, please bring a wrapped gift (price cap \$10) to the party. Finally, we'll cap off our month of Christmas fun with a **trip to LaSalette** to see the lights on **Tuesday, December 29th**. Siblings and parents/guardians are invited to join in on this outing so we can caravan over while maintaining social distancing. We'll meet in the church parking lot at 3:45pm and plan to arrive at LaSalette in time to see the lights turn on!

Youth Group



Confirmation

Confirmation class started back up this past month with five confirmands, all of whom are in their second year. The class is using a new program this year, called *Confirm Not Conform UCC* which is helping the class explore their faith and dive deep into big questions!



December Classes:

- Dec. 6th – Attend the Annual Meeting on Zoom
- Dec. 13th – Where Do You Stand: The Gospel According to Whom?
- Dec. 20th – Heretics R Us

Notes from Murray



Well, this is the last Notes from Murray for 2020. What a year this has been! We are almost through it, though. God will give us strength to the end of this situation. Music is part of that process, in my opinion. God gave us music. Everyone has the ability to create it in their mind and in life. We receive solace from the sound of it; excitement, peace, comfort, stimulation and so many other moods, emotions. Music is beauty in so many forms.

This month, we will have a Christmas concert on December 20th at 5:00pm. A zoom link will be sent in the Nearly Weekly Email for that week. This is after the Pats game and right in time before the last few days before the day we celebrate Christ's birth. This year's concert will be different, to be sure, but we hope it will be uplifting and entertaining. The concert will consist of some great music. Dale and Sylvia will play some duets, which is always a crowd pleaser! The music staff is currently preparing some anthems. The choir will be preparing something special for the event and more is in store!! It promises to be a fun time of Christmas fun for the whole family!

I want to thank the entire music team and volunteers who have contributed music this year. We are blessed with many artists and musicians in our church family. Thank you, also, to Jillian for being our life-line to seeing our services and hearing our music since the pandemic started. As we look at the not-so-distant future when we get back to normal, I long for the time when the choir can gather again and sing, breathe and make harmonies together. The youth program will be invigorated and will have some amazing programs that will get the kids excited and making joyful noises. The hand bells, while able to meet occasionally, will meet more regularly to use our wonderful bells. Our organ will be completed soon! What a great journey that has happened by Donna Costa and the organ completion committee. We can't wait to hear the new addition! Soon and very soon!

Over the years, I have had the privilege to be involved in some amazing projects with the Handel and Haydn Society and other groups. We have made a few recordings and I'd like to share some of the Christmas selections I am very fond of. Note: most of these aren't songs you will hear playing over speakers at Macy's.



[Magnum Mysterium](#) - Morten Lauridsen
[Hodie Christus natus est](#) - Sweelinck
[Deck the Hall](#) - Anonymous
[Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming](#) - Praetorius
[There is No Rose](#) - Anonymous
[Coventry Carol](#) - arr. Pilkington
[Agnus Dei](#) - Barber
[Magnum Mysterium](#) - Jennifer Higdon



[Long, Long Ago](#) - Herbert Howells (I am not in this recording, but this is one of my all-time favorite compositions that have had the pleasure of performing it, but never recorded it.)

May peace be with you as you enjoy these songs and may you be able to take some time to breathe and let your mind relax from the stresses and rush of life.

Sincerely,
Murray



ORGAN COMPLETION COMMITTEE

UPDATE FROM THE ORGAN COMPLETION COMMITTEE

CHRIST CHURCH
PIPE ORGAN SERIES PRESENTS

DECEMBER MIDDAY MUSIC
Wednesday December 16th
at 12:15 pm
Janet Hunt
Guest Organist

Free event
Program will be streamed online
Go to: www.brocktonucc.org or
Facebook page:
"Christ Church Pipe Organ Series"

SPONSORED BY

STOUGHTON CULTURAL COUNCIL

LIKE us on Facebook
Christ Church Pipe Organ Series


For information
E-mail: organ@brocktonucc.org
Christ Congregational Church
1350 Pleasant Street, Brockton
508-586-3022

PROJECT PIPES: 620

620 by 2020

Our goal: \$166,000 to install 620 pipes to complete the Choir Division on the Austin Organ Opus #2759

We have surpassed our goal !!

Any donations received above our \$166,000 goal will stay in a designated fund for organ maintenance.

ORGAN COMPLETION COMMITTEE
CHRIST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH UCC
BROCKTON, MA

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UPDATE FROM THE ORGAN BUILDER

Work continues in the shop of Czelusniak & Dugal, Organ Builders, on the installation of the Choir Division for our Austin Organ. During the past month, the windchest was mated to the windbox and secured; all pipework for the Choir division was racked and fitted to the windchest (and rackboards - one by one - pipe by pipe); the Choir expression box was fitted to the windchest, assembled, and secured; the expression shades were installed and the expression motor fitted to them and the structures.



AT LEFT, ALL RACKBOARDS HAVE BEEN FITTED TO THE MAIN WINDCHEST



AT LEFT, CROMONNE REEDS (WRAPPED FOR CLEANLINESS) ARE RACKED IN THE CHEST

AT RIGHT, THE MAIN WINDCHEST IS BEING MATED TO ITS REGULATED WINDBOX BELOW



AT RIGHT, KOPPEL FLUTE 4' PIPES ARE RACKED IN THE MAIN WINDCHEST



Wait with Us This Holy Advent

Tune: Stuttgart

Words: Katrina F Clinton

Wait with us this Holy Advent,
Wait and work for Christ's new reign.
Wait for expectation's moment
To renew the world again.

Wait with us for Hope's fruition,
One to save us from all sin.
From our mean and low condition
Let the New Age now begin.

Wait with us for Peace to prosper
When all wars will truly cease.
Neighbors all, good will to foster,
We can forge a lasting peace.

Wait with us for Joy to bubble.
Deep within, the wellsprings lie.
We can see beyond the trouble
To unleash the joy-filled sighs.

Wait with us for Love to fill all.
Fears are gone, doubts melt away.
Christ's disciples heed God's true call,
Choosing Love and living Grace.



The Season of Advent is here! And so, once again, we are waiting. We are waiting for expectation's moment to renew our world again! We are waiting for the birth of Jesus, our Savior. Wait with us! Pray with us! Hope with us!

Please continue to support this Beloved Community of CCCUCC with your gifts of Time, Talent, and Treasure!

Please fulfill your 2020 pledge, if you are able.

Please return your 2021 Pledge Form!

Please mail in a check: 1350 Pleasant St, Brockton MA 02301

Please use the Donate/Donate Today button at brocktonucc.org

Thank you! Praise and thanks to God!

Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love to All! Your Stewardship Committee

From the Mission Committee

Most years, the Missions Board invites members of the congregation to hang a Christmas card on our tree in the narthex, rather than mailing cards to church households individually. This year, we are replacing our card tree with the opportunity to share your Christmas greetings in the January issue of *The Courier*. You may send your brief Christmas message to the church office, either via e-mail (office@brocktonucc.org) or regular mail to be published in January. Please consider donating to missions the money you save on postage and cards. You can donate on the CCC website (use the box for "Special Missions Donations" and specify "card tree" in the memo space), or by sending contributions to the church office.





STEWARDSHIP SNIPPETS



(Not Snippy! Just Zippy!)

Unfolding Grace, Abundant Hope - A BOLD “Thanks” Giving

- * The CCCUCC Stewardship Committee is asking all of us in this Beloved Community to give thanks to God for the Unfolding Grace and Abundant Hope that we have in the future of our mission and ministry! We know that 2020 has been a very difficult and challenging year for so many, but “we do not lose hope.” YES, there is much to look forward to in 2021 at Christ Church!
- * From 2 Corinthians 4:16 of The Message: “So we’re not giving up. How could we! Even though on the outside it often looks like things are falling apart on us, on the inside, where God is making new life, not a day goes by without God’s unfolding Grace.”
- * From Pastor Jeff’s Stewardship Letter: “In the midst of all the challenges we are facing, there are opportunities to allow ourselves to be transformed as we renew our thinking about how we will go forward as a beloved community... what’s most essential is that we all dedicate ourselves to our shared mission - to build a Beloved Community, not just here at Christ Congregational Church but throughout our wider community.”
- * Pledge Packets for 2021 were distributed beginning on Sunday, November 8th. They were given out at outdoor worship and mailed via USPS. Recently, these Pledge Packets were made available online via the Nearly Weekly and can be downloaded using the [“Download Your Stewardship Packet Here!”](#)
- * Stewardship has invited all of us prayerfully to consider our 2021 pledges and to respond generously. We are moving forward into exciting new chapters of our Church lives, and we need the support of all of us! **Please return your completed 2021 Pledge Forms as soon as possible by dropping them off at the church office during open hours (if permitted) or by mailing them in to the church.**
- * Our joyful dedication of pledges will occur on Sunday, December 13th. And, of course, pledges will still be enthusiastically received after that date!
- * Blessed, peaceful, and safe Advent to all! What comfort to live and serve together in this Beloved Community, even in these trying times. With God’s help and love, we are strong together! We are strong in our giving, strong in our caring, strong in our support of one another, and strong in reaching out to the world. TOGETHER, we share the Advent sense of preparation, waiting, and expectation. With Hope, we look forward to a future when we can all be together again in person.

Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love, Matt, Jillian, Jane, and Kate
(Stewardship Committee)



Care Teams

Have you heard about our Care Teams? Made up of volunteers from the congregation, these teams provide care for various members of our community. Each team takes one week a month to write cards, make calls, and in a pre-pandemic world, drop off meals and/or visit with other members in the congregation. It’s one of the ways that our church community works to take care of each other.

Could you commit to making one call or writing one card a month? Do you have a desire to keep our community connected in this difficult time? If so, perhaps you’re called to be part of one of our Care Teams. If you’d like to join a team, or if you have questions, please reach out to our Bridge Pastor, Ann-Marie or the church office.



Wishing all the best on your Birthdays

Don Myers, Jeanie Boutwell, Leo Larson, Hector Morales, Lili Fleming, Scott Weatherbee, Cara Harrigan, Peridine Bastia, Breanna McNary, Russ Gillpatrick, Emma Milton, Janis Creedon, Dorothy Edyth Liolios, Glenn Carey, Joey Izyk, Nicole Milton, Nathan Eckstrom, Carole Duhamel, Bobby Gair, Piper Garner-MacKinnon, Betsy McMahon, Carolyn Bennett, Audrey Jones, Robbie Sinesi, Luke Creedon, Brian Ferguson, India Vergne, Stephanie Pursell

(listed in order of day of month from 1 to 31)

Wednesday Morning Virtual Bible Study

10:00 AM VIA ZOOM



Join us for Wednesday morning Bible Study group. Regulars and newcomers alike are welcome to drop in and check out this adult faith formation opportunity. The group discusses the lectionary scripture readings each week. Hope to see you there!

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84061103224>

Meeting ID: 840 6110 3224

+1 929 205 6099 Password: bible or (423861 if calling by phone)



We pray for the family of Jean Sampson (sister-in-law of Janet Eckstrom), may they rest in peace.

"Be Still

And

Know that I am God"

Psalm 46:10



Weekly Silent Prayer Group on Zoom

Starting Tuesday December 3rd at 7 PM to 8 PM

I would like to invite you to join me in learning about, experiencing and reflecting about silent prayer. Please email me at deb@act-cpa.com to get the zoom link emailed to you.

Peace, Deb Bowman

I remember when...

Thanksgiving at Grandma's started in late September with the making of Armenian cheese. She would do the preparation and I would stir and stir and stir the slow boiling vat. When prompted, I would start pouring the thick liquid into cloth lined wooden cubed boxes. Stored in the cellar in the coldest spot, this cheese would be ready by Thanksgiving Day.



Grandma would use the stove from the next door apartment while the man was away visiting his family in another State. This where the pies would be cooked, apple, pumpkin and peach. In the main house would go the two turkeys.

Grandma always invited any neighbor who didn't have a place to go and many times I would say, "Who's that?" and she would say, "A hungry neighbor from next door." Always had the door open for anyone that needed a place for Thanksgiving. An open door and an open heart.

We all miss the "old days" and with this Thanksgiving Day it will be like no other. Be nice to others, offer a lending hand and remember, YOU could be the one that needs that extra help.

George Manoogian
The Mister Nice Guy

WANTED: 2021

Calendars for Veterans at Brockton V.A. Hospital. Please leave or send the calendars to the office and the Missions Committee will deliver them.



Memorial Poinsettia Orders

Please place your poinsettia order by December 6th. The Deacons will be delivering Poinsettias to our homebound members on December 12th. Some of the plants will be retained to adorn the chancel throughout the Christmas season. We regret the option to take your own plant will not be available this year. Below is the order form, please fill out and return to the Church Office. You are welcome to have 4 names per plant.

Please complete this form and return it to the church with \$15 per poinsettia:

I, _____, would like to order _____ poinsettia plants for delivery to our homebound members on December 12th.



The names I would like listed on the memorial list are **(4 names per plant)**:

THE MASKERAID FUNDRAISER AT CHRIST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UCC

DEVELOPED BY THE CCC HARVEST FAIR COMMITTEE

The Calendar Drawings Begin December 1st and continue throughout this month!

2020 DECEMBER MaskerAid Raffle						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		Stonebridge Restaurant \$25 GC CVS \$25 GC	BM's House of Pizza \$25 GC Amazon \$25 GC	Market Basket \$25 GC Barnes & Noble \$25 GC	Dollar Tree \$25 GC Italian Kitchen \$30 GC	Target \$25 GC Dunkin' \$25 GC
Amazon \$50 GC	Hiland's Candy \$25 GC	Doggie Boutique \$25 GC	Good Days Restaurant \$25 GC	Cape Cod Café \$30 GC	Petco \$25 GC	Crystal's Kitchen \$30 GC
DSM \$50 GC	Lowe's \$25 GC	Home Depot \$25 GC	Trucchi's \$25 GC	Juanin's \$25 GC	Stonebridge Restaurant \$25 GC	Barnes & Noble \$25 GC
Target \$50 GC	T.Mason/Marshall/Home Goods \$25 GC	Dominos \$25 GC	Trader Joe's \$25 GC	Be Dazzled \$25 GC	The Beanyery \$25 GC	Good Days Restaurant \$25 GC
Black's Grille & Tap \$50 GC	Paira Rest & Pate Dust \$25 GC	Barnes & Noble \$25 GC	Amazon \$25 GC	Shaw's Supermarket \$25 GC	Genders Hairdresser \$30 GC	Pizzeria Uno \$25 GC
The Farmers Daughter \$50 GC	The Beanyery \$25 GC	Amazon \$25 GC	China Town Restaurant \$25 GC	Sunside Café \$25 GC	Shaw's Supermarket \$25 GC	El Mariachi Restaurant \$25 GC
Amazon \$50 GC	CVS \$25 GC	Dominos \$25 GC	Town Spa \$25 GC	Dunkin' \$25 GC	Hiland's Candy \$25 GC	Good Days Restaurant \$25 GC
Nocera's Restaurant \$30 GC	Boston Tavern \$25 GC	The Beanyery \$25 GC	Roche Brothers \$25 GC	Panera Bread \$25 GC		
Jade Leaf \$30 GC	Texas Roadhouse \$30 GC	CVS \$25 GC	Mud Restaurant \$25 GC	Petco \$25 GC		

A Huge Thank You and Good Luck to Everyone who has participated in this Socially Distant Fair Event!

We are so excited to begin adding winners to the Calendar.

Once the names are drawn someone from the Fair Team will contact the winner. Gift Cards will be mailed to the winner unless alternate arrangements are made.

If interested, Tickets will be sold in December and added on Fridays once received, for the chance to win a Gift Card each remaining days!!

The Wonderful, Very Special Donations by our church members went on sale in November and, if still available, can be purchased into December

Fairly Weekly Issues will provide updates

Please let the church office know if you want to be added to our e-mail mailing list.

Questions? Text, e-mail or call us--

Sheppó Email: sheppo247@comcast.net
Phone #/Text 1 508 631 1999

David Wilcox Email: darmok2@comcast.net
Phone #/Text 1 617 590 1878



Shop AmazonSmile For All Your Christmas Gifts!

AmazonSmile is a simple way for you to support your favorite charitable organization (Christ Congregational Church) every time you shop, at no cost to you. It's easy! Simply visit smile.amazon.com, select Christ Congregational Church, Brockton, and shop! You'll find the exact same low prices, vast selection and convenient shopping experience as Amazon.com, with the added benefit that Amazon will donate 0.5% of your eligible purchases to the charitable organization of your choice. (Check out Wholefoods and the Pantry for food delivery)

Imagine That!

IMAGE- IN THAT!

(A column on Visual Arts by Katrina Clinton)

LIGHT

It can be said that photography is a “captured record of light”. The camera is recording a moment of how light hits the tree, the person, the field, the house, the whatever-is-in-the-frame. Color is only a matter of the intensity and wavelength on the spectrum scale of light. There are wavelengths that we cannot see, like ultraviolet and infrared. There is no such thing as dark, only less light or fewer shadows.

As we enter Advent again, we are reminded of the “Light that came into the world”. And we hear once more how the “darkness cannot overcome” this Light. What a wonderful Word to hear in these shortened days when the light through our windows seems brief and shadowed.

The photo, below, of the Northern Lights was taken on our trip to Norway last January. It is an example of how human eyes are limited. It wasn't until we saw the photos taken through the camera lens that we could see the greens and pinks of the Northern Lights. Our eyes saw only gray wisps. What a delight to enhance the pictures and bring out their true colors. It was a lesson in the gifts of God that are sometimes hidden until discovered by those with “eyes to see them”.

The second photo is from our Candlelight service last December. We wait upon the light to come once again to fill our hearts with the love that is unconditional and unending. We light our candles of Peace, Hope, Joy and Love to mark the days of anticipation. Each candle reminds us of the true Light of the World and the fire of God that is within our souls, just waiting to be shared with others.

May this Advent bring new Light and Love, Joy and Peace into our world!



To my church family,

Thank you for all the kind words and cards of condolence on the death of my sister in law, Jean Sampson. You may remember she came to the Wednesday night dinners. Meatloaf was her favorite.

Janet Eckstrom

I want to thank Christ Congregational Church for the beautiful mum plant given to me this fall and the communion cups also. Thank You!

Blessings

Alice Farnsworth



Board Of Deacons,

Thank you so much for the beautiful mum. It is still blooming and bringing me joy when I look at it. Also thank you for the communion sets.

I have truly appreciated the many kindnesses extended to me.

Sincerely,

Sandra Hill

Christ Congregational Church Members and Friends:

We are truly a “Beloved” Community. Receiving so many comforting cards and condolences from all of you, including two former Pastors, during the time of our husband and dad. Alton Hefler was surely “Amazing Grace”. We felt so much love. Thank you so much for “being there” for us. The Lord was there for us also. He granted us much compassion during our time of grief. He restored our souls - Psalm 23.

Donna & Jennifer Hefler and Family



A Note from the Moderator...

As I write, with Thanksgiving only two days away, I am deeply grateful for the dedicated efforts of MANY church members who collectively have not only held us together, but actually carried us forward during these challenging months. Did you know that we have 51 persons who serve as church officers or members of standing boards and committees, all of whom have continued to meet (mostly via Zoom) in the service of our community's mission? Did you know that a number of those persons also have served on special temporary committees and task forces charged with leading the congregation through particular challenges of this past year? I want now to recognize one of those groups, one that is wrapping up the critical work they were tasked to do—by you—and who deserve extraordinary thanks from all of us. I refer to the Pastoral Search Committee—the folks who brought us Pastor Jeff, Dani, and Ivyn!

Because few of us have ever served on a PSC, most of have no idea how many hours this committee put into the search and call process over the past year. Let me give you some idea. They first took all the input produced from focus group meetings, interviews from Brockton area community leaders, our all-church retreat, demographic data, church historical documents, and more, and over three months drafted, consulted, re-drafted, consulted, and re-drafted a profile of our congregation to send out through U.C.C. networks to describe who we are, who we feel called to become, and what kind of pastoral leadership we sought. Then they reviewed MANY, not-brief application profiles from potential candidate and discussed each of them for potential fits. In the spring they spent many evenings interviewing candidates, often more than one evening per week, then assessing each candidate, re-interviewing the more promising candidates, and even interviewing a third or fourth time some candidates. Once they set their sights on Jeff, they organized a brief private visit to Brockton for the Kardisco family following all the pandemic safety protocols. They prayed and discerned some more and decided unanimously and enthusiastically to ask the congregation to call Rev. Jeff Kardisco as our senior pastor, and to discern with Jeff if this was a mutual call. Of course, then there was the challenge of figuring out how to organize a candidating weekend under pandemic conditions—quite uncharted territory. And do not think that once we voted on July 26 to call Jeff, their work was over. No! There were contractual matters, support for moving arrangements and a housing search, and a million other things you would never think of. Finally—well sort of “finally”—they took the lead on our welcoming Pastor Jeff, Dani, and Ivyn, and orienting Jeff. Even then, when they could have accepted our saying, “Thanks for a job well done,” and disbanded they asked the Council to let them re-convene, hopefully next year, to organize a “proper” welcome banquet in the future once public health conditions would permit such a social gathering. No way was the Council going to say, “No!”

I know that is a lot of detail, but I am sure there is even more that I have left out. My point is that sometimes, when we are not familiar with what lies behind a certain accomplishment, it is worth emphasizing a few details after other details to more fully understand the gift we have been given. So, please join me in extending a virtual standing ovation of gratitude for the following sisters and brothers: **Sue Koza and Emily Swisher-Rosa, co-chairs, who deserve off-the-charts praise; Doug Anderson; Janet Eckstrom; Audrey Jones; Henok Kaptimer; Leigh-Ann Larson; Loren Stott; Lorraine Wilcox; and Brian Young-Ferguson.** Thank-you good and faithful servants!

Next we will recognize the Financial Planning Task Force, which is also wrapping up its gift to us.

Barry Shelley

Christ Congregational Church Blue Christmas 2020

Streamed Online
Wednesday, December 16th
7:00 PM
<https://brocktonucc.org/live-videos/>

Jesus said, "Come to me, all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."

~Matthew 11:28~

No matter who you are, or what burdens you carry this holiday season, come as you are because you are welcome here.



CHRIST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, BROCKTON, MA

Advent and the Christmas season are a source of joy and excitement for many of us – but not for all. Every year this season can be a source of anxiety as the pressure to feel joyful is all around; even in the midst of sadness, or grief, or depression. The struggles of our lives don't stop simply because Christmas is coming. This year, especially, may be harder than other years for many of us. No matter who you are, or what you are carrying during this holiday season, we are offering an online Blue Christmas service on December 16th at 7 PM. This service recognizes the ways many of us still hurt, or carry feelings other than joy through this time. Please join us for a time of prayer, healing, and reflection – but most importantly please join us if you are in need of a space where it's safe to feel what you are feeling.

Christmas Eve

At
Christ Congregational Church

In Person Candlelighting (Outdoors)
5 PM

Traditional Christmas Eve (Online)
7 PM

<https://brocktonucc.org/live-videos/>



CHRIST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, BROCKTON, MA

www.brocktonucc.org
@brocktonucc

It's hard to believe that Christmas is right around the corner! This has been a year unlike any other in recent memory, and Christmas feels even more important this year as we welcome God's presence among us. Out of an abundance of caution, and based on the best recommendations from public health experts, we have decided to do something different for Christmas Eve this year. On December 24th we will have a small candle lighting service, outdoors in our parking lot, beginning at 5 PM. We will ask anyone who attends to wear masks and to maintain social distancing along with other safety precautions. We will also send out an RSVP form via Google forms in the coming days so that we can know how many people to expect, and to aid us in contact tracing if it is needed. The outdoor service will consist of prayers, a reading of the Christmas story, and lighting of candles with "Silent Night" being played on our organ so that it can be heard in the parking lot.

We are also going to be streaming a more traditional Christmas Eve service from the sanctuary which will begin at 7 PM on December 24th. This service will have all of the elements of the service that we have come to know and love. You can access this worship service, as well as all of our other worship services, on our website by going to www.brocktonucc.org and clicking on the "Live Worship" link.

Although our traditions have needed to change slightly this year for Christmas, the spirit of Christmas has not changed. Through the coming weeks we will await our God who has promised to come and dwell among us – and at Christmas we will remember that God has *a/ways* dwelt among us.



Advent 2020

Christ Congregational Church

Worship streamed online every Sunday @
<https://brocktonucc.org/live-videos/>

No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey, come as you are - you are welcome here!
CCC is an Open and Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Christ

Notable Advent Dates:



December 6th - Communion

December 16th - Blue Christmas 7 PM

December 20th - Christmas Pageant

December 20th - Christmas Concert (online) 5 PM

December 24th - Christmas Eve (outdoor candle light) 5 PM

December 24th - Christmas Eve (online traditional) 7 PM



CHRIST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, BROCKTON, MA

www.brocktonucc.org

CONTACT US

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Email: office@brocktonucc.org

Office Hours:

Monday thru Thursday:

9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.

Sunday Worship Time: 9:55 a.m.



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