



The Chimes

December 2025 Edition

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From the Pastor's Desk:

“We love because God first loved us.”

The season of Advent invites us to slow down and remember that every good gift comes from above. As we prepare for Christmas, we have the opportunity to cultivate a deeper awareness of God’s generous presence in our lives. This becomes the wellspring from which our own generosity flows.

One of the ways I enjoy preparing room for God in my life is our Monday morning Bible Study. This Advent we are discussing Lee Stroebel’s *The Case for Christmas*. We begin by exploring the truth of the gospels in the story of the Nativity.

Advent Devotionals are also available outside the office for anyone who is interested in deepening their daily conversation with God. The theme this year is Practicing Generosity. We often think of generosity as something being asked of us...but have you thought about the fact that we *receive* generosity from God? One writer said: “If we . . . refuse to let God be generous to us, we will find ourselves trying to give from empty wells. The most generous people are often those who have learned to welcome God’s gifts with open hearts and grateful spirits.”

This Advent be open to receive God’s gifts: the gift of rest, of beauty in creation, in acts of kindness from others, and the hope that come with the promise of Christ’s birth.

In hope and gratitude, *Sue*

*December is Pastor Appreciation Month,
a good time to contribute to The Christmas Fund—
A special offering of the UCC.*



The Christmas Fund has been caring for active and retired clergy and lay employees of the United Church of Christ for over 100 years, providing emergency grants, supplementation of small annuities and health premiums, and Christmas “Thank You” gift checks each December to our lower-income retirees.

Envelopes will be in the pews for your annual offering to support retired pastors; that’s why we call it Appreciation Month for your clergy. As an alternative to envelopes,

consider making your donation directly and securely at www.christmasfund.org.

Sponsor a Wreath!

The North Stonington Grange is sponsoring their 2nd Wreaths Across America on December 13th. These wreaths will be placed on the graves of Veterans at Wheeler, Union, Pendleton Hill and Old Plains Cemeteries.

To sponsor a wreath go to wreathsasscrossamerica.org. Each wreath is \$17.

When asked to search for the region, type in CTWHICE and it will come up as Wheeler Cemetery. Your wreath can be in honor or in memory of someone.

Our Annual Christmas Bazaar:
Saturday, December 6th, 2025

9 am - 1pm

Take-out Luncheon 11:30 am - 1 pm

And Lovely Dessert Choices

*Congregational Church of North Stonington,
UCC*



**Baked Goods, Jams and Relishes, Pies,
Cookie Trays, Miscellaneous Goodies,
Gift Table of Home Sewn Items,
Crafts, Mission Booth, and Vendors**



***Celebrate the Season in North Stonington!
Sunday, December 7th 2025***

***4:30 – 5:45 pm Open House at Wheeler
Library***

***6:00 – 6:30 pm North Stonington Village
Green***

Town Tree Lighting & Carol Sing

SANTA Arrives with Holiday Light Parade

***Dress Warmly & Bring Flashlight; Hot Chocolate follows at
Hewitt Hall, Congregational Church of North Stonington***

***ALL: Collecting Donations of canned goods for
Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center***

Scout Families:

***Please bring a plate of goodies to share; you can drop
them off at the church in Hewitt Hall.***

Lighthouse Girl Scouts will serve hot chocolate

Luminaries by Boy Scout Troop 71, Main Street

Choir Notes

Choirs Preparing for Christmas Eve Services

5:00 PM - Family Christmas Eve Service

9:30 PM- Prelude Music

10:00 PM - Candlelight Christmas Eve Service

Our choirs are busy preparing for the upcoming Christmas services.

The Youth Choir will offer special music at our Family Service on Christmas Eve at 5 PM and our own Alice Robbins will be the soloist. The Handbell Choir and Senior Choir are preparing for our annual Pre-Service Music Celebration on Christmas Eve beginning at 9:30 PM followed by our traditional candlelight Christmas Eve service at 10 PM.

We are thrilled to have Renee Celey, soprano soloist, as well as flutist, Michelle Macina, share their musical gifts at the 10 pm service.

Come and celebrate the birth of Jesus in scripture and song at our Christmas Eve worship services.

CHERUB CHOIR TO SING at December 21st Morning Worship Service

Our Cherub Choir will be singing at morning worship on December 21st. The Cherub Choir is made up of children ages three and up, along with our Youth Choir scholars. The cherubs traditionally sing on the Sunday morning before the Christmas Eve service.

Kathi Thaxton and Michael Noonan will lead our Cherub Choir. Mike will also send out a practice recording and music for parents.

Parents **with children ages 3 and up** are invited to bring them down to the choir room after worship for about 20 minutes on **November 30th, December 7th, and December 14th.**

We hope to see you and your little cherub after worship on November 30th, December 7th, and December 14th for Cherub Choir. Please see Mike if you have any questions.

The Stonington Madrigal Singers to Present Concert on December 14th at 3:00 pm

We are thrilled to announce our church will once again host a Christmas concert presented The Stonington Madrigal Singers in our sanctuary on Sunday, December 14th at 3 PM. This group of 12 singers, under the direction of Robert Guarino, will present a diverse musical program with songs from the medieval, renaissance, and baroque periods, including music for the Christmas season, and music for recorders.

Our Music Committee will host a reception in Hewitt Hall following the concert. There is no cost for admission, but donations will be gratefully accepted at the door.

Please also see the flyer on the following page.





The Stonington Madrigal Singers

Robert Guarino, Director

Sing We Now of Christmas

Sunday

December 7, 2025, 4:00 pm

The LaGrua Center

32 Water Street, Stonington, CT

Sunday

December 14, 2025, 3:00 pm

North Stonington

Congregational Church

89 Main Street,

North Stonington, CT

Donations gratefully
accepted.

Reception
following concert.

For information email stoningtonMsingers@gmail.com





POINSETTIAS FOR CHRISTMAS

At the Congregational Church
of North Stonington
United Church of Christ

I would like to have a plant in church

given by _____

☐ in memory of _____

☐ in honor of _____

☐ I will bring the plant on/or before **Wednesday,**
December 17th

☐ I am donating money for a poinsettia by **December 17th**
(\$15 minimum, enclosed).

To allow the flower committee ample time to arrange plants, they must be delivered to the church by NOON on Wednesday, December 17th and all plants should be clearly marked with donor(s) names.

Thank you!

Christmas Giving at PNC - Please plan to share the following for the Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center

Plan on giving these food basket items:

- Turkey or canned beef
- Canned fruits/fruit cocktail
- Cran-Raspberry drinks
- Gravy packs
- Canned Corn, Peas, Yams & Green Beans
- Brownie or cookie mix



**Feeding the
Community**

The magi, as you know, were wise men - wonderfully wise men - who brought gifts to the Babe in the manger. They invented the art of giving Christmas presents. Being wise, their gifts were no doubt wise ones, possibly bearing the privilege of exchange in case of duplication. And here I have lamely related to you the uneventful chronicle of two foolish children in a flat who most unwisely sacrificed for each other the greatest treasures of their house. But in a last word to the wise of these days let it be said that of all who give gifts these two were the wisest. Of all who give and receive gifts, such as they are wisest. Everywhere they are wisest. They are the magi.

--From "The Gift of the Magi" in the anthology The Four Million by O. Henry, 1906.

You can be an ANGEL.

December Mission Focus:
Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center
Christmas Donor Angels



Download from
Dreamstime.com

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Jerry Gail | Dreamstime.com

Again this year, PNC has asked for gift cards rather than toys, clothes, etc.

How to turn in Gift Cards:

- ***Bring to Church by December 3rd***
- ***OR Mail by December 3rd to PO Box 1697, Pawcatuck, CT 06379***
- ***OR deliver to 27 Chase St. by December 5th***

We just need your donations of gift cards for the mothers to use to shop for their children. The date was moved to give the moms time to shop. Places that parents would use in the Stonington-North Stonington area: WalMart, drug stores, grocery stores, TJ Maxx, or JC Penney's.

Thanks so much, Mission Committee



WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP
Ladies - Please Join Us !
CHRISTMAS PARTY
&
POTLUCK DINNER with Wine

Wednesday, December 10th

Hewitt Hall
4 pm

All are welcome !

In addition to your food, please bring a gift to exchange - ~ \$10 amount. Have no time to cook? Bring rolls, a beverage, or store-made food.



Dream together of a transformation for our church. Just as our Creator imagined our world and blessed us with our home planet, we celebrate all people, all the world of green trees, blue skies, autumn colors and calm breezes.

As we have changed through time, we became sincere followers of Christ. Our church family has grown to be the United Church of Christ developing into a loving congregation.

We have celebrated over 300 years of growth and development. Now, let us dream together to keep that spirit alive. We need to transform by being more kind and good and true, enlivening one another to work together for this family of God.

Will you share a story of faith and tell us how you experience God and family here at our church? Let Pastor Sue know of your excitement, please.

And be here for the whole season of sharing and giving as we raise pledges and offerings for 2026. The need is great, and the reward of faith is even greater.

Stewardship Reminder for 2025

Thank you for giving regularly this year.

***You are so important to
our Church Family!***

Now, at year's end, please don't wait till December 31st to keep up with your pledges and offerings.

Hopefully we can pay our bills and move into our new year smoothly. If you need to know your "shortfall," your pledge payment, or your building fund pledge, please contact the Financial Secretary, Steve Weicksel (weicksels@gmail.com).

Thanks a Heap!

Thanks to...

-All of the garden helpers: Anne Nelson, Monica Eppinger, Mac Turner, Joe Serwinski, and Dennis Bliven who also cut down two trees.

-Everyone who donated and came to the Halloween bowling party.

-All who donated pajamas for Jammie Grammie.

-Dave Larson for his donation to the thankful dinner.

-All the people who worked on the dinner: Mary Bliven for cooking the turkeys, the deacons and youth for setting up and serving, and for everyone who brought side dishes.

-Everyone who helped with setting up the Chrismon tree and preparing the sanctuary for Advent season.

-All of our worship volunteers.

-Women's Fellowship for their Christmas bazaar preparation and their contributions to our church and many charities.

-All the pie makers and those who are helping the cause in many other ways.

-Julie Clow for donating a used freezer for pies, and to Dennis Bliven and Marten Coulter for taking 2 old freezers to the transfer station.

All who supported the pie fundraiser by ordering and purchasing pies.

-All for their generosity with their pledges: past, present and future.

-Kathi Thaxton for the cornucopia of autumn harvest for the altar on Sunday, November 23rd.

-The youth for all their kindness and help at the Thankful Dinner.

December Birthdays...

3	Gretchen Noonan, Melanie Ouellette
5	Michelle Young
6	Kris Shabunia Albert Gumbert, Katherine Nelson, Mac Thompson
8	Ingrid Stock
9	Lisa Gray
11	Summer Cipriani Patricia Danley, Marjorie Misovich, Sue Stevens
12	Alice Robbins
13	Darlene Williams
18	Elaine Ricci
19	Art Armstrong
21	Gabriella Ricci
22	Paul Ames
24	Tyler Cipriani
30	Owen Watrous



... and Anniversaries

19	Rob and Melissa Rockwell
27	Wayne and Janetha Sander

If we have missed your special day(s) or if there are corrections to be made, please notify the church office at 860-535-0379.

Worship Volunteers

	Ushers	Deacon	Altar- Flowers	Lay Reader	Communion	Comments
7-Dec	Steve Gadaree Matthew Sander	Patty Danley	Mary Bliven	Gretchen Noonan	Julie Clow David McCord	<i>Deacons' Meeting 11:30 am</i> <i>Youth Choir Rehearsal</i> <i>5-8:30 pm Town Tree Lighting</i>
14-Dec	Paul Ames Julie Clow	Julie Clow	Sue Latourette	Monica Eppinger		<i>3 pm Madrigal Singers Concert</i>
21-Dec	Patty Danley Monica Eppinger	Kathi Thaxton	Christmas Flowers	Kevin Noonan		
24-Dec	TBD	TBD	Christmas Flowers	TBD		<i>5 pm Service</i> <i>10 pm Service with 9:30 pm Prelude</i>
28-Dec	Steve Gadaree Matthew Sander	Amy Foster	Christmas Flowers	Open Date		



Worship Watch

December 2025

Congregational Church of North Stonington

Worship at 10 a.m. & streaming online.

Church School at 10:15 Office Hours Mon-Thurs 9 to 1.

7th - Second Sunday of Advent -Communion-

“A Compelling and Frightful Being” Isaiah 11:1-10 and Matthew 3:1-12 Prophecies of a new shoot growing and the warnings of a wilderness man: Be ready! Senior Choir sings.

14th - “Singing Hard Times Away”. Isaiah 35 and Luke 1:47-56 Prophecies of hard times passing bringing a time of joyfulness. Mary sings of the great responsibility and great blessing she will bear.

Senior Choir sings, Deacons meet. 3 pm Madrigal Singers Concert

21st - “Unexpected Father”. Isaiah 7:10-17 and Matthew 1:18-25. Prophecies of a birth, and a man not ready but willing to be a father! God makes us able despite our own insecurities and worries!

Cherub, Youth and Sr. Choir, Handbell Choir, Robin Crandall, soloist.

24th - Christmas Eve Candlelight Services

5:00 pm Family-oriented service

9:30 pm “mini-concert” of Choirs and Handbell music

10:00 pm Lessons and Carols

29th – First Sunday of Christmas - Our “Story” Sunday

Isaiah 63:7-9 and Matthew 2:13-23

Steve Gadaree, Handbell soloist.

MISSION FOCUS FOR DECEMBER: The UCC Christmas Fund

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