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**The Chimes is a publication of the
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*“And with this Word, God created all things.
Nothing was made without the Word. Every-
thing that was created received its light from
him, and his life gave light to everyone. The
light keeps shining in the dark, and darkness
has never put it out.” (John 1:3-5, CEV)*

Dear Friends,

Happy New Year! I hope your year-end holiday
celebrations were filled with mirth and music,
and the joy of being with people you love.

But maybe you're among the significant number
of people who struggle with Seasonal Affective
Disorder (SAD), or some other mental health
challenge. SAD is a form of clinical depression that generally oc-
curs in the winter months, when daylight is diminished, tempera-
tures are colder, and isolation is easier. To the afflicted, it can feel
like the whole world is cheerful, but you just can't access the joy
of life's meaning, purpose, and relationships. Where others see
sunshine, you experience foreboding shadows. If you can relate to
any of this, take heart: you're not alone. And, thank God, society
(including many churches, which have often been as uncomforta-
ble with the subject as any group) is becoming increasingly open
to discussing mental health realities. It's amazing what a bit of
light—whether physical or metaphorical—can do for us!

Across the weeks of January and into February (known in the
Church as the liturgical season of Epiphany), we're going to
acknowledge things that can drag us down, get us gloomy, make
us moody or melancholy. All of these things are real, valid, and
Biblically well-documented aspects of the human experience—
through which we are able (if we choose) to learn things about
God, and self, and about the rich complexity of life.

Also across this season of Epiphany, we'll learn graceful ways of
refocusing, and/or of inviting the divine light within and all
around us—the light St. John testified to in the opening words of
his Gospel—to lend its sacred power to heal and strengthen.

(continued on page 3)



From the Faith Formation Office



Sr. Youth Group, grades 9-12, will be cooking for Ash St Shelter on Friday, January 13 at 4pm. Amy & Amy are looking forward to working with the teens as they prep the meal and plan some events for the new year. Be on the lookout for an email with more details!

CE Book Read

Christ the Lord – Out of Egypt Anne Rice, 2005

First of all – yes, this is a pseudo-autobiographical novel, with a seven-year-old Jesus bar Joseph as its first-person narrator. And yes, the author is THE late Anne Rice, of Vampire (Lestat), (Mayfair) Witches and Werewolves (of Midwinter et al) fame. It is one of the few of her novels that are decidedly different, even from her other compelling non-fantasy historical novels set in medieval Europe and antebellum New Orleans. Yet this one is a class of its own. I would argue that the most enlightening or valuable part might be her afterword, in which she gives us her faith journey that took her from a deeply religious Irish-catholic background with daily masses in Latin in the 1940s to decades of atheism starting in the sixties of her college years, to her wrestling with her faith AND the lack thereof following the death of her six-year-old daughter which prompted her to start writing fiction.

(continued on page 3)

News from *The Flock...*

Happy New Year!

No Flock Class on Sunday, January 1st.
See you on January 8th!



Blessing Bag Collection

The Flock will be collecting items for Blessing Bags for Nashua Soup Kitchen in January. We will be looking for **travel sizes items: shampoo, soap, toothbrush, toothpaste, etc.** *All items are due by February 12* and can be left in the CE Bin outside the front doors of the church or dropped off in Flagg Room on Sundays.

The children love this project and are looking forward to putting them together again.

CE is hosting Fellowship!

For the month of January, Christian Education will be hosting Fellowship Hour! All goodies can be dropped off in Hardy Hall prior to the service. A SignUpGenius has been created for the Flock. If you didn't receive the email, please let Kim B know :)

Here are the dates for each CE group:

- 1/1 - CE Board
- 1/8 - Flock
- 1/15 - Youth Group
- 1/22 - Flock
- 1/29 - CE Board

Thank you for your contributions!!

Don't miss the Just for Kids fun on page 7!

(From the Pastor – cont'd from p. 1)

Building on our Advent/Christmas theme of “Reflecting the Sacred,” we’ll practice paying attention to, noting, and being guided by the Christ light reflected in and through others—and ourselves!

In fact, we’re going to take a “lighten-up” approach from day one, in our New Year’s Day worship service: We’ll gather in Hardy Hall, and enjoy our coffee and refreshments *while* we sing songs and say prayers, hear the Scriptures, share stories, and proclaim the Good News in a different light and atmosphere! The Sunday morning liturgy will be less formal than usual as we gather in a circle and invite volunteers to read or lead in different ways. We’ll also have a laptop present for those who choose to Zoom in (it won’t be live-streamed, nor recorded on YouTube). Our communion service, which is usually held on the first Sunday of the month, will be held on January 8th, when we return to our more customary practices in the familiar light of the Meetinghouse.

My hope is that, starting the year by acknowledging the shadows while also attending to the Light, we’ll continue our year-long practice on “Deepening Our Vision.” As my sabbatical draws near (it starts in February, and I’ll say more about it in next month’s newsletter), I’m finding myself increasingly sifting through both memories and experiences with an eye on these things. Let’s all continue to reflect on where God has been active with us across the past several years, and where we are perhaps missing (whether longing for, or not yet recognizing) divine activity in and through our church community.

Dear family of faith and companions on this journey, as another New Year dawns, may we continue to enjoy God’s guiding presence; “Let There Be Light!”

Yours with faith, hope, and love,

Tanya

(CE Book Read – cont'd from p. 2)

Anne Rice has always written about faith, about metaphysics, about what moves gods and men, and “Out of Egypt” is the result of her return to her faith, to Christianity, and of years of working with the source and secondary material.

The young Jesus we meet in this novel is based on the gospels and the apocryphal texts. We follow him and his extended family (yes, not just Mary, his mother, and Joseph, of whom he knows that he is not his father) from their refuge in Egypt back to Nazareth. Jesus knows he’s different, special, but he is not the Son of God yet, aware of his destiny. He knows that angels play an important role in his life and that of his parents, he knows that he can do things others can’t do and he is a devoutly faithful Jew and youthful scholar. Little by little, he learns about his fate through those around him and he learns to accept and embrace it, and we follow him along those very familiar stories starting with his birth in Bethlehem, told to him by his uncles and rabbis.

As a novel, *Christ the Lord – Out of Egypt* is entertainingly familiar to those who know their Bible – but truly enlightening through Anne Rice’s afterword. I would suggest getting a 2008 or later copy (earlier copies don’t contain it) and do what I usually never suggest: Read the book backwards. Start with the author’s deeply personal faith journey and insights and then go back and read about the life of young Jesus.

There is a second installment (*The road to Cana*), which I haven’t read yet. Anybody? We would love to read here about what you are reading!

Submitted by Gudrun Pfeiffer

Summer Camp...already?



Yes, it is time to mark your calendars for summer camp at the UCC’s Horton Center on Pine Mountain. There are family camps, adventure camps, arts camps, and much, much more. There is something for everyone! Go to <https://horton-center.org/summer-camp-sessions/> to check out their camp schedule and see why YOU should be putting church camp on your calendar this year.

January 2023



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
9:30 am – Worship in Hardy Hall In Person and on Zoom (NO Livestream) No Sunday School 1	7:30 pm – CE Board 2	10 am – Prayer Shawl Ministry meeting 6:30 pm – Music Board meeting 3	10 am – Zoom Coffee Hour 7 pm – Church Council meeting (postponed from Dec) 4	7 pm - Choir 5	Epiphany  6	7
9:30 am – Communion Worship (In Person/Livestream) 9:30 am – The Flock 8	7 pm – Deacons meeting 9	7 pm – Mission & Action Board meeting 10	10 am – Zoom Coffee Hour 5 pm – Facilities Committee meeting 11	1 pm – Staff meeting 6 pm – Caring Connections 7 pm - Choir 12	Our Youth Group volunteers provide dinner at Ash St. Shelter 13	14
9:30 am – Worship (In Person/Livestream) 9:30 am – The Flock February <i>Chimes</i> deadline 15	Martin Luther King Jr Day 5:30 pm – Trustees meeting 16	10 am – Prayer Shawl Ministry meeting 17	10 am – Zoom Coffee Hour 7 pm – Stewardship Board meeting 18	7 pm – Choir 19	20	21
9:30 am – Worship (In Person/Livestream) 9:30 am – The Flock 22	23	24	10 am – Zoom Coffee Hour 7 pm – Church Council meeting 25	26	27	28
9:30 am – Worship (In Person/Livestream) 9:30 am – The Flock 29	30	31	<div>  <div> Annual Reports from Boards and Committees are due Wednesday, January 4th! Email reports to churchoffice@hollischurc.org </div> </div>			

Mission & Action News

January Items of the Month

This month, we will be helping fill the shelves of the **Brookline Food Pantry**. They have several special requests as well as needing food and non-food items.



Special Request Items

Full/Queen Winter Blankets
Twin Winter Blankets
Pillows

Urgent Needs

Men's Toiletries

Deodorant

Vitamins

Aspirin

Laundry Soap

Sponges

Trash Bags

Ziplock Bags (gal/qt)

Flushable Wipes

Paper Products

Dishwasher Detergent

(for machine dishwashers)

Juice Boxes

Pasta Sauce

Mayo

Ketchup

Jelly & Jam

Coffee, not decaf

Saltines

Sugar

Chef Boyardee Canned Pastas

Bottled Juice

(especially cranberry & apple)



M&A Thanks...

Many thanks to all who took a tag from the **Giving Tree** this year, making Christmas possible for **32 children** at the Nashua Children's Home **and two families** at Marguerite's place!



Home Heating Help

Thank you to all of those who attended the Christmas Eve services and made donations to our **Food and Fuel Fund**. Through the generosity of our members, the Food and Fuel program is able to assist families and individuals with heating fuel and Market Basket gift cards all year long.

If you know of anyone needing assistance, please contact Lee Harper at missionandaction@hollischurch.org

Ash St Shelter Dinner Chefs Needed

Our Senior Youth Group will be cooking dinner for Ash St Shelter in January, but we are looking for volunteers to help provide dinners on the second Friday of future months. You just cook the meal and deliver; we will give you a grocery gift card to offset the costs of the food ingredients. Please contact Lee Harper at missionandaction@hollischurch.org if you would like to help.



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Our Church Records

Deaths

December 9, 2022

Dr. James Wood Squires

December 20, 2022

Patricia Coughlin

From the Church Office

Annual Reports Due...

Annual Reports from Boards and Committees are due Wednesday, January 4th! Email reports to churchoffice@hollischurch.org.

Chimes Thanks...

Many thanks go to Nancy Bell, Patricia Cordell, Brenda Gibson, Freddi Olson, Deb Shipman and Joyce Toli for preparing your December *Chimes* for delivery to your mailbox.

Coming in February...

Mark your calendar for Annual Meeting

Join us for our Annual Meeting after worship on **Sunday, February 5**. At our annual meeting, we will:

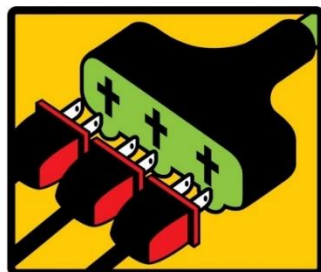
- Accept the reports of our officers, boards, committees, and organizations connected with the Church.
- Elect all officers, board members, and committee members for the upcoming year.
- Vote to accept and adopt the budget as recommended by the Trustees and Church Council.
- Consider any other business that may come before the meeting.

Come and be part of the decision-making for 2023!

Prepared to Serve: An Event for All of God's People

What IS Prepared to Serve?

It's a day-long event for all church members in the New Hampshire Conference, UCC (that's us!) with fellowship, inspiring worship, and educational, faith-building workshops and exhibits.



*Connecting &
Reconnecting*

Where and When?

Pembroke Academy, Pembroke, NH
Saturday, February 25, 2023

The theme of this year's Prepared to Serve event — ***Connecting & Reconnecting*** — is based on the scripture passage found in Romans 1:11-12 "I want to see you and share with you the same blessings that God's Spirit has given me. Then you will grow stronger in your faith. What I am saying is that we can encourage each other by the faith that is ours."

Workshops are offered on a variety of topics, including faith formation, church leadership, church finances, stewardship, global missions and wider church relations. A full listing and description of the *Prepared to Serve* workshops will soon be available on the New Hampshire Conference website www.nhcucc.org.

Celebrating Epiphany

Epiphany, from the Greek word *epiphaneia*, means an appearance or manifestation. Christians celebrate this festival each year on January 6, the 12th day after Christmas. Epiphany ends on Ash Wednesday, when Lent begins.



Epiphany marks the coming of the Magi, or wise men, to worship the baby Jesus. Because the Magi were Gentiles, Epiphany symbolizes the first recognition of Christ by non-Jews. It's a reminder that Christ came as the light — and Savior — of the whole world.

The traditional color for Epiphany is green, indicating life, growth, hope and eternity. Symbols for the season include a light, candle or star; a crown or three crowns; three gifts; and a globe. In the modern church, Epiphany has become a time to focus on reaching out and "showing" Jesus as the Savior of all people. It's also a reminder to engage in Christian community and to heal divisions among God's children.

Wisdom from MLK

I am convinced that **love is the most durable power in the world**. It is not an expression of impractical idealism, but of practical realism. Far from being the pious injunction of a Utopian dreamer, love is an absolute necessity for the survival of our civilization. To return hate for hate does nothing but intensify the existence of evil in the universe. Someone must have sense enough and morality enough to cut off the chain of hate and evil, and this can only be done through love.



—Martin Luther King Jr.

Just for Kids...



A NEW CREATION



The apostle Paul says everyone who believes in Jesus becomes brand new.



Directions: Cross out every third letter. Then write the remaining letters in the blanks to complete 2 Corinthians 5:17, NIV.

THIEROEFQORXEIDFAMNYAON
SEILSITNCVHRKISDTTBHEWNE
QWCDREYATMIOCNHFASWCOR
MEGTHWEOFLDXHASSGZONL
ETJHEWNEQWIDSHREROE

_____ , _____

_____ , _____

_____ :

_____ , _____

_____ ! 2 CORINTHIANS 5:17, NIV

Answer: Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! 2 Corinthians 5:17, NIV



NEW YEAR'S NOISE-MAKERS

Ring in the New Year with these fun noisemakers!



What you need:

- Wooden craft sticks
- Metallic paint (gold and silver)
- Paint brushes
- Jingle bells (gold and silver)
- Hot glue gun
- Metallic ribbon
- Scissors
- Adult help

What you do:

1. Paint half the sticks gold and half silver. Let dry.
2. Glue three bells to each stick.
3. Cut a six-inch piece of ribbon for each stick. Tie a bow and glue it to the noisemaker. Celebrate!



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

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

From **BREAD** and **CUP** to **FAITH** and **GIVING**.

Your Stewardship Board thanks those who have already made their 2023 Pledge commitment. As of late December, we have received only 75 pledges for 2023 (in contrast, 100 or more individuals/families pledged in each of the past three years). We're blessed to be part of a generous and supportive church family that offers so much to the congregation, children, and the greater community. Your pledge not only supports the church budget, it also impacts people's lives by supporting worship, education, caring and community. Your gifts are the foundation of our faith and discipleship.

Have *You* Pledged for 2023? If you have not, *there's still time!*

Making a pledge is easy! You can complete a 2023 Pledge Card (available in the narthex and outside the church office) OR make your pledge online at <https://hollischurch.org/annual-pledge/>. On our website, we also offer giving options that allow you to fulfill your pledge electronically. Thank you for your support!

