

The

Chimes

Newsletter of

The Congregational Church of Hollis (UCC)
3 Monument Square Hollis, NH 03049

December 2020

www.HollisChurch.org

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The Chimes is a publication of the Congregational Church of Hollis
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“Then...I will pour out my spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old folks will dream dreams, and your young ones shall see visions.” (Joel 2:28)

Dear Friends,

Do you keep a dream journal? I’ve heard it suggested more than once I should, but I keep forgetting to leave a book and pen next to my bed. Which is a pity, because — like a lot of people during this pandemic — I’ve had some really wild and vivid dreams across the past year. But, while I might have been able to report them out later that day, I can’t tell you today what any of them were. We know getting sustained sleep is critical to overall health and wellbeing; one reason for that, medical experts tell us, is our need to dream in order to “process” things. I do know some of the dreams I recalled upon waking helped me to understand things in a new way, and some of them helped me to see connections in my life I hadn’t seen before.

This Advent and Christmas Season, we’re going to be guided by the questions, “What does it look like to live as those who dream? How can we embody and bring forth God’s dreams? How do we dream of a better world when our current one feels harrowing and disorienting?”* We’ll be utilizing resources created by A Sanctified Art — the same team who designed our ‘*Unraveled*’ summer series — to reflect on the theme ‘*Those Who Dream*’.

We do know something about dreaming, and about dreams beginning to come to fruition. On Saturday, Nov. 14th, we dedicated the Squires Community Patio: the first step in blessing and consecrating our revitalized space for Christ’s ongoing work in and through and beyond our church community. The interior renovations are not quite complete yet (when are construction projects ever exactly to plan?), but very nearly — and will be in God’s perfect timing. And when all is ready, when the time is fulfilled, God will continue to work through us to birth other new dreams into realities of hope, peace, joy, and love. These will be nurtured by the **Living Our Vision team**, which is beginning to get energized and mobilized.

(continued on page 3)



From the Faith Formation Office



Confirmands Stay Busy

The Confirmation class has had a busy month...

- learning about the Bible
- learning Church History
- participating in their 2nd *Life Lesson* on how to handle stress
- making 2 cat scratching posts out of traffic cones to donate to a local cat shelter!

Unfortunately, they weren't able to bake pumpkin pies this year for Thanksgiving food baskets due to COVID restrictions, but 3 students were able to help pack the boxes of food.

December Bible Memory Verse:

For God loved the world so much that he gave his only son. God gave his son so that whoever believes in him may not be lost, but have eternal life.

John 3:16

Work on the Adam Verrecchia Community Garden is well underway!

In the back right corner of the church parking lot, across from the shed, the garden is beginning to take shape. The site was cleared, graded, pavers have been put down, and the pavilion is up! The garden committee will work on the design for plantings over the winter, and the garden will be completed in spring. The entire Verrecchia family is immensely grateful for the outpouring of support and generosity shown by the entire congregation and community as a whole. We are deeply honored that the church has supported this project and know Adam would be so moved to have such a place at his beloved church.

Although it seems surreal, and at times, heart-wrenching, for us to have a memorial garden in our son's name, we are comforted by the idea that this will be a place where Adam's spirit will feel at home. Nothing made him happier than opportunities to feel closer to God and be together with family and friends. The garden will be just that; a place where people can congregate together or spend time alone, but God's presence will always be felt in this tranquil outdoor space. It is our hope that this garden will be a place that can be shared with others who also feel moved to remember a loved one of their own. Like the other additions and updates to the church happening concurrently, we look forward to this garden being a place to build community while sharing in the presence of God's love and peace.

Thank you from the bottom of our hearts for the opportunity to create this garden.

~ Kim and Joel Verrecchia

Church School* Reflection and Look Ahead:

Whew! Kim and Kim weren't sure how this fall semester of classes would go with all the COVID restrictions, but God was hard at work in the church school program and it was a wonderful success! Classes were held every Tuesday at 4:30pm; sometimes outside, and sometimes on zoom, but each week many children's smiling faces appeared for learning and fun.



December classes (December 1, 8 and 15 at 4:30 on Zoom) will be focused on Advent lessons, with plenty of **holiday cheer** sprinkled in! The fall semester will conclude with class on December 15.

***Church School** will be debuting an all-new name starting in 2021! Stay tuned in January for *the big reveal!**

(From the Pastor – continued from page 1)

If you'd like to be a part of a creative team that will empower others to find joyous fulfillment by serving others, we'd love to have you **join the LOVing team**; email me (pastor@hollischurch.org) and I'll give you more details.

Many of you are wondering about Advent and Christmas Eve services. Whereas we'd hoped in the possibility of holding "hybrid" (numbers-limited, in-person with others gathering on Zoom) Advent services in the Meetinghouse, the alarming rise in COVID-19 infections has ruled that out as a possibility for us. But I trust our Advent services will still be meaningful and memorable. I'm truly looking forward to "*Those Who Dream*", and we will maintain our traditional practice of holding a children-centered service on the Third Sunday of Advent (Dec. 13th) and Music Sunday on the Fourth Sunday (Dec. 20th) this year, though obviously in modified, Zoom-friendly form! Please make time each Sunday in December to join us.

This year, I'm also going to offer a "**Longest Night**" service on **Monday the 21st at 7 p.m.** This is a tradition that invites people to come together to mark the time when there are more hours of darkness than light (in the Northern Hemisphere). As the Sanctified Art team write, "*It's a time to come together for prayers and laments, to mourn the losses and griefs of the year, to let the tears flow for the hurting places in our own lives, as well as for our country and our world. Known also as 'Blue Christmas,' a Longest Night Gathering is a safe and sacred space to share anguish, to plead with God to remember us, to pray for justice and restoration, even to hope against hope, through our doubts and tears and fears, that 'God will set things right all over the earth.'*"

On **Christmas Eve**, if the weather permits, we will hold two brief **(15-minute) outdoor services** on the newly-dedicated **Squires Community Patio at 4 p.m. and 5 p.m.** *We'll ask that you sign up, wear a mask, and keep your distance.* We will read the Christmas Story from Luke's Gospel; hear a brief reflection; offer a Christmas Prayer; and spread the Light of Christ to the singing of "Silent Night". Then at **7 p.m.**, those who'd like to sing more and for whom the **traditional Lessons & Carols** is a big part of Christmas Eve each year, can log on for the **Zoom service**, which will feature special musical offerings and the readings and carols everyone loves.

Although it will be different this year, my hopeful dream is that we will all discover Imanu-El (God-with-us) in new and transformative ways that Advent and Christmas Season.

Yours with faith, hope and love,

Tanya

*See page 5 for information about Advent Devotional booklets.

BoV: OUR RENOVATION: WHAT'S NEW?

Our project is moving along at full speed. It seems like there is something new every day.



Recent highlights include:

- **Patio:** Finished! Stop by and enjoy the winter sun.
- **Kitchen:** Appliances have arrived, new flooring is in place.
- **Hardy Hall:** Almost finished. Bright! Open! Welcoming!
- **Deacon's Kitchen:** Drywall is up. All repairs have been made.
- **New Nursery on main floor:** Framed, drywalled.
- **New Pastor's Office:** Framed, drywalled,
- **ADA bathroom:** Flooring is in. Almost complete!
- **And more:** Renovations are underway in Parkhurst and the New Admin Offices. The cancel floor has been replaced.

As of this writing we don't have a firm completion date but it's just around the corner. Stay up to date with our Sneak Peek Videos which are available under the "Our Renovation" tab on the church website as well as shown periodically during our virtual services. We anticipate another Sneak Peek during the month of December. Stay tuned!

Turn to page 5 for MORE exciting BoV News!

December 2020



Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Zoom Sunday worship services and fellowship continue on Sunday mornings at 9:30. Church boards meet via Zoom.

December Mission Items of the Month: ♦ Monetary donations for our **GIVING TREE** ~ supporting the Nashua Children's Home

♦ Non-perishable food for Brookline Food Pantry ♦ Diapers (all sizes) for Marguerite's Place

| | | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|---|---|---|----|
| CHRISTMAS FAIR | | 4:30 pm – Church School on zoom 6:30 pm – Music Board meeting 7pm – Stewardship Board meeting 1 | 10 am – Zoom Coffee Hour 2 | 7pm - Choir 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Online Auction bidding continues through Sunday, Dec. 6th Winning Bidders can pick up items Dec 7, Dec 10 or Dec 12 Raffle Basket ticket sales continue through Monday, Dec 7th (Ticket order forms <u>must be received</u> in the office by Dec 7) | | | | | | | |
| Second Sunday of Advent ~ Peace 9:30 am – Communion Worship on zoom 8:00 pm – CHRISTMAS FAIR Online Auction bidding closes 6 | 9am-12pm – CHRISTMAS FAIR Winning Bid Auction item pick-up in Hardy Hall Deadline for Raffle Basket Ticket orders 7 pm – CE Board meeting 7 | 4:30 pm – Church School on zoom 7 pm – Mission & Action Board meeting 8 | 10 am – Zoom Coffee Hour 6:30 pm - CHRISTMAS FAIR Raffle Basket drawing on Zoom 9 | 3pm–6pm – CHRISTMAS FAIR Auction item & Raffle Basket pick-up in Hardy Hall 7pm - Choir 10 | Our church volunteers provide dinner at Ash St. Shelter 11 | 9am-12 noon – CHRISTMAS FAIR Auction item & Raffle Basket pick-up Holiday Luminaria Stroll – info at HollisLuminaria.org 12 | |
| Third Sunday of Advent ~ Joy 9:30 am – Worship on zoom 13 | 7 pm – Deacons meeting 7 pm – Trustees meeting 14 | 4:30 pm – Church School on zoom 7 pm – Church Council meeting January <i>Chimes</i> deadline 15 | 10 am – Zoom Coffee Hour 16 | 7pm - Choir 17 | 18 | 19 | |
| Fourth Sunday of Advent ~ Love 9:30 am – Music Sunday Worship on zoom 2 pm – Mental Health Discussion Group 20 | 7pm – Longest Night Worship service 21 | 22 | 10 am – Zoom Coffee Hour 23 | Christmas Eve 4 pm – Outdoor Candlelight Service (weather permitting) 5 pm – Outdoor Candlelight Service (weather permitting) 7 pm – Lessons & Carols Service on Zoom 24 | | Christmas Day  25 | 26 |
| 9:30 am – Worship on zoom 27 | 28 | 29 | 10 am – Zoom Coffee Hour 30 | 31 | | | |

More from BoV: HOUSEWARMING REGISTRY IS LIVE!



Thanks to all who attended the **Virtual Housewarming party** last month! We had an overwhelming response with over 80 people participating in fun and fellowship. *How joyful!* If you missed it, you can check out the registry, read about the event and watch the hysterical sneak peek video at www.churchhousewarming.org. **There are still items left on the registry!** Maybe someone on your Christmas list still needs a present? What a great way to give the gift of giving.

JIM AND JAN SQUIRES COMMUNITY PATIO DEDICATION

Due to Covid, the Jim and Jan Squires Community Patio was dedicated in a private ceremony on November 14th. The dedication was the culmination of many years of hard work by a team of extremely devoted people. We are thankful to Dr Squires and the Squires Family for making the patio possible, and we are honored that their story and generous spirit will live on here, in the heart of our community, through this patio. We are looking forward to when we can be together as church community to celebrate.

Highlights of the dedication were shown at the service on Nov 22. You can watch these highlights and the full-length video as well as find out more about the event at www.SquiresPatio.org.

We invite you all to experience the Squires Patio in person. The day after the event, people were spotted sitting on the steps, eating subs and enjoying the sunshine – just as we envisioned! One member at the dedication commented that it looks like it has always been there. It truly does. We invite you to bundle up and see for yourself what a glorious space this is.

Advent Devotionals for “Those Who Dream”

Those interested in receiving hard copy of the Advent Devotional booklet can pick one up from the church office. Please call the church office or email sue@hollischurch.org to schedule a time to pick up or arrange mailing. For copyright reasons, we cannot post the file online, but electronic copies are available by emailing sue@hollischurch.org. The pdf will be sent to you.

Weekly Advent Devotional Discussion Group

Wednesdays from 7-8 p.m. Watch for the Zoom links in your email inbox. Drop-ins welcome!

From the authors of the devotional booklet:

This devotional is for the dreamers in all of us – those who dream of a deeper connection with God and those who dream of a better world. It’s for those who dream of comfort and for those who have given up on their dreams. It’s for those whose dreams have been crushed and for those who show us that dreams take time. And so, as you walk through [the prompts and readings supplied by the brief devotionals] day by day, may you dream alongside prophets and angels, Mary and the Magi Together, may we seek and sow God’s dreams for our world.

Hollis Holiday Luminaria Stroll Saturday, December 12th



Although Covid-19 has disrupted this event, we continue the tradition with a live luminaria display and virtual events. Join us for:

- * The Luminaria Stroll around Hollis Town center (candles will be placed and lit at 2:30 p.m.)
- * The Historic District Front Door Contest
- * Santa visits with his friends via zoom
- * Gingerbread House Contest (virtual)
- * “To Go” Chili & Cornbread Supper - on the church lawn from 4 pm to 6 pm
- * Canned Goods Food Drive to support the Deacons’ Holiday Food Baskets (Collection bins at the church, Hollis Pharmacy and Buckley’s)

For complete information, go to HollisLuminaria.org

Our Church Records

New Members

October 11, 2020

Cynthia and Bryar Trent
with Infant Dedication of daughter Evelyn

October 18, 2020

Gudrun Pfeiffer

Memorial Gifts

In loving memory of Adam Verrecchia by:

Martha Davis

Holly and John Babcock

Patricia Madigan

Anne Bennett

Jeffrey and Alice Duhamel

Maurice and Diane Godfroy

Emerson Emergency Physicians, LLC

In loving memory of Mike Verrecchia by:

Nik Verrecchia

Happy Birthday to...

Sibyl Cushman who will turn 90 years
young on December 1

Chris Trow who celebrates her 94th birth-
day on December 2



Holiday Shopping on Amazon?

Turn your online purchases – all year long -- into dollars for the church *without costing you a penny* at **AmazonSmile!**

AmazonSmile is a simple and automatic way for you to **support our church** every time you shop, at no cost to you. **On your first visit to smile.amazon.com, just designate the Congregational Church of Hollis as your charitable organization** to receive donations from eligible purchases before you begin shopping.

Mission & Action News

December Items of the Month



† **Monetary Donations** to support the **GIVING TREE**. All of our children's names this year have come from the Nashua Children's Home. All of the children are quarantined at the facility; their families are not al-

lowed to visit, and they cannot go home for the Holidays. This is adding to the stress that the children are already under. If you can assist in any way, we will purchase Amazon gift cards for the Home and deliver them. Thank you.

† **Non-perishable Food** for the Brookline Food Pantry as well as for the Holiday Baskets that our Deacons are preparing. The Holiday Baskets are distributed to the School Nurses, Marguerite's Place and Tolles St Mission.

† **Diapers in all sizes**. Marguerite's Place is just starting to open up for donations, so we will be taking diapers there again, and they can use the smaller sizes.

Please drop ALL donations in the plastic bin at the handicapped entrance to the church.

Food & Fuel Assistance

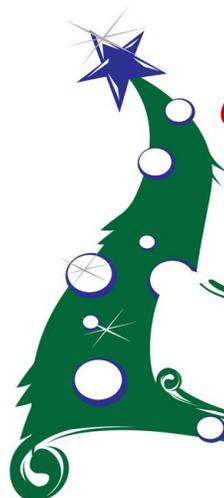
If you know anyone in the Hollis-Brookline community who needs assistance with food or fuel, please connect with Karen Marino at 603-475-3073 or kmarino360@gmail.com

Ash Street Shelter Dinners

Thank you to everyone who has cooked and delivered meals to the Ash Street Shelter this year. We are now signing people up for 2021. We would love to have families or volunteers sign up for February and beyond. Contact Lee Harper at 465- 5118 or blharper@tds.net if you would like to help.

Your Mission & Action Dollars at Work for the month of November:

- Meals Matter
- Harbor Homes Ending Homelessness program
- School Nurses – gift cards for student families in need



Our Special Edition
Christmas
Fair *for 2020*

...is in full swing!

Raffle Baskets Galore!

We have **23 amazing Raffle Baskets** to satisfy all kinds of desires, from “Wine & Cheese” to “Chill & Grill”!

Go to <https://hollischurch.org/2020-christmas-fair-raffle-baskets/> to view photos of all the baskets and see a list of each basket’s contents. You can also download a raffle ticket order form from that link.

Be sure to send in your raffle order ticket form and payment so the church office receives it by Monday, December 7th.

Raffle basket winning tickets will be drawn live on Zoom at 6:30pm on Wednesday, December 9th.

Online Auction Shopping!

More than 180 items are up for bid on our online auction site. *Talk about variety!* There’s a baby grand piano, art work, toys, gift cards, photography, hand-made knitwear and mittens, collectables, and *so much more!*

Go to <https://hollischurch.org/2020-christmas-fair-online-auction/> for more information about the auction, including a [link to the auction web-site](#) and a link to [auction FAQs](#).

Bidding ends at 8pm on Sunday, December 6th.

Winning bidders can pick up their items in Hardy Hall on the following dates and times:

- Monday, Dec. 7th from 9am - noon
- Thursday, Dec. 10th from 3pm – 6pm
- Saturday, Dec. 12th from 9am – noon

*So, turn on your favorite Christmas music,
grab a cup of hot cocoa with a candy cane stirrer,
settle into a comfy chair (it’s okay if you’re wearing pajamas!),
and shop ‘til you drop at our Special Edition
Christmas Fair for 2020!*





The Congregational Church of Hollis
 (United Church of Christ)
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 Hollis NH 03049

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Faith Consistently Annihilates Doubt, Fear and Anxiety

Excerpted* from Deacon Rick Guay's extraordinary Home Ministries food basket story

You can't make this stuff up...

Once again, I have been witness to yet another outstanding lesson in Faith. **Every single time I lose Faith, it presents itself in such a large and obvious way, that it's just unbelievable and undeniable.**

In planning The Deacons' Home Ministries program this year, there have been a lot of uncertainties, something we've all become too comfortably or uncomfortably accustomed to. We've had to learn to go with the flow. My contingency list has been long, trying to plan around all the things that I know, which I don't know.



For months, **I have been worrying about having enough food to fill our baskets for our three packing events.** [In mid-November, I was told that] all Hollis Scouting for Food pickups this year were being delivered and given to St. John Neumann's food pantry and that unfortunately, **it was unlikely that we would be getting *any* for our program this year.** The way that it was left, was that I would need to reach out to Evelyn at St. John Neumann's on Saturday morning, pleading our case for some allocation of food from the haul. [Following a discussion between Evelyn and Hollis Scout leader Tom], Evelyn looked over at us and said that they were at capacity and couldn't fit any more into their pantry. **She asked us if we could accept Tom's entire trailer full of food.**

WHAT JUST HAPPENED HERE?????!!!! This was the exact moment when I felt God slap me on the back and say "YE OF LITTLE FAITH." and I hung my head low. **This is truly a Fishes and Loaves story... Is there any doubt????!!!!** Our church's Home Ministry program constantly reminds me of God's overwhelming presence in our world. It's undeniable. I love being reminded to have Faith.

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*Read Rick's entire story at

<https://hollischurch.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Faith-Consistently-Annihilates-Doubt.pdf>