



The rumpet

DECEMBER 2025

A publication of the East Woodstock Congregational Church, UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

*Keep awake, therefore,
for you do not know on
what day your Lord
is coming.*

Matthew 24:42 NRSVue

The liturgical calendar calls us to remember expectation. While our memories of the days preceding Christmas may include anticipating gifts and festival gathering around meals and decorated trees, that is not the memory Advent amplifies. While Epiphany greets us at the dawn of a new year, memories of midnight toast and kisses does not frame that season. Lent may evoke shudders as we consider how difficult it may have been to forgo that favorite practice, menu item, or other thing in order to share in the sacrificial activity of Christ. Yet, if that struggle fails to generate empathy for the suffering of our neighbor on our block and across the world, the sacrifice was empty. A sunrise service on Easter Sunday morning may transport our imagination to the empty tomb, but that shocking moment led to uncertainty, discovery, and an empowered movement that launched on the Day of Pentecost and continues today.

The future of the church faces threats. While some have the reasonable fear of closing church doors, the more urgent and salient problem is the church that has lost its way, its voice, its witness, and its commitment to embodying good news in the world as Christ's agents in the world.

The call to remember expectation is a call to hope, to agency, and to activation in a world in need of conduits and co-creators of good news. In the anchoring text for the liturgical year, Jesus cautioned and encouraged their

followers to "keep awake." The command encompasses attentiveness, alertness, and readiness. The context of the passage emphasizes the anticipated return of Christ, the Chosen One. Could the Body of Christ reclaim its mantle and mandate to embody God's love and liberating power in the world? Could that be the return we expect...to the movement to follow the way of Jesus in spirit and in truth...not to give us an escape to heaven but to realize the kingdom on earth through our collective, Spirit-led salvific acts in the name of Jesus? Are we prepared and willing to be that church?

That is the question we will ponder this year even as we heed the call to "Stay Awake."

The Reverend Dr. Cheryl Lindsay,
Minister for Worship & Theology
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

OUTREACH OPPORTUNITY FOR GIFTING...

It's that time of year when we all have the opportunity to purchase presents for our partners at DCF, the children in the homeless shelter, and the domestic violence shelter. There are gift tags in fellowship hall with the child's name, age & some have gift suggestions. Please sign your name on the signup sheet when you choose your tag. Gifts need to be returned by Sunday, December 14th. **Santa will pick them up on the 15th.**

Thank you for your faithful support of Outreach!

Blue Christmas Service

A "Blue Christmas" service offers people a sacred space to not only remember their loved ones who have passed, but also to name their losses and griefs from the previous year, or maybe to recognize their disappointments or loneliness or fears. A way to acknowledge that they are not alone in the midst of their hurt. That others are hurting, too. It's about making space for the sadness that is already there. Naming it. Honoring it, even. And yes, remembering the hope we have in Jesus. Our service will be held on **Thursday, December 18, at 7PM.** All are welcome.





The angels announced the miraculous and wondrous birth of the Lord Jesus Christ to lowly and simple shepherds who were watching over their sheep in a field. Did you ever wonder why the angels did not make their glorious pronouncement to kings, the wealthy, or the temple priests? Why were peasant shepherds the first to hear this most astonishing of all announcements?

Perhaps it was to make clear right from the beginning of his life that Jesus was to become the greatest shepherd of all, the Great Shepherd of our salvation.

We should notice that sheep and shepherds hold an important significance in the scriptures. Sheep are mentioned more than any other animal in the Bible, over 400 times. Their meat was eaten at sacrificial meals, their skin was used for clothing, and the ram's horns were utilized for musical instruments (Joshua 6:4) and oil containers (I Samuel 16:1).

Though shepherding was considered a common occupation, it was nevertheless very important. Shepherding a flock of sheep required constantly moving them to new pastures in search of sustenance, ensuring an abundant and clean water supply, and always being vigilant for any who might wander astray. The shepherd's responsibilities further included guarding the sheep from attacks of predators and wild animals, such as bears, lions, and wolves, often placing the shepherd's own life in danger to protect the flocks.

Yet despite the value of this job, shepherding a flock was frowned upon by many in the ancient



Near East, sometimes even despised. We read in the Book of Genesis 46:34 that Joseph informs his father and brothers that "all shepherds are abhorrent to the Egyptians."

Nevertheless some of the most important figures in the Old Testament, such as Moses, David, and Amos worked as shepherds during some part of their life. Even the Hebrew patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were shepherds.

Of these, David is the most well known as a shepherd. He was a shepherd from his youth. Psalm 78 says about him that God "chose his servant David, and took him from the sheepfolds; from tending the nursing ewes he brought him to be the shepherd of his people Jacob, of Israel, his inheritance. With upright heart he tended them, and guided them with skillful hand" (Psalm 78:70-72).

And herein lies the key, I think, to why God chose to reveal the birth of the only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to shepherds. Jesus was to grow up to become our Great Shepherd.

As a kind and wise shepherd, Jesus does not condemn his flock as worthless sinners who deserve to be eaten by wolves, but rather, as lost and helpless sheep who need to be found and brought back safely home. It is interesting that those who minister for Jesus Christ are called pastors, which is another name for "shepherds."

Jesus was born in the humble surroundings of a stable and placed in a dirty manger, a feeding trough for animals. His birth would be announced to lowly shepherds who realized the importance of such good tidings and sought out the baby in the manger. Christ did not force his birth upon the people of that time. When he grew up, he did not coerce his way into their lives during his ministry. Rather he led the way to eternal salvation as a kind and caring shepherd for any who were willing to listen and to follow him. He taught and ministered compassionately through parables, miracles, and personal sacrifice to gain the attention of sinful and troubled souls. He served as a shepherd who went ahead of the sheep, not driving them from behind. He led them toward that which was good and away from danger and wrongdoing, ultimately preparing the way for entrance into eternal life. At this time of year when we make plans to celebrate the birthday of Jesus Christ, may we all renew our commitment to following our "Great Shepherd."

Merry Christmas,

Pastor Gary

WINTER IN ALL OF OUR LIVES

There is a winter in all of our lives,
a chill and darkness that makes us yearn
for days that have gone
or put our hope in days yet to be.
Mother-Father God, you created
seasons for a purpose.
Spring is full of expectation
buds breaking
frosts abating and an awakening
of creation before the first days of summer.
Now the sun gives warmth
and comfort to our lives
reviving aching joints
bringing colour, new life
and crops to fruiting.
Autumn gives nature space
to lean back, relax and enjoy the
fruits of its labour
mellow colours in sky and landscape
as the earth prepares to rest.
Then winter, cold and bare
as nature takes stock
rests, unwinds, sleeps until the time is right.
An endless cycle
and yet a perfect model.
We need a winter in our lives
a time of rest, a time to stand still
a time to reacquaint ourselves
with the faith in which we live.
It is only then that we can draw strength
from the one in whom we are rooted
take time to grow and rise
through the darkness
into the warm glow of your springtime
to blossom and flourish
bring colour and vitality into this world
your garden.
Thank you Creator
for the seasons of our lives.

NATURE'S WONDROUS CYCLE

As a part of nature's wondrous cycle
Of new birth, growth, fruitfulness and death
We rejoice in the creation of new life,
For parenthood, the passing on of
knowledge,
For understanding and the wisdom of years.



We are grateful for the life of Ken Marvin,
always ready to serve, in the Navy, Fire
Department, & more, and in the life of this
church. May his memory be a blessing.

The following are the scriptures for this month. You are invited to read them as part of your daily devotions and as preparation for worship. For daily devotions, please go to: sneucc.org/lectionary

December 7

Second Sunday of Advent
Isaiah 11:1-10 Psalm 72:1-7,
18-19 Romans 15:4-13
Matthew 3:1-12

December 14

Third Sunday of Advent
Isaiah 35:1-10 Psalm 146:5-10
or Luke 1:46b-55 James 5:7-10
Matthew 11:2-11

December 21

Fourth Sunday of Advent
Isaiah 7:10-16 Psalm 80:1-7,
17-19 Romans 1:1-7
Matthew 1:18-25

December 24 Nativity of the
Lord I Proper I Isaiah 9:2-7 Psalm
96 Titus 2:11-14 Luke 2:1-14
[15-20]

December 25

Nativity of the Lord II Proper II
Isaiah 62:6-12
Psalm 97 Titus 3:4-7
Luke 2:[1-7] 8-20

Nativity of the Lord III Proper III
Isaiah 52:7-10
Psalm 98
Hebrews 1:1-4 [5-12]
John 1:1-14

December 28

First Sunday after Christmas
Isaiah 63:7-9
Psalm 148
Hebrews 2:10-18
Matthew 2:13-23

worship&prayer

Continuing to pray for...

- Gisela Kaupp, continuing to recover from eye surgery
- Joel Morse
- Faith Armstrong
- Sally May
- Lisa Gould
- Dave Norman
- The Children and Family of Amanda (Crowley) & Jerry Zolobkowski
- The Family of Ken Marvin
- Cynthia Sylva
- Our faith community at EWCC as we move through the Search & Call process for a settled pastor

God hears our prayers and surrounds those we pray for with comfort, strength, and compassion in challenging times.

LADIES BENEVOLENT SOCIETY

LBS has had a busy Fall with the Holly Fair and our gathering on November 19. We discussed our successful Holly Fair which grossed \$10,425.96 from our tables. LBS has an account balance of \$23,034.63 at this point. We have committed \$5,000 towards painting the sanctuary and have provided \$4,820.07 to offset overruns for the new fire alarm system and the parsonage kitchen renovation. We have also offered to fund an upgrade of our church website. All of our funds are used for the church and I am certain that we will find good use for the funds we currently have!

Following our business meeting, Linda Kaplan provided the group with a Demonstration about making Thanksgiving floral arrangements using both purchased flowers and dried flowers from her garden. She completed two lovely specimens. Following the presentation, we enjoyed apple crisp and zucchini bread, coffee and tea provided by our hosts Kathy Carlson and Linda Kaplan. Another delightful afternoon of fellowship!



Our next meeting is December 17, 2025. Come and enjoy our annual Christmas Party in Fellowship Hall at 1:30. We will be collecting gift cards in any amount from supermarkets, gas stations, pharmacies, Walmart, Target, etc. These will be given to Pastor Gary and Outreach for distribution to people in need of help.

Kerstin Forrester

THE OUTREACH PANTRY is in need of the following staples:

Coffee, Flour (2 # bags), Sugar, Peanut butter, Cereal, Pasta Sauces, Canned tomatoes, Canned chicken and tuna.

Your generosity is most appreciated!

committee doings

CHURCH CALENDAR - EASIER TO FIND!

We are an active church with many meetings, Bible study classes, church events, and Fellowship Hall rentals. Sometimes, it is challenging to keep up with all the activity. The church uses Google Calendar (managed by our Office Manager, Mary Oliver) to manage all our activities.

The online calendar is available on our website <https://www.eastwoodstockchurch.org/calendar/> for your use.

The Trumpet has and will continue to include the current month's calendar. We are also adding a link to the Trumpet (the online version) and the Weekly Reminder for your use, so you can look ahead when planning an event or see what is going on.

Please take a look at our calendar. If there are any edits or new events to add, please let Mary know.

Society Committee

ANNUAL MEETING REPORTS

It's that time of year, when we pour over our notes, minutes, memories, and reflect on our church year. It's also the time to compile these facts and reflections for our Annual Report. This year, **the deadline for the Annual Report in January 9th.** *If you need any assistance putting together your report, please let the Office know. Thank you!*

PLEDGES

If you've not yet sent in your pledge card, please do so at your earliest convenience so that Society can format our budget for the coming year. Questions, please reach out to Collector, John Davis.

E-DELIVERY: We continue to use our MailChimp email platform to send The Trumpet, Sunday Bulletin, and continuing to send the Weekly Reminder. Please make sure your email contact information is correct. *If you have any changes please call the office, 860.928.7449 or email churchoffice@eastwoodstockchurch.org.*

SOCIETY—JEANS SUNDAY—THANK YOU!

Our gratitude to our enthusiastic group of volunteers who made our annual Jeans Sunday a grand success!

Our clean-up after worship on Sunday, November 16th had many helpers cleaning windows and gutters, changing light bulbs, raking leaves, polishing, disinfecting, organizing, and completing tasks that REALLY make a difference in the upkeep of our church buildings and grounds. Society's special thanks go out to Dawn Adiletta and Kerstin Forrester who hosted our much appreciated volunteer lunch after the clean-up, and to everyone who rolled up their sleeves and offered their time and energy to make our Church really shine! Through your good work we were all filled with a wonderful sense of fellowship and pride knowing that we ALL played an important role in caring for our beloved church buildings.

Thank you one and all!
Judith Wong, on behalf of Society

Learning in faith



THE "ADVENT"URE BEGINS!

While we have been focused on Communion study and parables, we are readying for Advent. Our pageant is scheduled for **Sunday, December 14th**.

A celebratory **Potluck** will follow the pageant and service. There is a sign-up sheet in Fellowship Hall. Any questions, please reach out to Jessica Weaver Boose or Dorrie Scranton.

Just a reminder....

We love hearing good news! Have a special event you'd like to share— a birth, graduation, new job, special honor? Let us know...



Have you changed your phone, email or mailing? Please let the office know of any changes so you don't miss out on *The Trumpet* or other important messages. You can send any changes or correspondence to Mary Oliver at: churchoffice@eastwoodstockchurch.org.

Holiday Art /Craft Show

East Woodstock Congregational Church

220 Woodstock Rd East Woodstock, CT

Sat Dec 6th 10 – 3

Over 20 vendors will be set up in the hall

Authors Jewelry Soaps

Oil / Water Paintings

Wood Photography

Door Swags/ Sleds

Knitted/crochet items

Pottery Candles

Bird Houses Handbags

Gifts Decorations Chair Caning Baskets

A little of This and a lot of That!!



UPCOMING LEARNING OPPORTUNITY!

**Thursday, February 5, 2026,
12 - 1PM via Zoom**

Presented by Ross Johnson

Pride celebrations aren't just for the big cities — they're a powerful form of community and connection in small towns too. Ross Johnson, Pastor of Living Faith UMC in Putnam, CT, will share the story of starting Quiet Corner Pride. He'll reflect on the unique role that pastors and churches can play in convening community-wide gatherings, the possibilities of forming partnerships with secular organizations and businesses, and lessons learned from affirming LGBTQ+ people in a politically moderate-to-conservative area. Come hear the Good News of how God is at work in one small town!

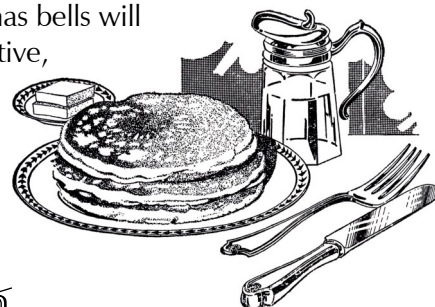
Click to register through Zoom. Once you have completed this registration, Zoom will send you a link to the meeting. *Each attendee must register separately.*
[https://sneucc-org.zoom.us/join/register/6T1UHKEfR1KH3bwnZkLxA#/
registration](https://sneucc-org.zoom.us/join/register/6T1UHKEfR1KH3bwnZkLxA#/)

Lunch and Learn for Leaders is a monthly webinar series hosted by the Center for Transformational Leadership and offered to our participants at NO cost due to the generosity of churches participating in proportional giving to Our Church's Wider Mission. Each third Thursday of the month from September through November and January through May, you are invited to join us for a 1-hour webinar session designed to inform, inspire, and invite learning and discussion. Each webinar is a bite-sized opportunity to explore areas of mission and ministry relevant to the local church. All authorized ministers and lay leaders are encouraged to attend.

GOOD CHRISTIAN MEN REJOICE!

The Christmas edition of men's breakfast will be on December 14th, the Christmas bells will be ringing, the menu will be festive, might sing a carol but there will be no mistletoe. Beginning at 8AM.

Windsor White



sharing the good news

Beloved in Christ,

In this season of gratitude, my heart is full as I think of the countless ways you, our churches, pastors, leaders, and volunteers continue to show up for the least, the last, and the lost.

Scripture reminds us, "Let us not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest time, if we do not give up. So then, whenever we have an opportunity, let us work for the good of all" (Galatians 6:9-10, NRSV). This is precisely what you are doing.

Across Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island, you are feeding the hungry, tending to the lonely, and opening your doors as warming centers for neighbors who need safety, dignity, and care. You are stocking food pantries, preparing meals, offering blankets, coats and hope, reminding your communities that compassion is not seasonal, it is who we are.

This is the quiet, powerful work of the Body of Christ. One big "C" church, living and breathing through many locations, many congregations, many hands and hearts. And through you, God's love becomes tangible. It becomes bread. It becomes warmth. It becomes welcome.

As we gather around our own tables this week, may we remember the wider table we are setting together, a table big enough for every child of God.

Thank you for being a Conference committed to justice, mercy, and love. Thank you for your faithfulness. Thank you for showing the world what hope looks like in action.

With deep gratitude for each of you,

Rev. Darrell L. Goodwin,
Executive Conference Minister
and President

December



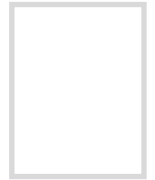
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1 Tai Chi, 11AM Community Kitchen 9AM Diaconate 6PM	2 Diaconate, 6PM	3 Bible Study 10:30AM Al-Anon, 7:30PM	4 Bell Choir 7PM	5 Food Fair, 9AM Craft Fair Set up 3PM	6 Artisan Craft Fair 10AM-3PM
7 Worship 10AM 10:00AM	8 Tai Chi 11AM Outreach, 6PM Search & Call 6PM via Zoom	9 Choir 7PM	10 Bible Study 10:30AM Al-Anon, 7:30PM	11 Bell Choir 7PM	12	13
14 8AM Men's Breakfast Worship 10AM Pageant & Potluck	15 Tai Chi 11AM Society 7PM	16 Choir 7PM	17 Bible Study 10:30AM LBS, 1:30PM Al-Anon, 7:30PM	18 Blue Christmas Service 7PM	19	20 TRUMPET DEADLINE
21 Worship 10AM Movie Matinee	22 Tai Chi 11AM No Book Club	23 Choir 7PM	24 Bible Study 10:30AM Christmas Eve Services 5&11PM	25 No Bells Christmas	26	27
28 Worship 10AM	29 Tai Chi 11AM	30 Choir 7PM	31 Bible Study 10:30AM Al-Anon, 7:30PM	 <p>MOVIE MATINEE! <i>The Nativity</i> will be shown following the service on December 21. Feel free to bring something to nosh or share. More information coming soon! Stay tuned on the Reminder.</p>		



East Woodstock Congregational Church

Post Office Box 156

East Woodstock, Connecticut 06244



Poinsettias

To order poinsettias for Christmas, please complete the following information.

Given by: _____

To Honor: _____

In Memory of: _____

Poinsettias _____ *@ 1.00 each*

Total: \$ _____

Please enclose a check for the cost made out to

EWCC / PO Box 156 / East Woodstock, CT 06244;

you may also drop off at the office. DEADLINE: WED. December 10

