

The United Church of Strafford News

PO Box 124 · Strafford, VT · 05072 · 802-765-4585

Located on the Strafford Green, 230 Justin Morrill Hwy, Sunday services at 10 a.m.

December 2015

Mark Your Calendar!

Pastor Lynn office hours – Wed.

Dec. 2 - 2-5 pm; Thurs. Dec. 10, 17 - 1-5 pm; Thurs. Dec. 24 - 3 pm and there through Christmas eve service; Thurs. Dec. 31 - 10 am - noon

1st Sunday in Advent, Church New Year Potluck – Sunday, Nov. 29 & “The Littlest Angel” auditions

Thetford Chamber Singers Vespers Concert – Saturday, Dec. 5 7:30 pm

“The Littlest Angel” Sunday, Dec. 20 at 5:00 pm

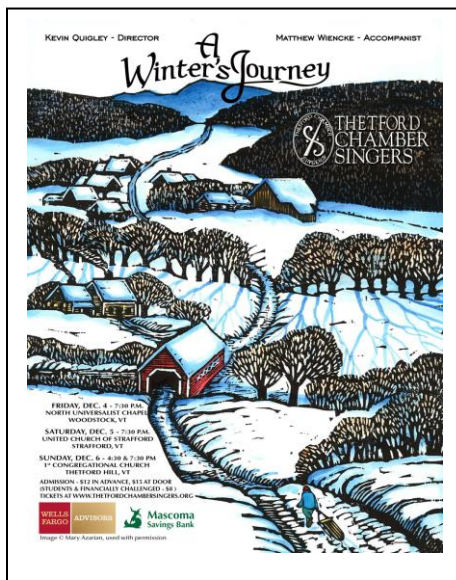
Christmas Eve Service Thursday, Dec. 24 at 8:00 pm

On-Line...

unitedchurchstr.wix.com/unitedchurchstr#

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Music Notes



Start the season off with the wonderful Thetford Chamber Singers Holiday Concert in Strafford on Saturday, Dec. 4th. The forty member chorus will sing a variety of songs, including a lovely solo by Strafford's own Rebecca Bailey. Tickets \$12 in advance, purchased on-line or through your Strafford connections – Becky, Dori, Emily Murray or Andrew Behrens.

Music during Sundays in Advent and Christmas Eve will include the singing of much beloved carols.

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ADVENT BEGINS!

Sunday, November 29 begins the new church year with the first Sunday of Advent! We're celebrating with a potluck after the service that day in the parish

hall. The four advent Sundays are: November 29 - Hope; December 6 - Peace; December 13 - Joy; and December 20 - Love.

FROM PASTOR LYNN

Dear United Church of Strafford,

This summer I brought home a magnetic refrigerator "bumper sticker" from the General Synod of the United Church of Christ. It catches my eye with its exhortations:

"BE THE CHURCH

Protect the environment. Care for the poor. Embrace diversity. Reject racism. Forgive often. Love God. Fight for the powerless. Share earthly and spiritual resources. Enjoy this life. God is still speaking, United Church of Christ"

This newsletter bears witness to many ways "Be the church" is lived out at this time and in this place. Sunday morning worship services and the times of fellowship and meeting also provide witness of the church being church as joys, concerns, life events, and community happenings are shared with each other. The "bumper sticker" provides a short and incomplete list of what being church is. It is not intended to become the new "Ten Commandments" (or nine, depending on whether or not you include "Be the church"). Rather, I read it as reminders of broad ways that scripture and that Jesus teaches us to live.

And we have our own way of being reminded how to live as a local gathering of the church universal:

"Our Church Covenant: We gather together with freedom of conscience in a community of love and inquiry. All are welcome, without exception. We practice Christianity with faith and compassion. We covenant with one another to embody the love of Christ, to nurture contemplation and action, and to offer our gifts, talents and energies as we are able."

More particularities of what this means will be put into words as the United Church of Strafford moves forward in writing its profile

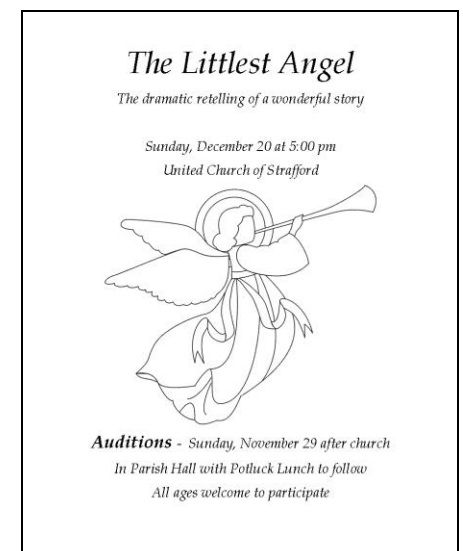
and discerns who to call for the settled pastor in the days and months ahead.

Meanwhile, "Be the church"! And let us rejoice that we are not alone, for God is faithful, "the same God who works all things in all persons. But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good." (I Corinthians 12: 6-7, NASB.)
Shalom,
Pastor Lynn

Religious Ed News

Bible Study: Bible study, soup, and prayer - Wednesdays 5:30 - 6:45 pm. Focus texts/topics will be named in the weekly updates.

Pageant "Audition": This year we will be retelling the wonderful story "The Littlest Angel". We will create parts for all who are interested, so let Dori know by Sunday, Nov. 29 after church if you would to participate. Children and youth of all ages are welcome to participate – we'll even be looking for adults to sing in the heavenly choir! We are trying something new - a one day of rehearsal - Saturday, Dec. 19 from 3-5. For those few who want a larger role, we will practice as needed.



"Exploring Faith"/Youth Group: The focus for December will be the Pageant. Going forward in the new year, we are seeking an adult to participate with Pastor Lynn to continue this offering. Please let Lynn know if you are interested.

Sunday Church: The Religious Ed committee met and has agreed to suspend Sunday School as has been traditionally done due to low attendance. Going forward, children are invited to stay with their families during the service. There are some books, crayons, and activities in the back of the sanctuary, and comfy chairs. We welcome all, and should a crowd of children gather, what a blessing that will be!

FAST: The Fun After School Tuesdays Program will conclude at the end of December. Offering in 2016 will depend on the request of families and the identification of a teacher to lead the program.

If you have thoughts or suggestions for the Religious Ed committee, please share them with Kathy Robinson, Dori Wolfe, or Pastor Lynn.

Mission Report

SUCCESSFUL PROGRESSO SOUP DRIVE - As of this writing, we collected and delivered to the Sharon Food Shelf 166 cans of soup! The Mission Committee has matched the donations with \$200.00! Thanks to all who participated.

Top 5 Food Shelf Needs at the Haven: tuna, pasta, pasta sauce, beans, brown rice

Change for Change: Contribute your loose change to the large bottle in the back of the sanctuary to support Heifer International.

Pledges 2015 – 16: Coming Along!

Thanks to all who have responded so generously to the pledge letter for our current church year. We all know that our church needs many kinds of support and commitment - financial among them!

If you have not yet pledged, or if your pledge letter somehow found its way to the bottom of a large pile on the coffee table, IT IS NOT TOO LATE! We still have a bit to go to reach our budget, and every tiny bit helps – really!

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Please send your pledge to the United Church of Strafford, PO Box 124, Strafford VT 05072.

Trustees Report

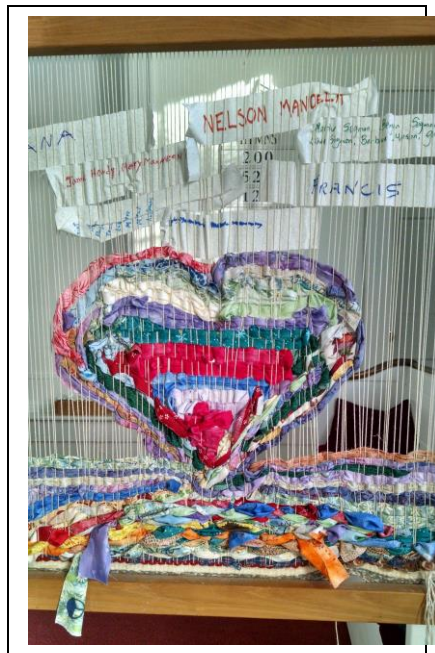
Our treasurer reports that we are on track financially. The front sidewalk steps to the church have been replaced, and all the plumbing is in excellent working order and the furnaces in both the parsonage and the church have been tuned! The church is ready for the Advent Season.

A Haiku

by Herbert A. Goertz

HOARFROST EVERYWHERE,
ON THE HILLS AND ON MY HAIR.
WINTER IS COMING.

Going Forward - Please see the insert about important next steps in the life of the church!



CHURCH CONTACTS

Moderator: Bill Burden

Pastor: Interim Pastor Lynn Wickberg

Music Director: (seeking)

Treasurer: Kerry Claffey

Clerk: Dori Wolfe, dori.wolfe@gmail.com

Deacons: Rebecca Bailey (chair), Kim Arsenault, Greg Lewis, RJ Farley, Gretchen Hannon

Trustees: John Hawkins (chair), John Echeverria, Ned Coffin

Committees:

Pastoral Relations: John Echeverria, Greg Lewis, Danette Harris

Religious Education: Kathy Robinson (co-chair), Dori Wolfe (co-chair),

Stewardship: Joey Hawkins (chair), June Solsaa

Missions: Danette Harris (chair), Bill and Dot Burden, Kim Arsenault

Hospitality: Kate Reimanis (chair), Laura Lewis

Endowment: Ken Bushnell (chair), John Hawkins, Kevin Plunkett

Nominating: RJ Farley (chair), Hazel Lewis