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# *The Federated Courier*

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## *From the Pastor's Desk*

*I believe in the sun—even when it is not shining.*

*I believe in God—even when He is silent.*

*I believe in love—even when it is not apparent.*

These words were found in a shelter in Cologne, where young Catholics were keeping some Jews in hiding because their lives were threatened, American soldiers found the following inscription\*

Read 1 Corinthians 13

Greetings of Grace and Peace!

Our Advent journey is based on the above referenced words translated in 1945 (see below). While I have no connection to the Holocaust personally and cannot assume that I know who wrote these words or under what conditions, they are words that speak to us and ask us to discern our own belief of what we believe.

Throughout the Bible we are asked to believe. It is not belief in simply a historical event, but belief in a God who came in the flesh to live among humanity. We are asked to hear the story and remember the amazing love God has for his/her creation, We give to others, those we know and strangers alike: mimicking God's call to give of ourselves to others as God, in Jesus, gave himself for all of humanity. Christmas calls us to open our hearts and allow Christ to enter in. We are

spurred on in our faith and belief by the faith journeys in the Bible and by those in our faith communities: immediate and at large.

As I ponder the quote above, I think the writer had to have a deep faith/belief built on a personal encounter with God and encouragement by others. Is your faith deep enough to believe in the sun when locked away in a damp dark cellar for years on end? To believe in God even when you are striped of freedoms, always hungry, and death surrounds you? To believe in love as the core of our existence on earth and for eternity as Paul writes in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians?

We are living in difficult times currently. How is it with your soul? What sustains you? How are you helping others to get through these days? In the first Advent sermon, November 29<sup>th</sup>, I spoke about what helped the prisoners of the Nazi concentration camp, Terezin, based on eyewitness accounts shared in the documentary: *Defiant Requiem*. Many found connection to their souls by staying connected through the arts: drawings, plays, and music. Please take time to fill your soul with the arts, nature, daily devotions, worship, or more. Christmas reminds us that God comes to us in Emmanuel. I pray your heart enlarges to know and believe in all the love God showers upon you. May Jesus be born within you or continue to deepen that you can believe in dark and trying days. Please do not hesitate to call me if you need to talk to someone. Christmas Blessings!

In Christ's Love and Light,

*Pastor Pat*

\*the earliest printed reference found was from the July 13th, 1945 edition of the Quaker publication *The Friend*, from London, which gives a partial transcript (translated into English) of a German language BBC European Service radio show. A German P.O.W. held in England, and identified only as "Prisoner F. B.," is quoted by *The Friend* as saying this:  
<https://humanistseminarian.com/2017/04/18/i-believe-in-the-sun-part-iv-conclusion/>

## *From the Deacons' Bench*

### Not Alone

I look forward to worshipping with our church family each Sunday. The shared experience enriches the experience for all as we praise God together - hear our voices joined in prayers, song - and take-in the heartfelt sermons of Pastor Pat. This is a blessing year round but becomes especially meaningful during the Advent season.

This year brings a unique challenge to worship together. Many of us have health concerns and vulnerabilities that keep us from in-person church attendance. It is easy to become lonely and discouraged even though you are in the hearts and prayers of your church family. Please know you are not alone. God's love and grace are always with you.

During this Advent season, let us all share ourselves through our Advent booklet and celebrate God's promise of Hope, Peace, Joy and Love. Keep a candle handy to light on Christmas Eve as we listen to our favorite carols - let us do it as one body - looking forward to the time we will all be together again.



Many blessings!  
Karen Anable

## *Congratulations*

Josephine Nicole Hiersche was born on June 12, 2020. Her parents are Nicole and Brendan Hiersche, and grandparents are Mary and Bob Howell.



## *December Birthdays*

Birthday Greetings to the following adult members of our church who celebrate birthdays in December.

Erin Lee	12/01
Sandra Wild	12/03
Stephanie Lemelin-Bliss	12/03
John Germain	12/05
Joyce Libby	12/05
Barbara Powers	12/08
Elaine DeGray	12/14
Shelley Sears	12/15
Brenda Olesuk	12/15
Sharon DeSanti	12/17
Erin Obuchowski	12/25
Florence Munroe	12/29
Russell Streeter	12/30



## *Sunday School Birthday*

Malaysia Tessier	12/04
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## *Deacon Server for the Month*

December	Dave Spencer
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## *Prayer Corner*



Evie Meacham

Ingrid & Beth

Benjamin Blain

Audrey Burger

John (Jack) Bennett

Janet Brehaut

Beverly Pease

Winnie

Don Facey

Fran Brown

Frank & Phyllis Watson

Bob Green

Bonnie Watson

Otto Kern

Carol Darnley

Gwen Wills

Lelum

Jackie Prior

Dennis Connor

Jeffrey Howe

Edith

Earl Schofield

Christopher

For first responders & healthcare workers

For those in rehab centers & nursing homes

For the homeless in the upcoming winter months

## *Sympathy To...*

*Family & friends of Janet Miller ( sister- in-  
law of Pastor Pat).*



# *A Thank You Letter from the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts*

October 26, 2020

*“Without this, I would have had barely anything to eat when I was at my low point. Because of this help, I was able to get by until I got back on my feet. I hope that this can continue for other people. THANK YOU.”* – Jayden from Westfield, Mobile Food Bank

Dear FCC,

Thank you so much for your donation of \$247.00 to the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts on 9/21/2020. Every dollar you’ve donated will provide 4 meals for struggling households!

With your gift, you continue to be part of an amazing and compassionate community that ensures we will continue to provide assistance to more than 90,000 individuals monthly at risk for hunger through:

- Food distribution to 251 frontline local pantries, meal sites and our own Brown Bag and Mobile Food sites....

*(to read more of the letter please see the community board in Libby Hall)*



## *Advent Booklet*

Hope that you are enjoying your Advent Booklet, if you did not receive yours, please give the office a call. Thanks to all who contributed!

## *Mission Giving*

This year, more than ever, support of those who have lost jobs or have had hours reduced are in need. Federated Community Church is supporting CHD MaryAnne's Kids with our Giving Christmas Tree. We still need a few items. If you would like to participate in sharing with a family in need, please either take a bulb with listed item from the tree following worship or call the office and ask Kristen to share what is needed. They are always in need of gift certificates to grocery stores if that is a more convenient way to give. Gift items need to be returned to the church by December 14<sup>th</sup> to give time for correct disbursement.



## *Sunday Worship*

We continue to offer onsite worship if Hampden is not in the “Red Zone” for the COVID -19 pandemic. Folks are required to wear masks, sit in marked seats (six feet away from another), and to follow signage as to doorways, walkways, etc. We have a new large screen television in the Isham room if more worshippers arrive than can fit in the sanctuary following the pandemic guidelines. We offer Live Streaming on our Facebook page (allows you to watch at 10 AM as worship is taking place). For your convenience we post the taped service to Facebook and our Website to watch at your convenience. The service is also shown on local Cable television (check with station for listing).





## *Christmas Eve Worship Service*

This year we will continue our tradition of offering a Christmas Eve candlelight service. However, due to COVID and restrictions of singing in close quarters, we will be having our service outside in the front of the church. Masks and distancing are required. There will be singing, prayers, lighting candles, and a word of hope. The Bell choir will share in their first live offering of music. Please pray for clear weather. Hope you will join us as we

***Come, Let Us Adore Him, Christ the Lord.  
Thursday, December 24<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 PM***



## *Blue Christmas Service Offered*

For many people, the holidays are a difficult time of the year. This year especially, with the loss of so much: jobs, loved ones, school, connections, normal rhythms of life, this service will offer us an opportunity to name our griefs or worries. It is appropriate to recognize these feelings. The service will include prayer, silence, and a word of hope. We invite you to join us for:

## *Blue Christmas Worship Service*

***December 17, 2020***

***6: 00 PM***

Come and center yourself in the warmth of the sanctuary and this quiet service. Come, be still and know God. You do not have to be holly and jolly to be loved by God. You are accepted just the way you are.

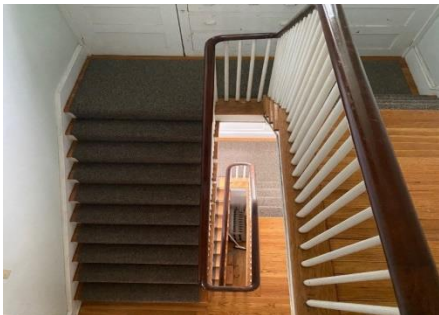
## *Stewardship*

Thank you to the Finance Committee who has taken on the Stewardship Campaign again this year. Thank you to the committee on their hard work and many hours dedicated to this part of the church ministry. Our theme is "*Amazing Grace*". Thank you to Janet Libby and Rick DeSanti for their heartfelt, inspiring words as we discern the importance of the church in our lives and how we will support it. Thank you for all who have already responded with their pledges for the next year. This helps to know how extensive our ministries can be in the upcoming year. If you have not mailed in your pledge yet, please consider the importance of your faith, the church to you and your family and the surrounding community, and the amazing grace God showers on you as you discern how you will support the church this year.

## *Christina's House Fundraiser :* *Goal Reached!!!*

A huge **"Thank-You"** to all who contributed to this worthwhile cause and made the new staircase possible! Check out the transformation in the photos below!

BEFORE & AFTER





Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 5:30 PM AA 7:00 PM Finance	2 6:30 PM Hand Bell Choir	3	4 10:30 AM Bible Study	5 6:30 PM Light the Night Parade
6 10:00 AM Worship/CE Ministry	7 6:30 PM Hand Bell Choir	8 5:30 PM AA	9 6:30 PM Hand Bell Choir	10	11 10:30 AM Bible Study	12 8:00 Men's Breakfast
13 10:00 AM Worship/CE Ministry	14 6:30 PM Hand Bell Choir	15 5:30 PM AA 6:30 BOD	16 6:30 PM Hand Bell Choir	17 6:00 PM Blue Christmas Service	18 10:30 AM Bible Study	19
20 10:00 AM Worship/CE Ministry	21 6:30 PM Hand Bell Choir	22 5:30 PM AA	23 6:30 PM Hand Bell Choir	24 5:30 PM Christmas Eve Service	25 <i>Merry Christmas!</i>	26
27 10:00 AM Worship/CE Ministry	28 6:30 PM Hand Bell Choir	29 5:30 PM AA	30	31 New Year's Eve		

*Join us for our  
Christmas Eve Outdoor Candlelight Service*

*5:30 PM*

*In front of the Church  
590 Main Street, Hampden, MA*