



First Church in Jaffrey

Weatherwane

December 2021

Thoughts for the Season...

Thunder rumbles in the mountain passes
And lightning rattles the eaves of our houses.
Flood waters await us in our avenues.

Snow falls upon snow, falls upon snow to avalanche
Over unprotected villages.
The sky slips low and grey and threatening.

We question ourselves.
What have we done to so affront nature?
We worry God.
Are you there? Are you there really?
Does the covenant you made with us still hold?

Into this climate of fear and apprehension, Christmas enters,
Streaming lights of joy, ringing bells of hope
And singing carols of forgiveness high up in the bright air.
The world is encouraged to come away from rancor,
Come the way of friendship.

Maya Angelou, the first stanzas of *Amazing Peace: A Christmas Poem* (2005)



Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness, and put on the armor of light, now in the time of this mortal life in which your Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge both the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Written by Thomas Cranmer for the Book of Common Prayer in 1549, this Collect is read on the First Sunday of Advent in the Anglican Church. Thanks to Rev. Cassius Webb for including this prayer in his sermon at First Church on November 28, 2021.



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OUR 2022 STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN

The Trustee Circle is working on the 2022 budget, which is shaped by the financial commitment of members, associate members and friends. This stewardship effort began last month with a letter and pledge card mailed to you. Here's an excerpt from that letter.

“We often think about the Stewardship Campaign as our ‘annual pledge campaign’. But this interpretation may diminish the meaning of the act. Stewardship is about taking care of something worth caring for and preserving.”

We at First Church have a powerful opportunity going forward. We have called Rev. Steve Miller to be our settled pastor. We can look forward to our future – a renewal. As a congregation, we have among us the individual resources to empower that future.”

We have received pledges which amount to 50% of our goal - and from 50% of those who regularly support First Church. Our thanks to the people who have sent in their pledge cards. Yet, we look forward to hearing from others. You may have misplaced your pledge card, or the mailing may be in your 'to do' pile of paper.

We need to hear from you! Please consider contacting our Treasurer Janet Grant at janetgrant@firstchurchinjaffrey.org or janetsgrant@msn.com with your pledge amount. Or mail to First Church in Jaffrey, PO Box 673, Jaffrey NH 03452.

We need your commitment to complete the budgeting process! And as an aside, continuing the tradition of our current and many of our past ministers, Rev Steve Miller and his wife Jill Tyler have pledged their financial commitment for 2022!



Worship Services in December and January

– Dealing with COVID

Just when we were hoping that the pandemic was winding down, New Hampshire has experienced an exponential rise in new COVID cases. According to the *Monadnock Ledger Transcript* and other news outlets, the situation is worse than it's ever been in our state. Because First Church regards the health and safety of our community as a priority, it's challenging to make responsible decisions regarding special Advent and Christmas services.

As this newsletter "goes to press" here's the schedule:

We will have our usual Sunday worship at 10:30 in the sanctuary during Advent. Every other pew is closed off with red ribbon to ensure distancing. Masks are required, and names of all attendees are checked off to facilitate contact tracing if needed. Sorry, coffee hour is canceled indefinitely. Gene Faxon and our wonderful trio will provide music selected for the season.

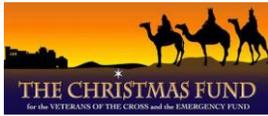
No decisions have been made regarding our traditional Christmas Eve service (Friday, December 24) and a service on Sunday, December 26. When plans are finalized, we will send an e-blast and post on our website.

January is an important month for First Church, a time of major transition. Plans call for worship at 10:30 to continue in the sanctuary to allow distancing. The schedule is as follows:

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|-----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| January 2, 2022 | Rev. David Felton leads worship. |
| January 9 | David's last Sunday as our interim pastor. We hope to hold a celebration of his time with us following the service. |
| January 16 | An in-between Sunday with Rev. Ilona Kwiecien. |
| January 23 | Rev. Steve Miller leads his first worship service at First Church. |
| January 30 | Following the service, we'll convene our annual meeting at 11:30. |

Because many in our congregation are 60 or older, vaccinations and the booster shot are strongly recommended to protect our community.

Special Offerings During Advent



The UCC Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund

“Good news. . . Great joy. . . All the people!” Luke 2:10

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.

United Church of Christ congregations and members have blessed the Christmas Fund with their generosity for many years. This year, your care and compassion will be especially appreciated by those servants of the church who are facing a time of need. Thank you!

First Church will collect this offering on **Sunday, December 19.**

Our Own Christmas Offering



Traditionally, money collected at the Christmas Eve Candlelight service and the Sunday before Christmas would be designated as a First Church Christmas Fund that benefits the town of Jaffrey. Because of the recent increases in Covid cases in NH, plans for special Christmas services have not been finalized. However, the Covid pandemic means that the needs for food and shelter in the community have also increased. During December, donations in any amount for the First Church Christmas fund will be collected and then divided between the Jaffrey Food Pantry and the Town Welfare Fund.

Donations for both offerings can also be left in the Treasurer’s mail slot in the Parish House or mailed to the First Church in Jaffrey, PO Box 673, Jaffrey, NH 03452. Please note UCC Christmas Fund or FCiJ Christmas in the memo line of your check (s).

You can make donations online by going to the website, www.firstchurchinjaffrey.org

Report from the Trustees **FCiJ increases cash in endowment by \$25,000**

First Church's Endowment Fund at Charter Trust has done well this year. The First Church Investment Committee on Nov. 5 was apprehensive about predictions of a market downturn and hoped to take advantage of the then-rising market. We asked Bryan Sanford (head of investment at Charter Trust) about the profits this year. Bryan reported that the portfolio showed a profit of \$70,000 to date. The Investment Committee, acting on behalf of the trustees and the church, decided it was a prudent time to increase the portfolio's cash position. The congregation has authorized the Trustees and Investment Committee to sell up to \$50,000 of stocks.

The Investment Committee directed Charter Trust to sell \$25,000 in stocks on Monday Nov. 8, anticipating that the resulting cash position in the FCiJ endowment fund would be around \$44,000. The S&P 500 on Nov. 8 again hit a record high. The First Church endowment closed Nov. 8 with a value of \$572,462, including \$46,852 in cash. After First Church received its mid-month investment income, the portfolio value on Nov.19 was \$570,848, including \$43,913 in cash.

The \$25,000 profit that we captured will be available in cash if and when the church needs it. Thus, First Church doesn't need to worry about having to sell stocks in a declining market. The cash will also augment the monthly investment income that helps fund the church budget.

The FCiJ endowment started the year at \$528,693 and we have received each month investment income of \$2,593, a total of \$28,524 in 11 months. The news of the omicron COVID variant caused the market to drop slightly at the end of November. The FCiJ value at closing on Nov. 30 was \$560,029 including \$43,994 in cash.

Ken Campbell, Trustee Chair & head of FCiJ Investment Committee which includes Janet Grant, Marc O'Brien and Tom Warren.



Decorating FCiJ for Advent



Second Sunday in Advent Communion

The Amazing Thanksgiving Pie Sale

The pie chefs have done it again! Pam Hill and Pat Harmon started their Thanksgiving pie marathon on Sunday, November 21. By Tuesday afternoon, they had 38 pies ready for people who had placed orders for the homemade blueberry, apple, pecan and pumpkin creations.



Ovens were running nonstop for two days in the church kitchen and members' homes. Linda Giragosian took on some baking, while Lisa Giragosian and Bruce Hill set up the Parish House to box, label, and sell pies between 2 and 4 on Tuesday, November 23.

The sale made \$660! This will be added to money raised by the summer pie sales and used to support a range of community services in the Monadnock region.

Thank you to everyone who participated in decorating our sanctuary with poinsettias!



Marcia Breckenridge Suze & Ken Campbell	In memory of my family In memory of our parents: Louise & Gilbert Thurston and Dorothy & David Campbell
Judy Collier	In memory of Mrs. Ann Raleigh Schulte
Karen Cox	In memory of my parents, William and Priscilla Joyce
Sylvia Hamilton	In memory of Charles Hamilton
Pam & Bruce Hill	In memory of our dear friend, Jodie Flynn
Roy Lake	In memory of the Lake family
Judy Lessard	In memory of Dick Lessard
MaryJo Marvin	In memory of Charles Marvin
Barbara Moore	In memory of Chandler "Tuck" Gilbert
Cynthia Rouvalis	
Ann St. Cyr	In memory of Patricia & Dow Gordon, Louise & Jim Hinchey, and Florence & Francis St. Cyr
Dan Wilfrid & Nancy Elder-Wilfrid	In memory of loved ones



CALL FOR FCIJ ANNUAL MEETING

To All Members,

The Annual Meeting of The First Church in Jaffrey will be held via Zoom from the Parish House on **Sunday, January 30, 2022 at 11:30 a.m.**

The purpose of this meeting is to:

- Receive and vote on reports for the year;
- Vote on the proposed 2022 Budget;
- Vote on officers proposed by the Nominating Circle for positions open this year:

Moderator

Three Trustees (of varying term lengths)

Clerk

Treasurer

And to undertake such other actions that may legally come before the meeting.

All members and friends are invited to attend via Zoom or in person (with mask). Information about the Zoom invitation will be forthcoming one week before the meeting. While all are welcome to attend, only members and associate members are permitted to vote.