



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

February 2026

www.HollisChurch.org

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*The Chimes is a publication of the
Congregational Church of Hollis*
www.hollischurch.org

Lead Pastor:
Rev. Tanya Stormo Rasmussen
Pastor@HollisChurch.org

Faith Formation (Christian Education):
Kim Burton
CE@HollisChurch.org

Minister of Christian Music:
Julie Oliver

Church Office:
Carli Ford - Communications
Admin@HollisChurch.org
Eileen Widner - Bookkeeper/Office Mgmt.
ChurchOffice@HollisChurch.org
Contact us:
603-465-7797 or 465-7099

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Then Jesus told his disciples, "If any wish to come after me, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it."

(Matthew 16:24-26)

Dear Friends,

The early weeks of 2026 have not been easy for our country, or for the world. I struggle at times to know what to say in response to the growing violence, lawlessness, lack of compassion, and abject cruelty on display coming from so many directions. The world as we have known it is in radical upheaval, and folks seem to be living according to different versions of reality, as if truth itself is up for grabs. Do we really believe that truth depends on whom we listen to, and what conveniently fits a preferred narrative?

The swelling of chaos and confounding messaging of leaders who leverage the words, but not the ways, of Christ Jesus, is profoundly disorienting. Honestly, if not for the spiritual practices that ground me—prayer, meditation, walking in the woods, contemplation on Scripture and other writings where I hear the wisdom of God speaking clearly—I wonder how I'd cope much of the time. My spiritual disciplines help me to imagine a response other than despair, help me to see that this world is far more complex and God's activity far more compelling than the media and other dominant messaging suggest.

How about you? Do you have grounding spiritual practices? If not, I want to encourage you to consider taking one up, even just for a season.

(From the Pastor- continued on p. 2)

Lent, which starts on Feb. 18th this year, is a 40-day (plus Sundays) opportunity to see how a daily practice of carving out even 10 minutes for quiet contemplation can completely reframe things for us. It can re-ground us in what the apostle Paul described as a “more excellent way.” Church tradition (and the Revised Common Lectionary) has supplied us with a series of Bible readings to help guide our imagination to deeper places as we engage the questions that human souls are here to grapple with in meaningful ways.

Lent begins in the ache, the questions, the tension between love and loss. It’s a season that does not rush toward resolution, but invites us to slow down. To notice and reflect. To repent: to turn with honesty, and to journey with Jesus through wilderness, confrontation, and cross. Along the way, we listen to voices from the margins. We learn from stories of resistance and renewal. And, we remember that God meets us not in strength, but in surrender. It’s powerful, perspective - and life-changing stuff!

This is the work of imagination: it allows us to envision a world remade by compassion, forbearance, mercy. It enables us to see that repair and restoration is possible—even in the shadow of overweening imperial forces. Imagination allows us to visualize, and practice, love that outlasts despair or defeat. Lent calls us into this holy labor—not as a solitary act, but as a communal path toward transformation.

I hope you’ll participate in this intentional journey in a new way this year. If you’ve never observed Lent with a daily practice (whether purposefully abstaining from something, or conscientiously taking on a new discipline), then let this be a first for you. And if you have before, then let it be all new to you this year.

This Lent, we will join our church siblings from Brookline and Mason at the Brookline Community Church for our Ash Wednesday service, at 7 p.m. Sunday mornings will keep us focused on “The Work of Imagination” as we imaginatively consider the experience of those who were closest to Jesus in the world-changing first century (everything was being rearranged for them, too!), and allow their journey to inform our own. Join us at Loaves & Lessons on Thursday evenings for simple, nourishing meals along with satisfying spiritual conversations, as we stay tethered to the things that truly matter. (Please also consider signing up to either provide, or help with clean-up after, the simple meals!)

In the coming season, I look forward to observing and imagining together what powerful new work God is calling us to do in this world, and to practicing and experiencing all that Love will do through us!

Yours with faith, hope, and love,

Tanya



A Report from the Bylaws Task Force

“Let love be genuine; hate what is evil; hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. Do not lag in zeal; be ardent in spirit; serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope; be patient in affliction; persevere in prayer.”

(Romans 12:9-12)

As many of you know, a small Task Force of very dedicated members has been meeting multiple times a month for nearly three years now in order to update our Church Bylaws. It's tedious work, but so important as our congregation works to articulate our best understanding of how we're called to live and minister together in Christ-centered covenant community. Because, of course, congregations change as surely as culture itself does; integrity of our mutual understanding means we need to periodically assess and adjust the document that lays out our understandings.

Last fall, we had a series of open conversations at which all members were invited to share their thoughts, concerns, and/or affirmations about the work the team had done thus far. And at those meetings, members of the Bylaws Task Force worked very hard to listen, record, and incorporate the majority opinions about a variety of matters. The proposed new Bylaws will be made available this month to consider for adoption at our Annual Meeting on March 1st (please note the date in your calendar and plan to attend!).

Some of the deepest and most extensive discussions pertained to what appropriately demonstrates active membership in our congregation. This is a key question because it determines who possesses the ability to vote on significant matters in our communal life. It is important that we clarify what we appropriately expect from one another in terms of active engagement. We are a group of people who covenant to live in intentional ways with one another so as to deepen our faith and discipleship to Jesus Christ. When conflict arises from time to time (as it inevitably will; we're a bunch of human beings here), painful rifts can deepen and cause damage to the broader community. Trust in the integrity of our community is undermined when folks who've not invested in, or engaged with, the life of the congregation for years are as entitled to decide on matters as folks who've regularly offered time, talent, and treasure in discerning and manifesting God's vision for this community. There can and should certainly be openness to listening to the views of former members, even if they are no longer eligible to vote. Clarifying who constitutes an active member is important so that we can agree who is truly invested in the well being of this community's life in Christ at a given moment.

There is no question that some members will not see their strongly-held opinion reflected in the revised document. This is by no means a way of implying that those expressed opinions didn't matter or weren't heard. To the contrary, every opinion – whether agreeing or dissenting – was carefully (often laboriously!) weighed and considered by the team, alongside the other expressed concerns and points of view. As a Congregational community, the democratic process and consensus is paramount to our covenant life together - and the Bylaws Task Force hopes that this deep consideration is evident.

While it's not exactly scintillating reading, we hope that every member will take the time to read what's being proposed. If there are questions needing clarification, please reach out to a member of the Task Force A.S.A.P. so that the proceedings at the Annual Meeting can move forward as smoothly as possible.

The Church of Jesus Christ has, across the millennia and across cultures, assumed a vast array of shapes, sizes, and ways of being together. The Bible contains some instructions (including those issued by Paul in the citation from Romans above). And yet, as those who believe that God is still speaking, it's up to us to discern and articulate as clearly as possible how God is inviting our specific church community to live and minister together. May we each and all experience the blessing of being intentional about our own engagement in the process!

Respectfully,

The Bylaws Task Force

Holly Babcock, Susan Benz, Lynn Goldberg, Kimber Harmon, Drew Mason, Rev. Tanya Stormo Rasmussen, Eileen Widner, Ed Wigfield

FROM THE FAITH FORMATION OFFICE

Thank you!

The Faith Formation Team would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to everyone who contributed to Fellowship Hour during the month of January. Your generous donations of goodies helped make this time of connection and community truly special. We are so grateful for our congregation's support and involvement to help make Fellowship Hour a warm and welcoming tradition. Thank you for your kindness and for helping us create a space for fellowship and joy. If you would like to get involved in the future with our Flock, please don't hesitate to email Kim at ce@hollischurch.org

Blessing Bag Donations Due Feb 9

The Flock will continue to collect items for Blessing Bags for Nashua Soup Kitchen. Suggested donations include:

- Shampoo
- Soap
- Toothbrushes
- Toothpaste



All items are due by **February 9** and can be left in the CE bin outside of the center front doors of the church or dropped off in the Flagg Room on Sundays.

STEM Lesson - Feb 15

Thank you to Mark Weir for volunteering to do a STEM project with the Flock on **February 15!** We can't wait to see what you have planned! Thank you for sharing your talents with the Flock.

No Flock: Feb 22

No Flock or Nursery on February 22nd for Winter Vacation Break.

Loaves & Lessons



Lenten Series: The Work of Imagination

When: Thursdays evenings, 5:30 pm, Feb 26 - Mar 26

Where: Hardy Hall

This Lent, we invite you to gather for a meaningful series centered on “The Work of Imagination,” using curriculum from Illustrated Ministry. Each session will include a homemade meal—with vegetarian and gluten-free options available—followed by thoughtful conversation and reflection grounded in our Lenten theme. Come share food, faith, and imagination as we explore how God invites us to see, wonder, and live more deeply during this season.

We Need Your Help Preparing Meals!

Please register for each session you plan to attend to assist with food preparation, and be sure to note any dietary restrictions when signing up.

Register through this link or scan the QR Code,
<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/8050849ACAC29A7FF2-61796938-loaves#/>

Loaves & Lessons
Sign Up Link





Music Board to Host February Fellowship

Thank you, Music Board for hosting Fellowship Hour during the month of February. Food and beverages may be dropped off in Hardy Hall prior to the service. If you have any questions, please email music@hollischurch.org. Thank you for your contributions and for helping make our time of fellowship so welcoming!

Holiday Gratitude From the F&H Team

Huge thanks to all who assisted with the Luminaria Stroll events of the church including the afternoon musical entertainment in the Meeting House, the Community Chili Supper, and Holiday Concert Bake Sale. Proceeds from the Chili Supper and the Holiday Concert's Bake Sale support the Food & Fuel Ministry Team which provide food boxes to those battling food insecurity in the local communities.

Not only were the attendees generous, but we had wonderful attendance for both events, serving supper to about 200 people with a sellout of the baked goods at the concert!

Thank you for the donated home-made desserts and canned goods, the sorting and transporting of the collected non-perishables, and set-up/clean-up and sales team at the concert. The F&H team is grateful to everyone who helped with the publicity, chili, cooking, table centerpieces, set-up & clean-up, serving, hosting and welcoming guests into our church at the chili supper. It can be a hectic day, but the Luminaria Stroll is such a joyous and welcoming annual community tradition.

Special thank you to those who helped with the church's Christmas decorations in the sanctuary, the outdoor tree lights and the beautiful crèche which reminds us all of the true meaning of Christmas. We are grateful for all the holiday angels!

A Note From the Birch Family

We, on behalf of the entire Birch family, would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to our friends and church family for the many ways you supported us during the difficult holiday season of Dick's brief illness and sudden passing. We are deeply grateful for the many prayers, cards, calls, memorial gifts, and various other kind expressions of care. Carol is appreciative for all those who helped with her annual church-related holiday commitments (Christmas Fair, church Christmas decorations, Luminaria's Chili Supper and Bake Sale, and post-worship Fellowship). Your love and support meant so much to us throughout the difficult time during and following the loss of Carol's loving father, Dick Birch, and Nancy's beloved husband of almost 72 years. We are truly blessed by this town and church.

With God's grace,
Nancy & Carol Birch et al

Dick's Celebration of Life service can be viewed at
<https://www.youtube.com/live/oeYNpd-BKpU>

Nominating Committee

Your gifts, wisdom, and commitment to our community make you a valued member of our congregation. We believe your voice and leadership would be a blessing in shaping the future of our church. Board/Committee members play a vital role in stewarding our resources, supporting our ministries, and ensuring our church remains a place of spiritual growth and outreach.

Brief summaries follow. You can request a full summary from any one of the Nominating Committee members.

Available Positions:

- **Deacons Board**
- **Stewardship Board** - Help with the spiritual understanding of tithing and pledging in support of church ministries.
- **Nominating Committee** - Help welcome visitors and new members, find ways to serve the congregation and wider community.

Feel free to contact the Nominating Board with any questions you may have at:

NOMINATING@hollischurch.org

Thank you,
Janis Louzek, David Gilmour and Charles Lewis

Mission & Action Update - Living our Faith Together

Mission and Action Donations

Thank you for your generosity and for your continued support of the causes our church embraces. Your donations help us serve our neighbors with compassion and purpose! This month, we gave money to:

- Charity: Water
- Marguerite's Place
- Mercy Ships
- Mercy Chefs
- Horton Center
- UCC's Strengthen the Church
- UCC's Neighbors in Need
- Holy Joe's Café



Socks, Socks, Socks Galore!

Our church has received a generous donation of socks from the Bombas Sock Company, and we have been busy distributing them throughout the community to organizations that can put them to good use.

If you would like to help us disperse the 1,500 pairs of socks we've received, please reach out to Karen Coulter at kwcoultter44@gmail.com. Thank you for helping us keep our community warm and cared for!

Current Collection Drives

Please drop off the following donations in the M&A Collection Bin:

- Used cell phones for Bridges
- Small toiletries for the Nashua Soup Kitchen

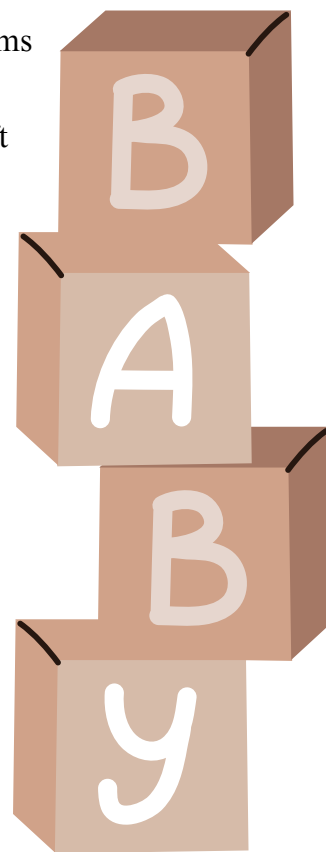
Additional Giving Opportunities collected outside of the church:

- Eyeglasses — can be dropped off at the Lions Club box at Walmart
- Women's hygiene items — order via Amazon and ship directly to Bridges or Marguerite's Place
- Diapers — order via Amazon and ship directly to Bridges or Marguerite's Place

Item of the Month for February

We are collecting essential items this month to support infants and toddlers. Items can be left in the M&A Collection Bin.

- Clothing
- Diapers (all sizes)
- Pull-ups
- Baby wipes
- Diaper rash cream
- Baby shampoo and body wash
- Infant lotion
- Formula
- Baby food and snacks



Mission & Action News



Congregational Church of Hollis Community Blood Drive

The Congregational Church of Hollis will host a Community Blood Drive on Saturday, February 28, from 9:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. in the church basement at 3 Monument Square, Hollis, NH 03049. This is a wonderful opportunity to support a lifesaving effort that directly benefits our wider community.

All donors will receive a \$20 gift card to a merchant of their choice as a thank-you for their generosity. Blood donations are critically needed, and a single donation can make a meaningful difference for those in need.

Please consider being a hero and making your appointment today at redcrossblood.org using sponsor code **HOLLISNH**, or by scanning the **QR code** below. Thank you for helping us share the gift of life.



Spring Clothing Drive for the Pass Along Project

This spring, we will be collecting clothing for young people entering the foster care system through the Pass Along Project. This organization currently serves about 600 children each year and hopes to reach all 1,500 children in New Hampshire foster care.

Each child receives a full week's worth of clothing to help them feel comfortable and cared for during a very uncertain time, including:

- a combination of gently used and two new outfits
- socks
- underwear
- other seasonal items

Pass Along Project will accept clothing and shoes in all sizes. They **do not**, however, accept toys, books, baby equipment, etc.

For children entering foster care, choosing their own outfit can be the one small piece of control they still have.

Together, we can restore dignity and show them **THEY MATTER** through the simple, powerful gift of clothing.

Learn more about Pass Along Project by visiting thepassalongproject.com and fostercarecapacity.com/states/new-hampshire.

Our Church Records

Deaths

December 1, 2025

Richard (Dick) Birch

Memorial Gifts

In loving memory of Dick Birch by:

Roger and Addie Saunders

Eileen and Paul Widner

Phyllis King

Taylor Steindel

Karen and Warren Coulter

Marilyn Wehrle

Ann Siglin

New Communications Admin

We welcome our new Communications Administrator, Carli Ford! Carli has been a member of the Congregational Church of Hollis since 2024 and brings over 15 years of experience in administrative and leadership roles. She serves on the Christian Education Board and is also the Admissions Director at Hollis Montessori School, where she supports families and community engagement. Carli lives in Hollis with her husband and three children and values being part of a faith community rooted in growth, compassion, and connection. Carli can be reached at admin@hollischurch.org.

New Church Office Hours

Program Year Hours (September - May)

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday

Morning Hours: 8:00 am – 12:00 pm

Afternoon Hours: 3:30 pm – 5:30 pm

Church office hours are subject to change to accommodate inclement weather, vacations, and staffing fluctuations. Call before you stop by or make an appointment (603-465-7797).

Interested in Providing Flowers for the Meetinghouse?

Would you like to help beautify our worship space and honor a loved one, celebrate a milestone, or give thanks? You are invited to provide flowers for a Sunday service in 2026!

To begin, visit the bulletin board located outside of the church office. Take a slip of paper with the instructions and write your name on the flower calendar as a reminder.

If you choose to provide the flowers yourself, please deliver them to the church by **9:15 AM on Sunday**. You may also request a floral arrangement through Wendy Hills Longland; she can be reached at 603-465-3466 at least one week before your chosen date to finalize the arrangement and discuss payment options.

By **Tuesday morning** prior to your chosen date, please call the Church Office at 603-465-7797 or email admin@hollischurch.org with the date you are providing flowers and your dedication wording.

A typical dedication reads:

"The flowers this morning are presented to the glory of God... in loving memory of / in honor of / in celebration of (name)."



Chimes Thanks







A BIG Thank You goes to Nancy Bell, Brenda Gibson, Patricia Cordell, Deb Shipman, Freddi Olson, Susan Burton and Joyce Toli for preparing your February *Chimes* for delivery to your mailbox.

March Chimes Deadline

Our next Chimes newsletter will be the March edition. **The submission deadline is February 15.**

DEADLINE

February 2026

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
9:30am Communion Worship  9:30am Flock 11:00am FFMF Food Box Packing	2 5:30pm Stewardship	3 10:00am Knitting Ministry 4:00pm Mission & Action 6:00pm Music Board	4 4:30pm Caring Connections  5:00pm Book Study: Heart of Christianity 	5 7:00pm Choir	6	7
9:30am Worship 9:30am Flock	9 7:00pm Deacons	10	11 4:30pm Facilities 5:00pm Book Study: Heart of Christianity 	12 7:00pm Choir	13	14
9:30am Worship 9:30am Flock Chimes  Deadline	16 5:30pm Trustees	17 10:00am Knitting Ministry 6:30pm Council	18 7:00 pm Ash Wednesday Worship at Brookline Community Church	19 7:00pm Choir	20	21
9:30am Worship No Flock: School Break	23	24	25	26 5:30pm Loaves & Lessons  7:00pm Choir	27	28 Red Cross Blood Drive 9:30am-2:00pm 

Thank you to our Music Board for hosting Sunday Fellowship this month!
Church Office Hours are Tuesday through Thursday, 8:00am—12:00pm | 3:30—5:30pm
 Please remember that hours are subject to change to accommodate inclement weather, holidays, vacations, and staffing fluctuations. Call before you stop by or make an appointment (603-465-7797).

The Congregational Church of Hollis
(United Church of Christ)
3 Monument Square
Hollis NH 03049

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Hollis, NH 03049

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



WARRANT

(For the March 2026 Annual Meeting)

To the members of the Congregational Church of Hollis, New Hampshire, (United Church of Christ) qualified to vote in Church affairs:

You are hereby notified to meet in said Hollis, New Hampshire, on Sunday, March 1, 2026, (snow date of Sunday, March 8, 2026) at 10:45 a.m. to consider the following articles:

Article 1: To consider the reports of the elected officers, boards, committees, and organizations connected with the Church.

Article 2: To elect all officers, board members, and committee members necessary for the upcoming year.

Article 3: To see if the Church will accept and adopt the budget as recommended by the Trustees and Church Council.

Article 4: To see if the Church will adopt the following changes to Articles V and IX of the bylaws (new text in bold, removed text struck through).