



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

Volume 44 No. 1

Be The Church

January 2024

WORSHIP AND PROGRAMS:

Worship: Remotely and On-Site
Sundays, 10:00AM

Regular Events:

- Adult Choir:
Wednesdays, 6:45PM
- Adult Hand Bells:
Wednesdays, 6PM
- Afternoon Hand Bell Group
TBD
- Bible Study: Zoom
Wednesdays, 10AM
- Prayer Shawl Ministry:
Wednesdays, 10AM
- Quilt Guild:
3rd Tuesday, 1PM



Board Meetings: ZOOM

- Christian Ed: Jan. 9, 7:00PM
- Council: Jan. 18, 7PM
- Deacons: Jan. 4, 7PM
- Finance/Property: Jan. 11, 7PM
- Media/Tech: TBD
- Missions: TBD
- Music: Jan. 25, 7PM
- Vitality: Jan. 7, 11:30AM

PASTOR'S PAGE

"After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in the territory of Judea during the rule of King Herod, magi came from the east to Jerusalem. They asked, 'Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We've seen his star in the east, and we've come to honor him.'"
 ~Matthew 2:1-2~

Advent is the season of waiting, Christmas is the season of receiving the gift of the Christ Child, and Epiphany is the season of discovery that naturally follows the waiting and the receiving. In some places around the world Christians place as much emphasis, if not more emphasis, on the season *after* Christmas. In many nations through Central and South America the recognition of *Dia De Los Reyes* is celebrated with children leaving their shoes under their beds, so that the magi who come will bless them with gifts, and Christmas trees aren't even put up until Christmas Eve – and are left standing until at least the Epiphany has come. Because it matters what happens once Jesus is here, not only that he has come.

The text above is often the one associated with the actual day of Epiphany, which is January 6th according to our own Christian tradition. The magi don't arrive until *after* the miracle of Jesus' birth (probably well after his birth) contrary to what most Christmas pageants we've seen in our lives would tell us. They come to him from a great distance at great peril, with great sacrifice, and bearing gifts. They've come to honor him.

And they've done all of this by following a star that inspired them.

If you've been around Christ Congregational Church for the past three years you probably know that star words are coming to worship on January 7th, and if you aren't familiar with star words it's pretty straight forward. Each person in the congregation receives a paper star with a single word written on it. Each one is prayerfully written on the star by me or by Dani, hoping that the Spirit will bring that word to the person who needs it most. Once you've received your star it's up to you on how it might inspire you – maybe it's something you need to tend to more deeply in your own life, or maybe it's something you have to allow yourself to receive from someone else, or perhaps it's a word that will give you the direction you need to deepen your discipleship. It's up to you what the Spirit might say to you through your word. The only stipulation I ever put on it is to *NOT* treat it like just another New Year's resolution. Reflect on the word you receive, think about what it means (both in a practical sense and in a deeper sense) and let it speak to you each day.

Now, I also want to say that everyone approaches the star word practice differently. I tape mine to the door of one of my desk cupboards so that I can see it when I sit to work. I've heard others who put it on a mirror where they get ready each morning, or in their wallet where they'll see it. I've also known others who drop their paper star to the bottom of a purse or deep in a coat pocket, or crinkled up on the floor of a well trafficked kid-mobile. Or still others just lose the paper star and never see it again. That's all OK too! Grace abounds. My prayer each year is simply that the giving of star words might help us to better connect to those magi from so long ago, who followed a single star based on curiosity and inspiration to bear gifts to a new king. We'll all take different paths to get there through 2024, and my greatest prayer is that your path would be Spirit led with God's presence abundantly manifesting by your side. No matter the path, we are all blessed to be able to walk in beloved community with one another so that none of us will be alone.

Blessings and Peace,
 Pastor Jeff



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION NEWS

Happy New Year, Beloved Community!

As we begin this new year, I've taken some time to reflect on where we are headed as a beloved community in regards to faith formation. In 2024, we will continue to experiment and hone in on the best format for our children to learn in Sunday School. Over the summer, I hope to explore how to educate our community on neurodiversity and how we can provide worship and learning experiences not only to our young people, but anyone regardless of age who enter our space whose brains work uniquely. In the fall, I hope to collaborate with Pastor Jeff to bring a new structure for adult faith formation. I truly believe God has great things in store for our community as we continue to form our faith together. If you have been struck by the Spirit with an idea or desire for faith formation, I'd love to hear from you and we can discuss whatever is on your heart and mind!

We will start Sunday School off this month celebrating Epiphany on January 7th, where children will receive a star word that is carefully crafted with young people in mind. The rest of the month we will have lessons based on the scripture from the lectionary that week so that families can share what they learned or thought about either during worship or in Sunday School

The CE team will be having a winter retreat on February 4, 2024 from 11:30am-3pm. This is a time to brainstorm and plan events through the spring. Anyone is welcome to join this planning, not just CE team members. We truly invite new ideas to our planning. Please send me an email if you plan on joining as we typically have lunch together.

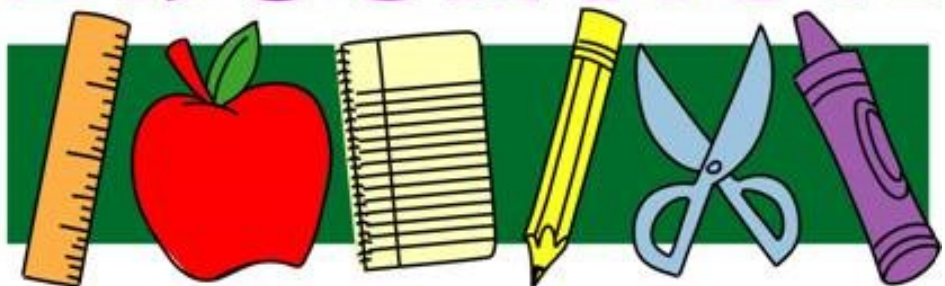
Finally, a big thank you to the volunteers in this ministry area for the month of December: Tammy Blackler, Deb Bowman, Cathy Campbell, Deana Colby, Betsey Clifford, Janet Eckstrom, Cara Harrigan, Matt Howard, Bridget Barrows Penn, MaryAnn Selman, Brenda Wyss, and Michelle Young-Ferguson.

In Peace,
Dani

*"But those who wait upon God get fresh strength.
They spread their wings and soar like eagles,
They run and don't get tired, they walk and don't lag behind."
Isaiah 40:31 The Message*

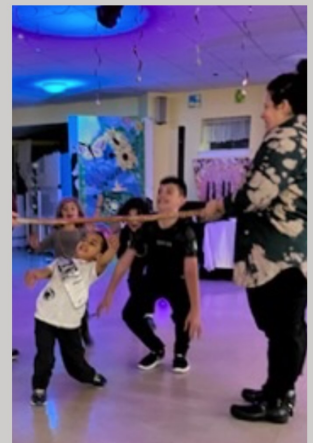
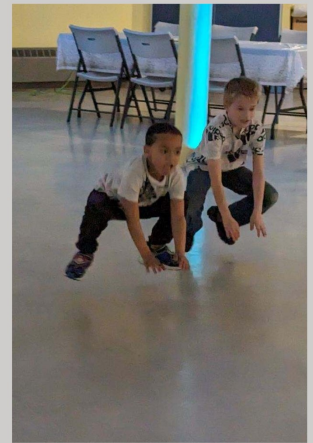


CHRISTIAN EDUCATION





**DECEMBER
FAITH
FORMATION
ACTIVITIES**



**A**

Aida Azoukou

B

Ernest Baglola
Mary Baglola
George & Constance Bamford
Horace & Shirley Bamford
L. Elsie Bamford
Sandra Ellen Bamford
Robert Binda
Anne Brooks
Bernhard & Aida Bruns

D

Mr. & Mrs. Howard W. Dalton
Mr. & Mrs. Walter Dalton
Mr. & Mrs. Albert D. Daniels
Mr. Joseph Dodd
Mrs. Mabel Dodd
Daniel E. Dunklee Jr.
Mr. & Mrs. Daniel E. Dunklee Sr.

E

Harriet G. Eastman
Kerry Eckstrom
Wayne Eckstrom

F

Allen & Connie Fisher
Bernice Fisher
Harold & Marjorie Fisher
Jo Mary Samuelson Fisher
John & Theresa Forest

G

Bob & Mary Gibson

H

Mr. & Mrs. Richard Haase
Alton F. Hefler
Mr. & Mrs. John Hefler
George & Arleen Hutt

I

Mr. & Mrs. Arthur E. Illsley, Sr.
Mr. & Mrs. Arthur E. Illsley, Jr.

J

Aaron Johnson
Bob Johnson
Constance "Penny" Johnson
Carlos Carrillo Joubert

K

Frank & Elsie Kittredge

M

Walter & Flora Marlenga
Mr. & Mrs. James J. McGunnigal
Mr. & Mrs. Patrick McGunnigal
Mr. Stephen McGunnigal
John Molander
Margaret & Arthur Molander
Mark Molander
Rita & Arthur Molander
Babe Moline

O

Carl Harry Olson
Catherine Marie Olson

P

Robert & Ruth Poole
Sandy Poole

Q

Ryan D. Quesnel

R

Susan Reynolds

S

Cutty Samuelson
Faith Samuelson
Margaret A. Sheppard
Richard Sheppard
Robert Sheppard

Terry Sheppard

Vivian Sheppard
Linda Siegrist
Eveylyn R. Hoeg Simmons
Leslie P. Simmons
Warren R. Simmons
Mr. & Mrs. Herbert J. Sinclair
Ethyl Southworth
Winslow & Doris Staples
Scott & Jayne Stevens

T

Ruth Dunklee Taylor
James C. Thomas, Jr.

W

Barbara J. Weatherbee
Bradford E. Weatherbee
Dorothy A. Weatherbee
Grace A. Weatherbee-Crane
Beverly & Bedford "Bud" Wheaton
Douglas & Doris Wilbur
Mr. & Mrs. Clifton Wilsey

Y

Mrs. Mildred Yecius



JANUARY BIRTHDAYS



Wishing all the best on your Birthdays

Nelda Hayes, Mark P. Deyoe, Jessica Gross, Isabella Morales, Larry Jones, Christopher Williams, Marilyn Fairbanks, David Wilcox, Lindsay Kennedy, Rebecca Lacourse, Lelah Dickerson-Sinclair, Sandra Hill, Tim MacIntyre, Malikai Swisher Rosa, Mark W. Deyoe, Kristine Blanchard, Amy Brooks, Eva Lomba, Ethan Harrigan, Thomas Jones, Bill McCarthy

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

FELLOWSHIP COFFEE HOUR VOLUNTEERS



SignUp.com

There will always be at least 2 people helping with our Fellowship Coffee Hour, so not to worry if you are only one. We appreciate ALL help!

Thank you from your Vitality team – Michelle, Elisha, Maryam and Janet

BE THE CHURCH

Protect the environment. Care for the poor. Forgive often. **Reject Racism.** Fight for the powerless. Share earthly and spiritual resources. Embrace diversity. Love God. Enjoy this life.



2024

JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH
Su Mo Tu We Th Fr Sa 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	Su Mo Tu We Th Fr Sa 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29	Su Mo Tu We Th Fr Sa 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31
APRIL	MAY	JUNE
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JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER
Su Mo Tu We Th Fr Sa 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	Su Mo Tu We Th Fr Sa 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	Su Mo Tu We Th Fr Sa 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30
OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
Su Mo Tu We Th Fr Sa 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	Su Mo Tu We Th Fr Sa 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30	Su Mo Tu We Th Fr Sa 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31

COMMITTEE

Missions is collecting 2024 calendars for the Brockton Veterans Hospital. Please bring them to the Church Office. All kinds and sizes are needed.



The SERRV counter is open in Fellowship Hall on the second Sunday of the month!



COMMON THREADS QUILT GUILD

The Common Threads Quilt Guild has decided to meet in January and February this year. Weather permitting, we will meet January 16th and February 20th. If Brockton Public are cancelled, we will not meet. If you don't want to clean off your car or its too cold for you, please don't worry about trying to get here. If you can't make, please text or call Kristine @ 781-856-3364. Hope the weather is good and hope to see you



<— A Patriotic quilt made by Kristine Blanchard for he fire fighter brother.



A mixture of baby quilts for the NICU.



Our first meeting of 2024 will be Kristine Blanchard's first meeting as the CTQG leader so be sure to join us on this happy day. She will do a great job and I am happy to hand the guild over to her. Welcome Kristine!

If you need a ride call Janet @ 508-583-0505.

See you at the meeting.

Janet Eckstrom

WE'RE ALMOST READY!

As the parsonage construction is progressing, a few items will be needed before move-in - are you able to help?

We will need a refrigerator, a stove, a microwave, a dish washer, and a washer and dryer before move in day. Please consider sponsoring an appliance, or making a donation toward the purchase of these items. Anything you can do will help!!



Please note "Parsonage Appliances" on your donation, or reach out to Karl Koza at 508-314-0989 or Sheppo Fisher at treasurer@brocktonucc.org if you have any questions.



Christ Congregational

Church

Tis The Season

School of Prophetic Action

Leadership Training

Sundays and Wednesdays starting 2/4/24

We are pleased to announce that the trainings will be held on both Sunday afternoons and Wednesday evenings, allowing attendees flexibility in choosing the session that best fits their schedule. Please note that participants must commit to attending one session per week.

The School of Prophetic Action is a series of in-person, interactive trainings on the skills and knowledge at the core of interfaith community organizing. These trainings will be a great way to build relationship with other leaders in the greater Brockton community and learn critical skills that you can use to advocate for social change.



Register at:
<https://tinyurl.com/SOPA2024> or
Scan the QR code



Brockton
Interfaith
Community



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1350 Pleasant St.
Brockton, MA 02301-2840

CONTACT US

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1350 Pleasant Street
Brockton, MA 02301-2840

Tel: 508-586-3022
Web: brocktonucc.org
Email: office@brocktonucc.org

Office Hours:

Monday thru Thursday:

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

Sunday Worship Time: 9:55 a.m.

BE THE CHURCH

Protect the environment. Care for the poor.

Forgive often. Reject racism.

Fight for the powerless.

Share earthly and spiritual resources.

Embrace diversity. Love God. Enjoy this life.