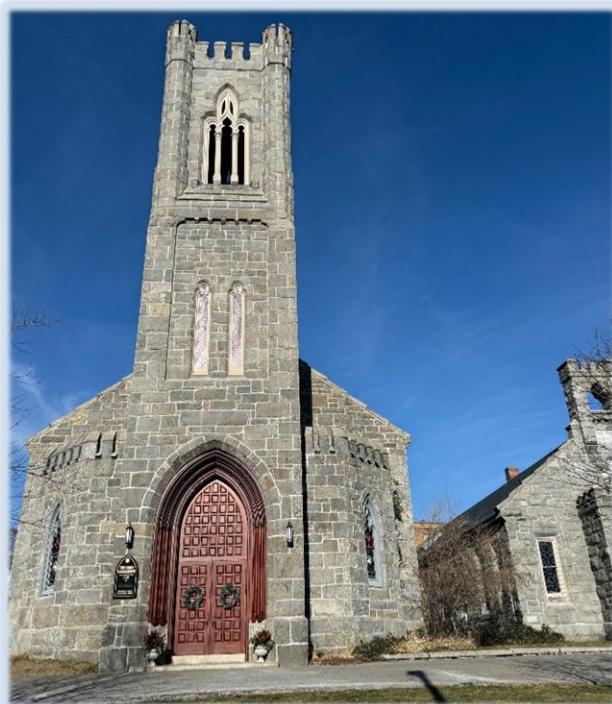




January 2026

# THE BEACON



## *First Church Congregational United Church of Christ*

26 Pleasant Street  
Methuen, MA 01844-3199  
Telephone: (978) 687-1240

**Rev. Dr. Ann Rogers-Brigham, Senior Pastor**  
[amrogersbrigham@gmail.com](mailto:amrogersbrigham@gmail.com)

**Roberta Jurovich, Office Manager**  
[firstchurch.roberta@gmail.com](mailto:firstchurch.roberta@gmail.com)

**Mike Boutin, Minister of Music**  
[boutinerjr@gmail.com](mailto:boutinerjr@gmail.com)

[www.firstchurchmethuen.com](http://www.firstchurchmethuen.com)



*Worship on Sundays at 10:00 AM*



## *Minister's Message* **Rev. Dr. Ann Rogers-Brigham**

Dear members and friends of First Church,

Happy New Year! We move into January days at First Church savoring winter Sundays, moving back into church meetings after the Christmas holidays and planning for a full 2026 church calendar year. For me, moving into January days, Epiphany days, sheds light on the importance of "life together" here at First Church and how we share that life from day to day, week to week. I think about how we talk to one another, communicate, plan, dream, share, email, text, meet up; it is all in order to answer Jesus' call and prayer that we may be "one."

It was in 1908 that the Octave of Christian Unity began and our journey to be "one" as churches across many denominational lines was started. The focus was on prayer for unity among our many churches, diverse yet connected by baptism and covenant to be Christ's disciples. In pockets here in the U.S. and in Europe, church leaders began working together on a common celebration for Christian unity. Take time to read the rich history of how this happened to get a true sense of the journey to be where we are today.

A marker year was 1958. We celebrate that in 1958, the French Catholic group Unité Chrétienne and the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches (a body which includes, among others, most of the world's Orthodox churches as well as many Anglican, Baptist, Lutheran, Methodist, Reformed, United and Independent churches) begin co-operative preparation of materials for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

How are we connected at First Church to this world-wide movement? As a member church of the United Church of Christ through our Northeast Association of the Southern New England Conference, we are part of the World Council of Churches. How exciting to be part of this large ecumenical body! That means we follow the lead of the World Council of Churches in the northern hemisphere to mark "The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity" each year from January 18-25. What's unique is that every year different countries choose the scripture theme and plan the liturgy.

This year, 2026, we thank the brothers and sisters of the monastic community of Bose in northern Italy for preparing our prayers and reflections. The theme for the 2026 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is ONE SPIRIT, JUST AS YOU ARE CALLED TO THE ONE HOPE OF YOUR CALLING" Ephesians (4:4)

Take a moment to read the passage in context: Ephesians 4: 1-4

*I, therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace: there is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.*

It was approved by the Catholic Church's Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity and the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches, in collaboration with the ecumenical monastic community of Bose in Italy. Yes, that's lots of intentional communication and coordination and planning ahead!

In the chosen passage for reflection, Ephesians 4:4, the Apostle Paul reminds the early Christians in Ephesus of the unifying power of the Holy Spirit: "There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to one hope when you were called." This verse calls believers to remember that, despite differences, all are part of the one Body of Christ and share a common hope through the Spirit.

I believe that this call to prayer and unity is important for us as a local church. In the new year, we try to name our hopes and dreams for the coming year. We want to make a difference in the lives of those who live in communities around us and make a difference in how we address issues that are part of our daily news. In a world that is divided on so many levels, we strive toward unity and togetherness in order to be a bridge offering cooperation and dialogue, whatever the topic. We have a place, a community, where we can make this happen. It is not an easy task or call, but it is the goal.

This new year, may we have as our resolution at First Church the commitment to the paths of cooperation and dialogue? The interim period in the life of our church provides opportunity to explore what that means for our First Church future. How will we listen, talk, and share ideas for change or for keeping things the way they are? How will we be open and communicative when we come to disagreements? Christian unity begins at home, so, let's commit to continuing what we do well in meeting, talking and working together and treasuring opportunities for studying together and building relationships. Fostering understanding and offering mutual respect is the reward, isn't it?

Thank you for allowing me to share my passion for us to attend to a unique calling as the church to let our faith inform every part of our lives in order to express our Christian values.

As we move toward The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity this year, let us pray for people around the world and our mutual ministry of peace and reconciliation. May we hold fast to God's invitation to be a light of hope and peace to our hurting world.

Jesus said (John 8:12) "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life." May our Epiphany lights shine brightly and may we be people of the Light.

Grace and peace,  
*Rev. Ann Rogers Brigham*

\* \* \* \* \*

## **A New Year's Prayer**

### ***“Occupy our Calendars”***

*Our times are in your hands:  
But we count our times for us;  
we count our days and fill them with us;  
we count our weeks and fill them with our busyness;  
we count our years and we fill them with our fears.  
And then caught up short with your claim,  
Our times are in your hands!  
Take our times, times of love and times of weariness,  
Take them all, bless them, break them,  
give them to us again,  
slow paced and eager,  
fixed in our readiness for neighbor.  
Occupy our calendars,  
Flood us with itsy-bitsy, daily kairos,  
In the name of your fleshed kairos. Amen.*

Written by Walter Brueggemann's in his collections of prayers, *Awed to Heaven, Rooted in Earth*. I share it with best wishes for the new year 2026.



# Sunday Worship

10:00 AM

**We hope you will join us!**

We like to see you in the congregation on Sunday mornings, but for those who cannot attend in person, worship will be broadcast each Sunday, at 10:00 AM, on YouTube Live ([www.youtube.com/@firstchurchcongregationalm1729](https://www.youtube.com/@firstchurchcongregationalm1729)). An Order of Worship will be emailed out by the Friday before the service.

\* \* \* \* \*

## *Children's Moment* 12/28/25

*Talking about Baby Jesus.*



\* \* \* \* \*

## A Meal (Breakfast) with Ann

2<sup>ND</sup> Wednesdays at 8:00 AM

at Ellie's Farmhouse Restaurant, 436 Broadway, Methuen



Breakfast with Ann will resume on Wednesday, January 14<sup>th</sup>, at 8:00 AM. Join Rev. Ann and friends at Ellie's Farmhouse, 436 Broadway in Methuen, for delicious breakfast and informal conversation! If you have never joined us, we extend a special welcome to you. No reservation needed. If you don't want breakfast, just come join us for good conversation.



December Group at Breakfast with Ann

# *Weekly Bulletin Prayer List*



We print a Prayer List within each Sunday Worship bulletin. To have someone included on the bulletin prayer list, please let Roberta, in the Church Office, know by emailing her at [firstchurch.roberta@gmail.com](mailto:firstchurch.roberta@gmail.com). Thank you.

If you, or someone you know, is in need of a pastoral visit, please contact Rev. Rogers-Brigham at [amrogersbrigham@gmail.com](mailto:amrogersbrigham@gmail.com) or 978-687-1240.

\* \* \* \* \*

## **2026 OFFERING ENVELOPES**

The 2026 offering envelopes are available. Those who requested envelopes, those are placed in the back of the sanctuary for pickup. There are also a few blank boxes and a sign-up sheet there as well. Be sure to write down your name and box number if you take a box so we can track on your giving statement.



Pledge cards and e-pledging forms are still available.

*Thank you.*

\* \* \* \* \*

## **IN CASE OF SNOW...**

As we enter the snow season, please be advised that on weekdays, if school is cancelled, the church office will not be open. If a blizzard is predicted for a given Sunday, if there are any changes to the time of worship, or worship is cancelled, please check our church web page, [www.firstchurchmethuen.com](http://www.firstchurchmethuen.com) and Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/firstchurchmethuen](http://www.facebook.com/firstchurchmethuen)).



# Confirmation Class 2025

Thank you to all who provided support and education to our youth, Isabella Bane, Alexis Murray, Andrew Pavlenkov and Haleigh Sanborn, through their Confirmation year of study.

Thank you to our Deacons and their support of our confirmation program. Special thank you to Judi Boyko, our Deacon liaison, for all she did to prepare the confirmation class for their special day and for her arrangement of gifts on Sunday, 12/7. (The youth received a book by Frederick Buechner, Peculiar Treasures, a red rose, a red stole with their name on it, and a certificate)

We express gratitude to adults who served as mentors to our youth and helped them to prepare for their confirmation day: Scott Sanborn, Judi Boyko, Sarah Pavlenkov and Allan Barlow.

We offer thanks to Donna Zacharias who prepared the confirmation certificates with her beautiful calligraphy. (Janet and Don Towler's daughter in Freedom, NH)

Thank you, parents, (grandparents and others) for providing your support to our youth and encouraging their participation and completion of the program. We all enjoyed a wonderful confirmation luncheon/cake after service on Sunday. We are grateful!

Look for the pictures from Confirmation Sunday on page 20 of this Beacon.

\* \* \* \* \*

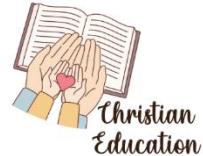
## CE Report

We wish to thank everyone who adopted youth this Christmas and donated the Gifts to the Manger. They were very excited about the gifts and very grateful for all of them as they had extra families added at the last minute. Man Inc. was also very happy to have received gifts for older children as they do not receive as many for them and this year, we had a few more than usual.

We also wish to thank everyone who helped with the youth on Sunday, December 21st, for their Christmas Pageant. It was a wonderful morning. Pictures are on page 22 of this Beacon.

### Sunday School Lessons for January 2026

- January 4<sup>th</sup> – **The Red Sea** – Exodus 14:1-30
- January 11<sup>th</sup> – **The Ten Commandments (1-5)** – Exodus 20:1-7
- January 18<sup>th</sup> – **The Ten Commandments (6-10)** – Exodus 20:1-7
- January 27<sup>th</sup> – **The Battle of Jericho** – Joshua 6:1-20
- February 1<sup>st</sup> – **Jonah & the Big Fish** – Jonah 1-4



We hope you had a wonderful Holiday, and we look forward to seeing everyone in the New Year!

Blessings,  
Mrs. B. and Mrs. P.

## From the Chair of the Church Board...

Happy New Year!!! I hope you had a wonderful Christmas and Advent season (which doesn't officially end until the celebration of Epiphany), you've cleaned up all of the wrapping paper and leftovers, and you're ready for a mid-winter's nap. However, with a fresh calendar and great hope, there is always a lot of energy at First Church. I know that many of our church committees are working on these special elements, events, and programs as well for celebration of our savior's birth, so it will be a wonderful season ahead!

As always, we have plenty more going on, including:

- I certainly hope you were able to attend many of the Advent services, especially the Cantata. The music was absolutely splendid, and it was a real treat to celebrate the coming of our Lord. I personally was touched by confirming our youth, the wonderful messages from the pulpit, and the joy of anticipation.
- The search process for our next settled pastor is continuing. The profile is online with the UCC, and prospective pastors have applied for the position we offer. We are receiving their profiles and beginning the interviewing process for potential candidates to be our next settled pastor. The committee is meeting virtually and physically, and they are working at a rapid pace to build our future. If you would like to see the final profile, it will be available in the office after worship.
- Our annual George Washington Birthday Dinner is approaching. It will surely be a spectacular time of fellowship, so please think about volunteering to be part of it. You all make this event shine!
- Our Outreach group is hard at work with numerous efforts. I sincerely thank you all for time, talent, and treasure given for those less fortunate. With Advent, the mitten tree was filled up, gifts were collected for the Methuen Arlington Neighborhood, and lots more. This month, we will begin our tradition of the Souper Bowl of Caring, which will gather cans of soup and monetary donations for those in critical need of food security. More is being planned and there are a ton of other ways to give for the upcoming season, so please read further to find out how you can help. Between all these focused projects and our continuing food pantry, helping so many in our community, there are numerous ways to make an impact.
- Chapel school is having a great year! The teachers and children are busy in the classrooms and playground, and it is wonderful to hear the joy throughout the church. However, enrollment is still active for the 2025-2026 school year, so if there is a family that may need our services, I invite you to connect them with Gina or Roberta. Tours are happening regularly.
- Our Membership Development & Communications team is hard at work planning fun events throughout the coming year. They are investigating lots of activities and fellowship times, so stay tuned. If you're interested in their work or helping out, please reach out to Carol Sanborn for more information.
- ...and so much more!

So, if you're looking for some way to help our church and our community, there's plenty of options. Also, there's always the prayer shawl ministry, other outreach projects, singing or ringing in one of our outstanding choirs, or just joining the walking group to help yourself. There are so many new opportunities available through our historic congregation, so feel free to seek out what you would like and help our neighbors & neighborhood at the same time.

As always, all are welcome to chat anytime with me. I love to hear your ideas and suggestions. We also have a lot of other activities and missions scheduled, so I would love your input. I know you all work so hard to make our church a blessing to our families and neighbors, and I thank you from the bottom of my heart. Let's keep the energy and drive rolling, continuing to seek God, care for each other, and improve our community.

God bless,  
Josh



\* \* \* \* \*



## *Special Worship Opportunities in January*

On January 6, we celebrate the Feast of Epiphany. At First Church, we will celebrate Epiphany in our worship service on January 4<sup>th</sup>. We will do this by reading the scripture for Epiphany Sunday, welcome our youth dressed as the magi, and sing Christmas carols with the words of communion. Come and join us as we welcome the new year and retell the story in Matthew's gospel of the Magi arriving in Bethlehem and presenting gifts for a king to Jesus as a baby. In the Sundays of Epiphany that follow in January, we hear story after story of people recognizing Jesus as the Messiah. This time is characterized by revelation and mystery surrounding God's new incarnate way of being with God's people in Jesus. Join us for worship!

- **January 4<sup>th</sup> – Epiphany Sunday Observed and Singing Communion**
  - Lessons: Isaiah 60:1-6; Psalm 72:1-7; Ephesians 3:1-12; Matthew 2:1-12
- **January 11<sup>th</sup> – Baptism of Christ**
  - Lessons: Isaiah 42:1-9; Psalm 29; Acts 10:34-43; Matthew 3:13-17
- **January 18<sup>th</sup> – Second Sunday after the Epiphany, MLK Sunday (Week of Prayer for Christian Unity begins)**
  - Lessons: Isaiah 49:1-7; Psalm 40:1-11; 1 Corinthians 1:1-9; John 1:29-42
- **January 25<sup>th</sup> – Third Sunday after the Epiphany – Ecumenical Sunday**
  - Lessons: Isaiah 9:1-4; Psalm 27:1, 4-9; 1 Corinthians 1:10-18; Matthew 4:12-23

**WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY (Jan 18-25)** asks us to pray for unity in Christ and peace for our world. As Christians from many different faith perspectives, we know our differences but affirm our oneness in Christ's hope for people to live in harmony and compassion and peace. May we be merciful as God is merciful! May we pray for peace.

## A Prayer for Peace

*How do we pray for peace from half a world away?*

*How can words salve and soothe real wounds,*

*Assuage real fears, Wipe tears from real eyes?*

*God of endless compassion, transform our prayers*

*From words into bridges, that span the distances*

*Between us, uniting our hearts in yours.*

*Every time we turn our keys in a lock,*

*May we remember all who are losing their homes.*

*Every time we step into our cars,*

*May we remember all who are having to flee.*

*Every time we embrace our children,*

*May we remember all who are trying to shield theirs from war.*

*May our besieged sisters and brothers*

*Be drawn into the arms of the suffering Christ,*

*And may our cry be heard as one voice,*

*Ringing out from every corner of the earth:*

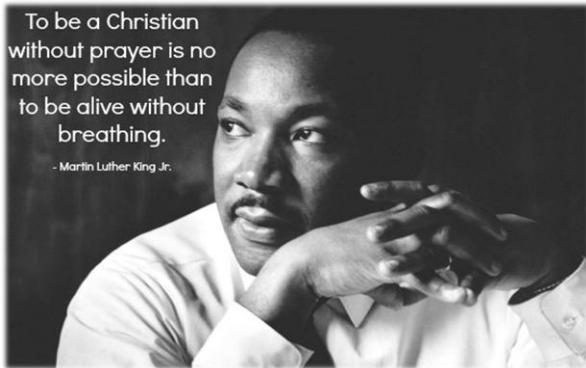
*God of endless mercy, grant us peace.*

*Amen.*

~ Cameron Bellm

(Cameron Bellm is a Seattle-based writer of prayers, poems, and devotionals. After completing her Ph.D. in Russian literature at the University of California, Berkeley, she traded the academic life for the contemplative life, informed by Ignatian spirituality and Catholic social teaching)

\* \* \* \* \*



We remember Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. and his teachings in worship on Sunday, January 18<sup>th</sup>.

**PRAYER:** *Eternal God, out of whose mind this great cosmic universe, we bless you. Help us to seek that which is high, noble and good. Help us in the moment of difficult decision. Help us to work with renewed vigor for a warless world, a better distribution of wealth, and a brother/sisterhood that transcends race or color. AMEN.*

# From Your Stewardship Ministry Team

The Stewardship Ministry Team is grateful to our members and friends for your financial support of our 2025 stewardship campaign, *Living the Vision Together*. We have received many new pledges and increase to pledges which will allow us to continue to *live our vision* of a growing church membership and Sunday School program, and increased fellowship and community outreach activities. We are thankful for all the pledges that we have received. If you have not returned a pledge card, you can do so at any time. If you would like to receive the Stewardship Pledge Materials to make your pledge, please contact the church office at 978-687-1240 and it will be mailed to you. You can also make an electronic donation by following the directions at the end of any monthly Beacon. And if you are an electronic giver, please remember to return an electronic giving form, even if there is no change of information. For any questions about making a pledge or donation to First Church, please contact the church office or any member of the Stewardship Ministry Team.

Back in September, our Sunday School children were given offering envelopes so that they can take part in giving to the church. It is a joy to see the children come forward for children's time each Sunday, happily placing their offering in their own special plate as they learn about stewardship and the importance of supporting our church. We will continue to make sure they are supplied with offering envelopes for the coming year.

## Stewardship Ministry Team:

Kathy Romano – Chairperson

Rev. Ann Rogers-Brigham, Irene Maggio, Marilyn Peck, Robyn Sliney

## Living the Vision Together



*Seeking God*



*Caring for Each Other*



*Improving Our Community*

**Your Pledge Makes It All Happen**

# *Musical Musings*

*Happy New Year!*

By the time you read this, Advent and Christmas will be pleasant memories. Our music program is always busy at this time of the year: Advent Cantata, children's pageant on the Fourth Sunday of Advent, Christmas Eve: it's a whirlwind of rehearsals, planning, and working with choirs, guest singers, and instrumentalists. I am so grateful for all the hard work and talent that is shared each week: First Church is blessed!

I hope you enjoyed the return of First Church handbells during Advent and Christmas, much thanks to its new director, Paul Delabruere. Paul is a tremendously gifted musician, finishing up his doctorate in music at Boston University. We are grateful for Paul's leadership and sharing his many talents with us.

We were also blessed with a children's choir during Advent and Christmas: they're so cute to watch, and really do bring us the joy of the season, so thanks, kids, for singing your hearts out!

Now that we are past the "high holidays", I will be focusing my attention on the restoration of the organ in anticipation of the 300th anniversary of the congregation in 2029. I'm hoping to raise a significant amount of money by partnering with generous donors, local philanthropies, and a national foundation that supports the restoration of pipe organs. The Treat organ really is a national treasure, and deserves to be restored and maintained. Keep this intention in your prayers!

Finally, I always love to hear from you: what do you like about our music program? What do you not like? Which hymns would you like to hear again or never? I value feedback....take the time to stop me after worship, or send me an email and let me know what you think!

Peace and all good things,

*Mike Boutin*



## From the Outreach Ministry Team



# The 2026 Ray Benedix Souper Bowl Challenge

Get ready for the **2026 Ray Benedix Souper Bowl of Caring Challenge!** This year we will have a new and exciting competition, **Team CANS vs Team DOLLARS!** Which team will earn the most points and win the challenge? You can support your chosen team by donating either cans of soup or money. We will present the team scores on Sundays at the end of each quarter on our special scoreboard. Our kickoff announcement will happen on Sunday, January 11<sup>th</sup>, and the 4 quarters will be 1/18, 1/25, 2/1 and 2/8 (Souper/Super Bowl). The Outreach Team will host a football-themed coffee hour on February 8<sup>th</sup> with special Souper Bowl snacks.

Ray Benedix, a long-time church member, initiated our participation in the National Souper Bowl of Caring Challenge and led our team that planned and organized the month-long soup collection for many years. Please help us to continue honoring Ray's memory through our donations of soup and money in 2026. All cans of soup and monetary donations raised will go to the Neighbors in Need Food Pantry held here at First Church each Tuesday evening.

Cans of soup and monetary donations may be brought to church each Sunday before or after church until 11:45, from January 18<sup>th</sup> through February 8<sup>th</sup>. You may also order soup online and have it shipped to the church. Our goals this year are 750 cans of soup and \$750. Please help us feed the hungry in our community by donating to our 2026 Souper Bowl of Caring Challenge.

Are you going to be on:

**Team Cans ... or Team Dollars?**



## 2026 Souper Bowl Challenge

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Donation Amount: \_\_\_\_\_

Please make your check payable to 'First Church Congregational', write 'Souper Bowl' on the memo line and return no later than Sunday, February 8<sup>th</sup>.

Respectfully,  
**Your Outreach Ministry Team**



# Walking Group for Fitness and Fellowship

## Tuesdays in January

We will continue to walk at The Loop during the winter months, as weather permits. We will meet at 10:00 AM in front of the AMC Theater on the following Tuesdays in January: 1/6, 1/13, 1/20 and 1/27. Bundle up and join us for exercise and conversation!



## **A Prayer for the Feast of the Epiphany**

*I wonder sometimes  
If one of the stars that lit Abraham's night  
Was the one that led the Magi to Jesus.  
A dark canvas speckled by the most generous brush—  
What an improbable promise to an old man.  
But our God has never been daunted by the unlikely, the impossible.  
What a sight for the Magi, too,  
A baby resting on hay, his cries mingled with braying and bleating.  
I like to think they heard in those everyday sounds a holy chorus,  
Saw in that noisy tableau a Creator serenaded by His creation,  
All of it embodied, enfleshed—  
All of it good.  
And when we've left our gifts for this implausible King,  
May we, like the Magi, go home by another way—  
Having encountered the holy,  
May we protect it, guard it,  
Trail its light behind us wherever we go.  
A sacred arc transposed from heaven to earth,  
May we ourselves become the star,  
Leading the way to Emmanuel.  
Amen.*

~ Cameron Bellm

# Prayer Shawl Ministry

The Prayer Shawl Ministry meets year-round and always welcomes anyone who wishes to be part of this ministry. Knitting or crocheting experience is not a prerequisite to becoming a member. Come for the fellowship and someone will be glad to help you if needed. Please contact Bobbi Barlow for more information.

*We invite you to join us on **Wednesdays from 1:00 - 3:00 PM**,  
in the parlor of First Church Congregational.*



\* \* \* \* \*

## Interest in Study? *Making End of Life Decisions*

During Lent, I'm wondering about your interest a mini-course on making end of life decisions. We could do this just after Coffee hour on **Sundays, March 1<sup>st</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>**. If you are interested, please indicate your interest on the sign-up sheet on the bulletin board near the church office.

I was reading this quote from *The Longing for Home* by Frederick Buechner and thought about the need to "move toward old age and death" with grace and courage. The season of Lent is a great time for adult study opportunities.

Here's the quote that prompts my question about this topic:

*"I recognize that even in the valley of the shadow of my own tangled thoughts there is something holy and unutterable seeking to restore my soul... I always stop and touch the coarse gray bark of one particular tree with my hand or cheek, which I suppose is a way of blessing it for being so strong and beautiful. Who knows how long it has been standing there wearing its foliage like a crown even though a part of it is dying? Because of that quality of sheer endurance one morning, I found myself touching it not to bless it, but to ask its blessing, so that I myself might move toward old age and death with something like its stunning grace and courage."*

Of course, you don't have to be "old" to participate in a presentation/discussion on making end of life decisions. This is an opportunity for all people, whatever your age or interest!

Thanks for letting me know as I plan for Lenten study opportunities.

~ Rev Ann

# The Chapel School



The children have all returned from Christmas Break with much excitement. Their stories are priceless!!!

In the month of January, we will be preparing for Parent/Teacher Conferences. Conferences give every parent the opportunity to sit down with their child's teachers and review their child's progress and portfolios. Portfolios are a collection of each child's work, observations and pictures to share with parents. It's a wonderful snapshot of the growth each child has made in all areas of development since September.

The Mitten Tree was once again overflowing with many hats, scarves and mittens. Everything was packed up and sent to Methuen Public Schools Resource Center. Children in need will now be warm for those cold winter days. Thanks to all the families that contributed. A giant thank you goes out to all the lovely ladies of the Prayer Shawl Ministry who have worked so hard to provide an abundant amount of hand knitted items. It has also been a great lesson for the Chapel children to learn and care for those in need and to pay it forward in the Spirit of giving for the Holiday.

It may be cold and snowy outside during January but inside the atmosphere is warm with the laughs and giggles of happy children. We are looking forward to playing in the snow and seeing the children grow in the second half of the school year.

Registration has begun for the 2026-2027 school year. We have already received several phone calls and look forward to giving tours to all our new families. Showing the school to each family during school hours allows us to get to know the family and show off our great program.

Gina Colarusso  
Director





The  
Chapel School



Festival  
of  
Trees

2025



Thank you to all our Chapel Families for the beautiful artwork!

# The Mitten Tree was quite overflowing this year!

*Thank you to all the church & school families  
who contributed to make this a success.*



All the mittens, gloves, hats and scarves were donated to the Methuen Public Schools for their families in need.



# *Christmas Giving*

## *2025*



### **Poinsettias given in loving memory of:**

**Robert F Pye and Peter G Jurovich, Sr** by Roberta, Tom, Nick, Emily & Nicolette Jurovich

**Marilyn & Robert Blaser and Agnes & Edwin Riedel** by Susan & Robert Riedel

**Loretta Platt & Mason Ferry** by Lisa & Josh Ferry

**Anne & Edward H Lemieux, Edward B & William I Lemieux and Kristyn B Stevens** by Jean Lemieux & family

**Ray Benedix** by Anne, Cyndy & Paul

**Kenneth & Elinor Peck & J Phillip & Ruth Mason** by Ken & Marilyn Peck

**Jason Romano** by Kathy Romano

**Jack, Helen & Fred Darlington** by Helen Darlington

**Alta & Kenneth Newton** by Robyn & Larry Sliney

### **Poinsettias given in celebration/honor of:**

**Mike's Music Ministry Among Us** by Susan & Robert Riedel

**Rev. Ann's Ministry Among Us** by Susan & Robert Riedel

**Our Parents** by Sally & Gary Dockham

### **Poinsettias donated by:**

The Boyko Family

### **Donation to the Capital Campaign given in loving memory of:**

**George King** by Pat King & Family

### **Donation to the Coffee Hour Fund by:**

The Boyko Family

### **Donations to the Operating Expense given in memory of:**

**Wil & Margaret Kurth, Scott Brown & Anita Watson** by Jennifer & Mike Borislow

**Drummond & Ingalls Family** by Nancy Drummond

**Loved Ones** by Becky Smith

**Donations to the Organ Restoration Fund have been given in loving memory of:**

**Arthur Gray** by Carol Gray

**Bill & Lucille Moran** by Pat King & Family

**Mrs. Janet Mellor** by Martin & Brenda Killourie

**John & Blanche Darlington and David & Mary Skea** by Helen Darlington

**Jason Romano** by Kathy Romano

**Lawrence & Elizabeth Sliney and Robert & Lois Allen** by Robyn & Larry Sliney

**Donations to the Outreach Fund given in memory of:**

**Ray Benedix** by Anne, Cyndy & Paul

**Ward & Betty Maue and Arthur & Barbara Sprague** by Glenn Sprague & Deb MaueSprague

**Anita, Eileen & Donald Watson, Marcelle & Richard Gingras, Scott Brown and Margaret Kurth** by Dorothy Watson

**Jason Romano** by Kathy Romano

**Donald Owen Peck, Megan Marie Tripp and Hannah Taylor** by Ken & Marilyn Peck

**Hazel Dennison, Barbara Teer, Barbara Skinner and Linda Craven** by Helen Darlington

**Paul Allen & Ian Davis** by Robyn & Larry Sliney

**Donation to the Outreach Fund in celebration of:**

**Mike & Christine Sprague** by Glenn Sprague & Deb MaueSprague

*Thank You*



*Christmas Eve 2025*

# Pictures from Confirmation Sunday

December 14, 2025

Congratulations to our Confirmands:

*Isabella Bane, Alexis Murray, Andrew Pavlenkov & Haleigh Sanborn*



And their Mentors:

*Judi Boyko, Sarah Pavlenkov, Scott Sanborn & Allan Barlow*



And their families...



# Pictures from Music Sunday

December 14, 2025



# Christmas Pageant

## 12/21/25

Thank you to all our children/youth who participated in our Christmas Pageant,  
***“Las Posadas – In Search of Shelter and Love.”***



**Las Posadas**, which means "the inns" or "the shelters" in Spanish, is a 400 year-old Advent tradition in Spanish-speaking countries, particularly Mexico. Las Posadas commemorates the journey of Joseph and Mary from Nazareth to Bethlehem and their search for shelter in preparation for Jesus' birth. Traditionally, participants will travel from house to house, as Joseph and Mary did in Bethlehem, only to be turned away.



The play reminded us of Jesus' message of love for the world, and to honor each person as a child of God.

The Christmas season is a time to put love in action and to remember many families in need of shelter and the welcome of God's love and compassion.



# What's the REACH Ministry?

Do you know of someone facing surgery, recovering from surgery or living with a long-term illness? Do you know someone who has recently lost their job or could use financial support? Do you know someone who suffers from depression or is often down in the dumps around the holidays?

Maybe this person is you?



If so, we can help. Our new **REACH** Ministry wants to make sure that members of our community have a place to turn for support in their time of need. The term **REACH** stands for -- **R**eliable, **E**ngaging, **A**ble, **C**aring and **H**artfelt support.

Contact Judi Boyko or Pat King for more information, or speak to our Pastor.

\* \* \* \* \*

## ***Would you like to make an electronic donation to the church?***

Use your smart phone or tablet by scanning this QR code!



Or visit our website at [www.firstchurchmethuen.com](http://www.firstchurchmethuen.com)  
and click the **“Donate”** button.

*Thank you for your support.*



## **JANUARY**

- 04 Deborah MauSprague
- 06 Cathy Gable
- 07 Janet Towler
- 09 Nicolette Jurovich
- 10 Roberta Barlow
- 26 Carolyn Gill

## **FEBRUARY**

- 04 Lynn Dewhirst
- 05 Joseph Yarid
- 07 Roberta Jurovich

\* \*



## **JANUARY**

1/6 Robert & Susan Newton

Married 47 years



# January 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Worship Service <i>Sundays at 10:00 AM In-Person &amp; on YouTube Live</i> <a href="https://www.facebook.com/firstchurchmethuen">www.facebook.com/firstchurchmethuen</a>						
<b>4 Epiphany (observed)</b> <b>Singing Communion</b> 8:30 AM Chancel Choir 11:15 AM Fellowship	<b>5</b> 6:30 PM Finance	<b>6</b> 10:00 AM Walking Group (The Loop) 4:30 PM Food Pantry	<b>7</b> 1:00 PM Prayer Shawl 5:45 PM Christian Ed 6:30 PM Church Board	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b> 10:00 AM Historical
<b>11</b> <b>Souper Bowl of Caring</b> Kick-Off 8:30 AM Chancel Choir 11:15 AM Fellowship	<b>12</b> 6:30 PM Outreach	<b>13</b> 10:00 AM Walking Group (The Loop) 4:30 PM Food Pantry	<b>14</b> 8:00 AM Breakfast with Ann (Ellie's Farmhouse) 1:00 PM Prayer Shawl 7:00 PM Diaconate	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> 14
<b>18</b> 8:30 AM Chancel Choir 11:15 AM Fellowship	<b>19</b> MLK Day Church Office & Chapel School Closed 1:00 PM Cook For Bread & Roses 6:30 PM Stewardship	<b>20</b> 10:00 AM Walking Group (The Loop) 4:30 PM Food Pantry	<b>21</b> February <b>BEACON deadline</b> 1:00 PM Prayer Shawl 7:00 PM MDCC	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>25</b> 8:30 AM Chancel Choir 11:15 AM Fellowship	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b> 10:00 AM Walking Group (The Loop) 4:30 PM Food Pantry	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>

*First Church Congregational  
United Church of Christ  
26 Pleasant Street  
Methuen, MA 01844-3199*

**Address Service Requested**