

The *Chimes*

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

March 2026

[www.HollisChurch.org](http://www.HollisChurch.org)

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*Be still, my soul: for God will undertake  
to guide the future surely as the past.  
Your hope, your confidence, let nothing shake;  
all now mysterious shall be bright at last.  
Be still, my soul: the waves and winds still know  
the voice that calmed them in this world below.*



-Kathrina von Schlegel, "Be Still My Soul", vs. 2 (1752)

**Dear Friends,**

A few days ago, a clergy colleague asked the group I was part of: "How are you holding all that is happening in the world? How is your heart?" I was amazed by how immediately I felt dropped into the core of my being in the world by her question(s).

Historians report that the Rev'd. John Wesley – the English evangelist who (with his prolific hymn-writing brother, Charles) launched the early 18th-century revival movement known as Methodism – used to encourage members of the small house-group communities they nurtured to greet one another with the question: "How goes it with your soul?"

Can you imagine greeting one another with those words these days? Times were different then, of course—that was shortly before our forebears had penned the Declaration of Independence. And yet, at least this much was similar: the world order (at least in Europe and North America) was at the tumultuous tipping point of dramatic change, and everyone was feeling it.

And so, I wonder: what would *your* reaction be, and how might you respond, if someone asked you that today? (Consider yourself asked... 😊)

*(From the Pastor- continued on p. 2)*

(From the Pastor - continued from p. 1)

The season of Lent invites us into a 40-day exploration of the question, and offers us an opportunity to practice intentionally deepening our faith and confidence in God's unwavering abiding with us.

We, ourselves, have changed (I hope!) considerably as we've matured from infancy, childhood, adolescence, and through the different stages of adulthood with regard to the ways we comprehend the very idea of our soul – including how we relate with God, others, and the world around us. All of these changes are part of the process of transformation at the heart of being human. We inevitably change, as the world changes around us—and as our experience and comprehension of this world's myriad facets expand and deepen.

And yet, as Thomas O. Chisholm observed of God in his beloved hymn, "Great Is Thy Faithfulness": *"Thou changest not, thy compassions, they fail not; as thou has been, thou forever wilt be."* Chisholm surely took as some of his inspiration, words of the much earlier hymn-writer of Psalm 45 who proclaimed, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change, though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble with its tumult." It's reassuring to know that, contrary to Benjamin Franklin's old quip that "Nothing is certain except death and taxes", there is a force even greater than both of those at work in this world and in our lives—One that invites us to engage more fully during these forty days!

As part of "The Work of Imagination" theme guiding our Lenten season, each Sunday morning

our scripture readings will be preceded by a Character Narrative as a sort of collective practice in imaginatively engaging with one or another character in the Biblical lesson for the day. (If you're interested in taking a part, or playing a role, please let me know and I'll gladly include you!) At Thursday evening Loaves & Lessons, you'll also find opportunities to practice diving a little deeper into your own faith journey and understanding as we engage the following themes:

- 2/26: Permission to Explore
- 3/5: The Way Is the Process
- 3/12: Reinterpret, Reconfigure, Re-translate
- 3/19: All-Ages Lenten Lesson
- 3/26: Nurturing our Graced Uniqueness

Throughout the coming month (and entire season of Lent, which continues into the first week of April with the celebration of Easter on April 5th), whether you're able to join us on Sundays and/or Thursdays, I do hope you'll find a practice that grounds and nourishes you, and draws you more deeply into the company of the God whose loving presence never wavers despite all the swirling change around us. And, I hope you'll pay attention to how it's going with your soul—and ultimately find yourself able to say (with yet another hymn writer, Horatio Spafford), "It is well with my soul!"

Yours with faith, hope, and love,

*Tanya*

# Hollis Strawberry Festival...*Help Us Keep the Tradition Alive!*

Submitted by Eileen Widner

The Strawberry Festival is a longstanding tradition in Hollis. The event began as a simple “dessert and concert,” bringing together the harvest bounty of Hollis’s fruit farms with the “first fruits” of a new generation of musicians in the newly formed Hollis Church School Band (1943). The first recorded mention of the Strawberry Festival was found in a 1946 newspaper article:

“The annual Strawberry Festival will be held Sunday from 2 through 6 pm on the Hollis common. Sponsored by the Hollis Church School Band it features concerts throughout the afternoon, strawberry shortcake and whipped cream...”

This early festival began a tradition of homegrown music and desserts that continued — and grew to include the Apple Festival — through many decades. In 1965, the group of musicians became known as the Hollis Town Band, and the connection to the church remained with the band providing the annual Christmas concert to benefit our holiday food basket ministry.

By the 1970s, the festivals had grown so large that the band formed a partnership with the Hollis Woman’s Club to sponsor the Strawberry and Apple Festivals. In recent years, the Woman’s Club opted out as Apple Festival partner and the band welcomed the Hollis Brookline Rebels Cheerleaders as a sponsoring partner. Then in 2025, the Hollis Woman’s Club ended their partnership with the Strawberry Festival — and we were at a crossroads. ***Do we allow the Strawberry Festival to end and become a relic of the past? Or will another group step forward to continue the tradition?***

Last fall, a small group of people from church, spearheaded by Eileen Widner and Carol Birch, sought and received the approval of Church Council to form a Strawberry Festival Team. We hope to draw on our church members as well as members of the entire Hollis community to keep the Strawberry Festival tradition alive and well.

The Strawberry Festival with its setting on Monument Square offers a charming and unique opportunity for people from many miles away to come and enjoy the ambience of an old-fashioned New England small town atmosphere. ***Please plan to join the Strawberry Festival team and help keep this tradition alive!*** No matter what your strengths may be, we have a need you can fill — from festival advertising to hulling berries to serving desserts and many others! We will share more details in future Chimes, but you can **add your name to the team** by emailing Carol at [FandH@hollischurch.org](mailto:FandH@hollischurch.org).

Until then, put these dates on your calendar!

- **Festival: 2-4 pm on Sunday, June 28**
- **Hulling Party: morning of Friday, June 26**



# FAITH FORMATION



The Flock is collecting travel-size toiletry items to create Blessing Bags for Nashua Soup Kitchen.

All items are due by **March 1** 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.

## Spring Service Project: Easter Baskets for Marguerite' Place

The Flock has chosen to build Easter baskets (and an egg hunt) for Marguerite's Place. They are collecting egg-filler items to help make the celebration extra special!

- Wrapped candy
- Small toys or balls
- Stickers
- Bracelets
- Other small, fun trinkets that fit inside plastic eggs

All items can be dropped off in the CE bin outside the church front doors or in the CE office by March 22.

Keep an eye out for more details on sponsoring an Easter basket!

## Loaves & Lessons

### *Lenten Series: The Work of Imagination*

**When:** Thurs 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.” 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#/>



*Volunteer for a week of fun!!!!*

# SAVE THE DATE FOR VBC

July 13 - 16 from 9-1pm

## Volunteer opportunities include:

- Set up on Sunday
- Clean up on Thursday
- Station leader - games/crafts/lesson
- Group leader
- Bake/provide snacks

Sign up for 1,2,3 or all 4 days.  
Or for a few hours!



Email Kim with any questions or to sign up as a volunteer! [ce@hollischurch.org](mailto:ce@hollischurch.org)



Volunteers  
Needed

Vacation Bible Camp registration will begin on Sunday, March 15 during Fellowship. Stop by the registration table in Hardy Hall to fill out a form and find out the theme. Join us July 13-16 from 9:00 am - 1:00 pm for a fun-filled week of lessons, crafts, STEM, games, snacks, and much more! Don't miss out! Spots are limited.

- Ages 4 years through Grade 5
- Children must be able to attend all 4 days
- Registration Opens March 15
- Registration closes June 14
- \$10/child for church members
- \$20/child for HB community

Need a registration form? Contact Kim at [CE@hollischurch.org](mailto:CE@hollischurch.org) or stop at the church office. You can mail the form to the church or bring it to a Flock class.

Adult and teen volunteers are needed! Can you help for one day—or all week? Would you be willing to serve as a floater where needed? Anyone entering Grade 6 and up is welcome to help! A youth volunteer meeting/training will be held on Sunday, July 12 (time TBD).



## Trustees to Host March Fellowship

Thank you, Trustees for hosting Fellowship Hour during the month of March. Food and beverages may be dropped off in Hardy Hall prior to the service. If you have any questions, please email [trustees@hollischurch.org](mailto:trustees@hollischurch.org).

## Volunteers Needed for July 4 Celebration

The Hollis Historical Society is gearing up for its annual July 4 celebration—and they'd love our help! Do you enjoy decorating festive spaces or being part of a joyful community event? Volunteers are needed to decorate the front doors of the church and to help serve birthday cake during the celebration, which will take place in Hardy Hall.

It's a fun way to be part of the festivities and celebrate together as a community! If you're interested in helping out, please contact Kim Burton at [ce@hollischurch.org](mailto:ce@hollischurch.org).

## Photography Exhibit Exploring Immigration

Please join our Immigrant & Refugee Support Ministry Team for a photographic exhibit of immigrants and their stories of resettling in New Hampshire. The exhibit, primarily displayed in Hardy Hall, "Finding Home: Portraits and Memories of Immigrants", features the work of award-winning photographer Becky Field. Since Advent, we have been exploring "What Child is This?" and now, during Lent, "Who am I?". Our questioning continues by asking "Who is our Neighbor?"

As an Open and Affirming church, we believe that the diversity of our community, far and wide, makes

us better able to see different points of view and can foster a culture of belonging while honoring the inherent dignity of all people. It doesn't matter where you've come from, or where you are in life's journey, you are welcome at the Congregational Church of Hollis.

Since 2012, Field has used her camera to highlight humanity and celebrate the contributions of immigrants within our communities. Her work shows that, while we are different in many ways, we all have the same desires for safe homes, good jobs, a strong future for our children, and freedom to practice our traditions. In addition to her photographs, Field interviewed immigrants about their journeys to resettle in New Hampshire. A QR code accompanies each story to provide a short recording of the immigrant's own voice and accent. This work is based on Field's book, *Finding Home: Portraits and Memories of Immigrants* (Peter E. Randall Publisher, 2020).

"These photographs and stories celebrate the cultural diversity in our state," said Becky. "Cultural and ethnic diversity have been an important part of New Hampshire's history and continue to make our communities stronger and better for all of us."

Becky holds a certificate in photography from the New Hampshire Institute of Art (now at New England College) and has studied at photography centers throughout the Northeast. In past work, she was a research ecologist and holds a doctoral degree in ecology. She lives in Concord, NH.

This exhibit is opening on April 5 (Easter Sunday) and will be on display through May 24, 2026. Additionally, there will be a free and accessible reception and artist engagement event on April 18 from 2:00 - 4:00 PM.

For other viewing times and further information, contact the church office at (603) 465-7797 or at [churchoffice@hollischurch.org](mailto:churchoffice@hollischurch.org).

# MISSION & ACTION

## 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

## Socks, Socks, Socks Galore!



Thanks to a generous donation from the Bombas Sock Company, our church has been busy sorting and delivering socks to local organizations, helping get them directly into the hands of those who need them most.

If you would like to help us disperse the socks we've received, please reach out to Karen Coulter at [kwcoulter44@gmail.com](mailto:kwcoulter44@gmail.com). Thank you for helping us keep our community warm and cared for!

## Mission and Action Donations

In 2026, Mission and Action will continue to support the following UCC drives: Our Church's Wider Mission

- One Great Hour of Sharing (with a UCC congregation wide offering on March 15)
- Strength the Church
- Neighbors in Need
- UCC Christmas Fund

## Quarterly Drive: Pass Along Project

Over the next few months, we will be supporting the Pass Along Project ([thepassalongproject.com](http://thepassalongproject.com)) by collecting clothing for young people entering the foster care system.

**Please consider donating new socks, underwear, or pajamas.**

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.

March 15  
Offering

**One Great  
HOUR**  
OF SHARING

We will be taking a special collection on March 15 for the One Great Hour of Sharing ministry of the UCC. This ministry connects you to disaster relief, refugee assistance, and development efforts around the globe. When disasters strike, or when individuals are displaced due to violence or poverty, OGHS ensures immediate response and ongoing recovery.

Through your support, OGHS funds comprehensive development programs in areas such as healthcare, education, agriculture, food security, microfinancing, and women's empowerment.

Your contributions help meet urgent needs while addressing the root causes of vulnerability, ensuring long-term, sustainable solutions for affected communities.

Thank you for your gifts! For more information, see [www.ucc.org/oghs](http://www.ucc.org/oghs).

## Nominating Committee

We value your gifts and invite you to consider serving in a Board or Committee role as we shape the future of our church together. A few positions remain open; full summaries are available from the Nominating Committee upon request.

- Board of Deacons
- 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 Committee with any questions you may have at [nominating@hollischurch.org](mailto:nominating@hollischurch.org).

## Mission Trip Ministry

Our newly formed Mission Trip Ministry Team—made up of five teens, three adults, and two Red Shirt hopefuls—is preparing to take part in a Group Mission Trip this summer in Hazlet.

**There are still four open spots available** for anyone age 14 and up who may be interested in joining this exciting and fun opportunity to experience how small acts of service can make a meaningful difference in the life of a family in need. Church groups from across the country will gather for the week to build community, strengthen faith, and create lasting memories together. No prior experience or special skills are required—participants learn side by side while completing projects such as home painting, building or repairing wheelchair ramps, and other home improvements.

**Mark your calendars for July 19–25, 2026**, and consider joining this group for a week of “Illumination.” A \$100 deposit, payable to The Congregational Church of Hollis, is all that’s needed to take part in this transformative trip.

For more information, email [churchoffice@hollischurch.org](mailto:churchoffice@hollischurch.org).

# CHURCH OFFICE

## Our Church Records

New Member by Reaffirmation of Faith  
February 8, 2026  
Fraser Tibbetts

## With Gratitude!

A BIG Thank You goes to Nancy Bell, Sue Burton, Debbe Shipman, and Joyce Toli for preparing your February *Chimes* for delivery to your mailbox.

## April Chimes Deadline



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

## 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).*

# 2020 March



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Second Sunday in Lent 9:30am <b>Communion Worship</b> 9:30am Flock 10:45am Annual Meeting 	5:30pm Stewardship	10:00am Knitting Ministry 4:00pm Mission & Action 6:00pm Music Board 	4:30pm Caring Connections 	5:30pm Loaves & Lessons 7:00pm Choir 		
Third Sunday in Lent 9:30am Worship 9:30am Flock Daylight Savings Begins	7:00pm Deacons			5:30pm Loaves & Lessons 7:00pm Choir 	4:00pm Facilities	
Fourth Sunday in Lent 9:30am Worship 9:30am Flock 10:30am CE/FF Board Chimes Deadline  6:00pm Mission Trip Planning	5:30pm Trustees	10:00am Knitting Ministry 6:30pm Council 		5:15pm Combined Loaves & Lessons/Flock Pizza Night 7:00pm Choir 		
Fifth Sunday in Lent 9:30am Worship 9:30am Flock				5:30pm Loaves & Lessons 7:00pm Choir 		
Sixth Sunday in Lent Palm/Passion Sunday 						

**Thank you to our Trustees 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

Non-Profit Organization  
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Hollis, NH 03049

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



## JOIN US FOR HOLY WEEK



### **Palm/Passion Sunday | March 29 at 9:30 am**

Join us for Palm Sunday worship with special music and a joyful children's Procession of Palms as we enter into Holy Week.

### **Maundy Thursday | April 2 at 7:00 pm**

Our traditional Maundy Thursday service, including Holy Communion and Tenebrae. The community cross will be draped in black through Holy Saturday.

### **Easter Sunday Services | April 5**

**Sunrise Service at Triple Knoll Farm** at 11 Pepperell Road, Hollis

**9:30 am Easter Worship Service** with joyous music from the choir. You are invited to bring cut flowers to adorn the community cross and celebrate Resurrection!