

# NORTH STAR

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UCC

January 2015

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UCC

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Gathered Since 1730

Serving, Welcoming, Growing in Christ

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**COME TO WORSHIP**

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Concord, NH 03301

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Email: [secretary@concordfirstchurch.org](mailto:secretary@concordfirstchurch.org)

Website: [www.concordfirstchurch.org](http://www.concordfirstchurch.org)

Office Hours: Monday - Thursday: 9 am - 1 pm

Sunday Worship 10:00 a.m.

## Ministers of the Church

All the People

### Senior Minister

Rev. Emilia Halstead

### Pastor Emeritus

Rev. Dr. Donald F. Jennings

### Director of Music

Mr. William Metevier

### Church Secretary

Shelley Westenberg

### Treasurer

Linda Baines

### Financial Secretary

Carolyn Andrews

### Sexton

AJ Adjutant

### North Star Editor

Linda Sims

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## FROM THE PASTOR

Greetings Beloved in Christ,

Happy New Year! It is with a heart filled with gladness that I offer the following scripture passage for reflection as we begin this New Year together:

*What gain have the workers from their toil? I have seen the business that God has given to everyone to be busy with. God has made everything suitable for its time; moreover he has put a sense of past and future into their minds, yet they cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end. I know that there is nothing better for them than to be happy and enjoy themselves as long as they live; moreover, it is God's gift that all should eat and drink and take pleasure in all their toil. (Ecclesiastes 3:9-13)*

As a society we have made this time of year one of looking at memories of the past and peering forward into the future. We look back on all that we've done this past year and we look forward with hope to all that we seek to accomplish in this New Year.

One of the dangers of looking back at the year is the possibility of getting trapped in the vicious internal court room. The voices in our head say to us, "Really? That's all you've accomplished this year?" "That resolution lasted, what, all of two days? That's pathetic!" "You've been promising to finish that project for 3 years now, you really are worthless." In case you're wondering, this is not the voice of God saying these things to you. In fact, God weeps to see us brutally whipping our own backs. We remind one another – a lot – that God is the judge, that we should do our best not to judge one another. Yet, we forget that this extends to our own selves.

God is saying to us: "Beloved, you are more loved than you could ever know. Your life matters more to me than you could ever know. Please stop and enjoy this time with those who love you and those whom you love.

ENJOY every minute of it. Soak it all in. You are so phenomenal. You have value beyond measure. I love you completely."

In this New Year, might I recommend a new type of resolution? Rather than choosing something that forces you to "change yourself" in some way, why not resolve to love, cherish, and be exceedingly gentle with yourself. The best part of this resolution is that God is utterly and completely on board with this idea! We could not ask for a better "coach" in this resolution than the one who made us and loves us completely. God does not seek us to be perfect. God only seeks for us to be Present.

Throughout this year, when you catch yourself attempting to be perfect at something, ask yourself "Who am I attempting to



be perfect for?" Our Creator only asks us to be true to ourselves, present to God's presence in our lives, and to love everyone (including ourselves). Perfection is neither desired nor required. Jesus is the one who taught us these things about God. Jesus is the Light that illuminated for us the heart of our Creator.

Being exceeding gentle with ourselves allows us the freedom to be exceedingly gentle with the people we encounter every day. Doing so teaches our hearts how to live life always acknowledging the divine spark in all people, everywhere.

Blessings,

*Pastor Emilia*

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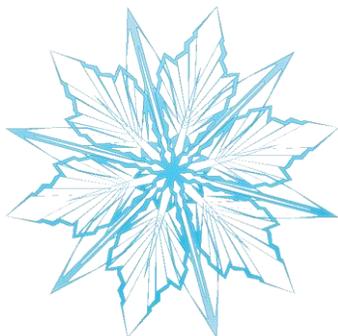
## FROM THE CABINET

As 2014 comes to a close and we reflect back throughout the year, we certainly have been blessed with God's gifts. In February our new Church Secretary Shelley Westenberg was hired. She has been such a positive force to our church. In May the congregation accepted the call from our new Pastor, the Rev Emilia Halstead. We have been blessed by her energy, enthusiasm and teachings. The last and newest staff member hired was "AJ" our church sexton. If anything needs to be fixed or there is chore to be done we can count on him. We have been blessed by all three.

We begin 2015 with the city of Concord celebrating its 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Our church has played a very integral part in the history of Concord. I have mentioned several times that we should host some event at First Church during the celebration. I invite you to an informal meeting after our church service on January 18<sup>th</sup> to determine if there is enough interest to pursue an event and, if there is, to discuss ideas.

As we continue to have security problems with our doors at church, I ask that when you leave the church you could please make sure you have properly closed the door. AJ has been working hard on the doors to ensure that they close easily and latch. The doors are old and need a lot of TLC, but we need to make sure they are secure when leaving. If you have trouble with a door, see me, Carroll Blake, AJ or leave a note to Shelley. Thank you.

*Everett Sims, Cabinet President*



## FROM THE DEACONS

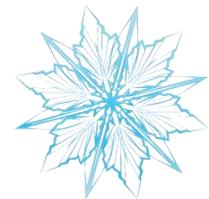
Hard to believe, but Christmas has come and gone. We celebrated the birth of Jesus, and now we head into the season of Epiphany and Lent. We will be holding our traditional Epiphany service on January 11, complete with a luncheon after the service.

We are currently planning the Lenten services, which will begin on Ash Wednesday (February 18). Details to follow in the February North Star, but the deacons are looking forward to working with Pastor Emilia and all of you during this period of reflection.

One final note: with the conclusion of Advent comes the task of taking down decorations. I'd like to thank everyone who helped set up the church! I am also sending out a call for volunteers to help clean up. We are meeting on January 10 (Saturday) at 10 AM. Anyone interested is welcome to show up! We have lots of tasks for people of all ages and skill groups.

Happy hopes for 2015!

*Jon Murphy, for the Deacons*



## FROM THE BOARD OF MISSIONS

**CHRISTMAS CARDS SUCCESS!!** We collected 638 Christmas cards, which the Huntoons delivered to the State Prison. What a meaningful way to remember others. Thank you for taking the time to bring in your cards.

Please remember to bring in any unwanted 2015 calendars for the Merrimack Nursing Home and continue to bring in your recent magazines. They are greatly appreciated.

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**HEIFER INTERNATIONAL** Thank you to all of you who bought animals for Heifer International as Christmas presents this year. Your donations will go toward helping people in need obtain self-independence. We raised \$370 toward heifers, honeybees, chickens, etc.

**CHRISTMAS FUND** Thank you for all your donations to the Christmas Fund. The money collected assists retired clergy and clergy in crisis. The money is still coming in, so we will let you know the amount when it is totaled.

**CHRISTMAS MESSAGE** We received a Christmas message from the Rev. Matuvhunye who is studying at Andover Newton Seminary. It is posted on the Missions bulletin board space in the Assembly Room for all to see.

**INVITATION TO TRAVEL TO ZIMBABWE** We received a message from Rev. Michelle Bagby Allan from the Conference Center about a trip to Zimbabwe in August of 2015. This will be for young adults 18 to 30 years old. Please read the details posted on the bulletin board in the Assembly Room.

**"SOUPER" BOWL** Is your favorite team going to the Super Bowl this year? Even if your team doesn't make it to the Super Bowl, remember to bring some cash with you to church on Super Bowl Sunday and contribute to the "Souper" Bowl. All the money collected will go to the Friendly Kitchen. For those of you who are not football fans, we are talking about Feb. 1<sup>st</sup>!

Sara Nichols and the Board of Missions



## FROM THE FOOD PANTRY

The Holidays are over and we at the Food Pantry want to thank you for making it a happier experience for our clients. I wish you could have seen the expressions on their faces when we would ask them if they could use any of the extras we were able to hand out, from toys to warm homemade hats, mittens, and scarfs. Especially our Refugees and people new to the pantry. It really warms your heart to know how you are helping God's families.

Let's keep up the wonderful work in 2015, but it is only possible when we all work together to help those less fortunate.



Happy New Year from-

*All of us at the Food Pantry*

## FROM THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY

The dates for the 2015 – 2016 Stewardship Campaign have been set. The annual Stewardship Tea will be on Saturday, February 28<sup>th</sup>. The four Stewardship Sundays are March 1, 8, 15 and 22. Since Palm Sunday is March 29<sup>th</sup> and Easter is April 5<sup>th</sup>, our celebratory luncheon will not be held until mid-April, the exact date to be determined later.

Carolyn Andrews



## FROM THE BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

The CE Board welcomes our new nursery care provider Jenny Strand, available each Sunday for Nursery through-Preschool Childcare during worship from 9:45 to 11:15 am.

We will be beginning a new church season, The Season after Epiphany, during which time the children will learn of the early life of Jesus Christ. *The Whole People of God* is a wonderful curriculum to guide for new teachers, and we welcome our Safer-Church trained members to consider assisting on an occasional Sunday. It truly is a gift to teach these eager children.

Sheila Swenson, for the Board of Christian Education

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## FROM THE BEYER GROUP

Good news! The members of the Beyer Group have achieved the status title of "Bucket Brigade Ladies." As our Christmas project, and thanks to the generosity of our members, we filled our cleanup bucket and helped to complete another. We received a lovely thank you from the Board of Missions for our contribution to this worthwhile project.

The Beyer Group will not meet during the month of January: However, we note with sadness the passing of one of our own, and a good friend to the church: Roioli Schweiker passed away on December 13 after a 22-year struggle with heart disease. Here is her obituary from the Union Leader:

*Roioli Feemster Schweiker was born Sept. 1, 1929, in New Orleans, La., to Roy Feemster and Olive Swagerty Feemster. She graduated from Brookline (Mass.) High School and Duke University and received an M.A.T. degree from Radcliffe College. She married Robert F. Schweiker Jr. and they lived in Pittsburgh, Cambridge Mass., Plainfield, Vt., Kabul, Amherst, Mass., and Toronto, before settling in Concord. She belonged to many church women's groups and served as president of the Woman's Club of Concord. She wrote guidebooks about caving, ski touring and canoeing and edited two family histories. She was the first woman to climb the 100 highest mountains in New Hampshire in winter.*

As we fondly remember Roioli, we say "Happy New Year to all!"

*Jeanne Cate*, Beyer Group Secretary



## PRAYER CONCERNS & PASTORAL CARE

If you or someone you know is in need of prayer and would like their name included in our Sunday prayers or put on the church prayer list, please contact Sally Kelly (salking2@yahoo.com) or Pastor Emilia (pastor@concordfirstchurch.org or (603) 225-5491). If you would like a member of the Pastor's Aid Visitation Team to visit with you, please contact Barbara Carlstrand at (603) 224-9792.

*The Prayer Circle asks you to keep in prayer the following members and friends:*

Harriet Bailey  
Miriam Callahan  
David French  
Ginny Gove  
Elizabeth Hardy  
Rose Kachadoorian  
Dot Riley  
Nancy Sanborn  
Janet Smith  
Julia and Milton Tasker  
Gertrude Taylor



**The Coffee Hour will be provided by the Board of Christian Education during the month of January**

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## EPIPHANY LUNCHEON

January 11<sup>th</sup>

Following Worship

Spiral Ham will be provided

A sign-up sheet will be in the Assembly Room on January 4<sup>th</sup> for side-dish offerings!



## CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR JANUARY

**Monday, Tuesday & Thursday:** Food Pantry - 9:30-11:30am

**Every Monday in January:** Counting Committee 9:00 am

**Every Tuesday:** Choir Rehearsal - 6:30 pm

**Sunday, January 4:** Communion Sunday

**Monday, January 5:**  
- Staff Meeting 10:30 am  
- Faith Formation 6:30 pm

**Tuesday, January 6:**  
-Female Charitable 1:00 pm  
-Pastor Emilia's Communion Visitations 9:30-5 pm

**Wednesday January 7:**  
-Pastor's Aid 1:30 pm  
- Faith Formation 6:30 pm

**Saturday, January 10:** "Ungreening" of the Church: 10 am

**Sunday, January 11:**

First Church Celebrates Epiphany: Luncheon follows Worship

**Monday, January 12:**

-Coffee with Pastor Emilia at Panera 11:30-1:30 pm  
-Women's Guild at Havenwood 7:00pm

**January 13, 14 and 15:**

-Pastor Emilia attending "Tending the Fire" conference

**Wednesday, January 14:**

Cabinet 6:30 pm

**Thursday, January 15:**

Jazz Worship planning session 6-7 pm

**Sunday, January 18:**

Exploratory Meeting regarding Concord's 250<sup>th</sup> Celebration after Worship

**Monday, January 19:**

-Spiritual Directors 12 pm  
-Coffee with Pastor Emilia at Gibson's 2-4 pm

**Tuesday, January 20:**

Worship at Havenwood 1:30 pm

**Wednesday, January 21:**

Trustees, Deacons and All Boards 6:30 pm (Missions at Havenwood)

**Monday, January 26:**

-Faith Formation 6:30 pm  
-February North Star articles due

**Tuesday, January 27:**

4th Tuesday Prayers in Chapel 1:00 pm

**Wednesday, January 28:**

Faith Formation 6:30 pm

**Thursday, January 29:**

Pastor Emilia on vacation until February 11

## January Brrrr-tldays!

Rev. Edward Brueggemann, 1/7  
Justin Belair, 1/8  
Donald Carpenter, 1/26  
Hailey McKenna, 1/27  
Cedric Dustin III, 1/31

