



**THE BELL TREE**  
AN MCCC PUBLICATION

*A Newsletter for*  
**JANUARY 2024**

*The Mount Carmel Congregational Church*  
*(A United Church of Christ)*  
*3285 Whitney Avenue, Hamden, CT 06518*

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## *From the Pastor's Desk...*

Happy New Year!

I am still a bit incredulous that we are beginning the year that will complete the first quarter of this new century. Remember when Y2K was a big deal? Now that is forgotten history. Life rolls on—or at least time does. We get to decide what we will do with our lives.

One of the poems I come back to at the beginning of most every year is this one from Howard Thurman called “The Work of Christmas.”

### **The Work of Christmas**

When the song of the angels is stilled,  
When the star in the sky is gone,  
When the kings and princes are home,  
When the shepherds are back with their flock,  
The work of Christmas begins:  
    To find the lost,  
    To heal the broken,  
    To feed the hungry,  
    To release the prisoner,  
    To rebuild the nations,  
    To bring peace among others,  
    To make music in the heart.

We have had wonderful Advent and Christmas seasons. (Actually, as you read this, Christmastide is still going.) If other years are any indication, 2024 will be full of surprises. The best news is we will face it together. I'm looking forward to that.

Peace,  
Milton

# JANUARY WORSHIP SCHEDULE



*Please join every Sunday at 10am in the Church for service, followed by coffee hour in the Parlor! Note: These are lectionary passages for your own devotional purposes. Weekly scripture readings are subject to change.*

<p><b><u>January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023: Baptism of Christ</u></b>  <b>Holy Communion</b>  <i>First Sunday after Epiphany</i>  <b>Scripture:</b> Genesis 1: 1-5                  Psalm 29                  Acts of the Apostles 19: 1-7                  Mark 1: 4-11</p>	<p><b><u>January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023</u></b>  <i>Second Sunday after Epiphany</i>  <b>Scripture:</b> 1 Samuel 3: 1-10 (11-20)                  Psalm 139: 1-6, 13-18                  1 Corinthians 6: 12-20                  John 1: 43-51</p>
<p><b><u>January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2023</u></b>  <i>Third Sunday after Epiphany</i>  <b>Scripture:</b> Johah 3: 1-5, 10                  Psalm 62: 5-12                  1 Corinthians 7: 29-31                  Mark 1: 14-20</p>	<p><b><u>January 28<sup>th</sup>, 2023</u></b>  <i>Fourth Sunday after Epiphany</i>  <b>Scripture:</b> Deuteronomy 18: 15-20                  Psalm 111                  1 Corinthians 8: 1-13                  Mark 1: 21-28</p>



## **JANUARY BIRTHDAYS**

*Happy Birthday Wishes Go to the Following:*

Laraine Patterson     January 4<sup>th</sup>  
 Jane Dringoli         January 15<sup>th</sup>

If you would like to add your name to our birthday list, please contact our office.

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## 2024 Members and Friends Directory – Confirm Date

Thanks to your prompt responses, the 2024 Directory will be available for pickup in the Church Narthex, as well as the entrance to the Parish House, starting Sunday, January 7<sup>th</sup>! As per usual, a digital copy will be available upon request by filling out the following Google Form: (<https://mccucc.tiny.us/directory>). If for some reason you have not received a copy, please contact the office and we will send you one as soon as possible.

-Aren Alberico

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## Faith Formation

Church School. So far, we have been able to meet twice each month and hope to continue doing that in the new year!

ARK Banks. Our latest contribution towards the pastor discretionary fund is \$173.41, and that money has gone to helping the less fortunate in our community. We hope that you will continue to fill up your banks at home so that we can continue to help our community. Reminder: Once you drop off your ARK Bank, you can pick up an empty bank in the Church Narthex or at the entrance to the Parish House.

-Debbie Wooley

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## Outreach

Thanksgiving Baskets. We received a letter from the Keefe Center thanking us for our contributions to their Thanksgiving food drive. Thanks in part to our efforts, they were able to feed over 900 families this year!

VNA Senior Gift Run. The VNA sends along its thanks for all of our contributions for the Senior Gift Run. They appreciate all the unwrapped and wrapped gifts that we delivered to them and hope to continue working with us in the years to come.

Christmas Giving Tree. Thanks to your contributions, we had yet another successful year of our Christmas Giving Tree! We had two extra gifts this year, one of which was a lovely lap quilt handmade by our very own Nancy Poland.

-Debbie Wooley

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## Stewardship

As of December 1<sup>st</sup>, pledges to date are \$83,000 with 39 individual pledge units. If you have any additional questions regarding stewardship and pledging, please contact me by email at [ce@mccucc.com](mailto:ce@mccucc.com).

“Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.” – 1 Peter 4:10.

-Debbie Wooley

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### **Potluck Luncheon**

Our Christmas Brunch was a huge success! We would like to thank all those who contributed, whether that be with set-up and clean-up, cooking up some fantastic food, or by providing us with some excellent music to set the mood for the season (thank you Lorraine!).

Our next Potluck Luncheon will be held on Sunday, February 25<sup>th</sup>. We will be looking for your famous Soup and Chili recipes!

-Church Staff

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### **Glass Display Case**

We are still looking for a new home for the glass display case currently being held in the parlor. The dimensions of the case are 60 inches wide, 20 inches deep, and 40 inches tall. If you are interested in the case, please contact the office.

-Church Staff

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## **FINANCIAL REPORT: OCTOBER 2023**

Following is the financial report for October 2023. If you have any questions, Ellen can be reached at [treasurer@mccucc.com](mailto:treasurer@mccucc.com).

<b>Income:</b>	Pledges and Offerings:	\$12,373.45
	Other Income:	\$3,877.30
	Total Income:	\$16,250.75
<b>Expenses:</b>	Total Expenses:	\$14,978.93
<b>Net Income:</b>		\$1,271.82

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## **FINANCIAL REPORT: NOVEMBER 2023**

Following is the financial report for November 2023. If you have any questions, Ellen can be reached at [treasurer@mccucc.com](mailto:treasurer@mccucc.com).

<b>Income:</b>	Pledges and Offerings:	\$8,016.00
	Other Income:	\$2,349.00
	Total Income:	\$10,365.00
<b>Expenses:</b>	Total Expenses:	\$11,399.00
<b>Net Income (Loss):</b>		-\$1,034.00

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## **GENERAL ANNOUCEMENTS**

**Bell Tree Submissions.** Do you have an event to announce? A story to share? We would love to hear it! Send us an email at [office@mccucc.com](mailto:office@mccucc.com) by the second to last Tuesday of the month and we may include your article in our next publication.

**Ushers.** We are always looking for more Ushers – no experience necessary! Please see Dave or Bev Jurkiewicz, or Debbie Wooley, for more information!

**Joys and Concerns.** If you wish to have a joy or concern announced during worship, please forward to them to Aren at [office@mccucc.com](mailto:office@mccucc.com) or call the church office at (203) 248-7408.

**Pastoral Support.** If you require pastoral support or guidance, feel free to contact our minister, Reverend Milton, by email at [Pastor@mccucc.com](mailto:Pastor@mccucc.com), or by calling our office.

**Coffee Hour.** Coffee Hour volunteers are needed. If you would like to sign up for a Sunday, please contact the office directly or use the signup sheet now located at the entrance of the Parish House.

**Altar Flowers.** Altar flowers are needed. If you would like to sign up for a Sunday, please contact the office directly or use the signup sheet now located at the entrance of the Parish House.

**Rentals.** If you or anyone you know would be interested in renting out our parish hall to host a small private event, please feel free to visit our website for scheduling, rates, and conditions.

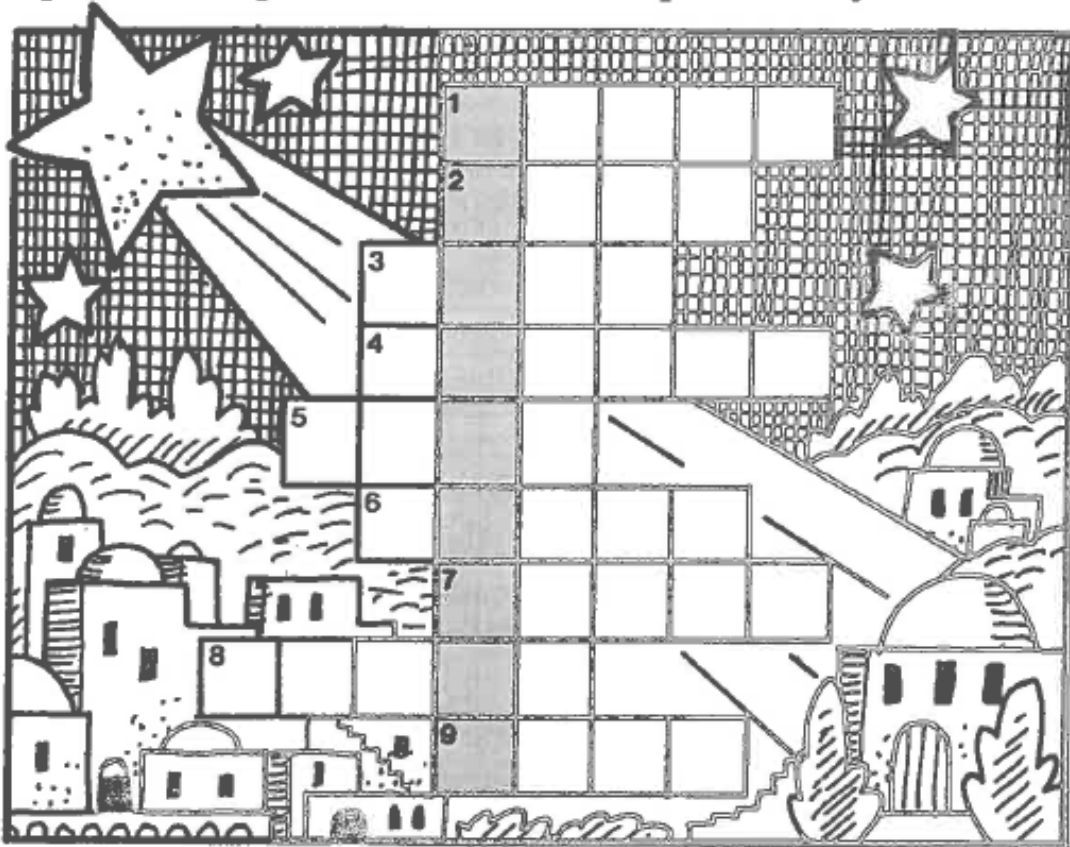
**Food Bank.** Donations for the Food Bank are always needed if you are able to contribute. Non-perishable items such as canned beef stew, hearty soups, canned fish, peanut butter, mac and cheese packages, and oatmeal would be greatly appreciated.

**Prayer Shawls.** As a reminder, Prayer Shawls are always available to those who need them. If you or anyone you know needs one, please contact the office and we will arrange a shawl for you.

**Lost & Found.** As of the time of writing, we have a number of items in our Lost & Found: 1) A pair of unbranded leopard-print glasses left from the Shirts and Skirts Christmas Party; 2) A green towel left from our Christmas Brunch; and 3) A pair of Foster Grant leopard-print glasses. If any of these items belong to you, then please contact the Church Office at your earliest convenience.

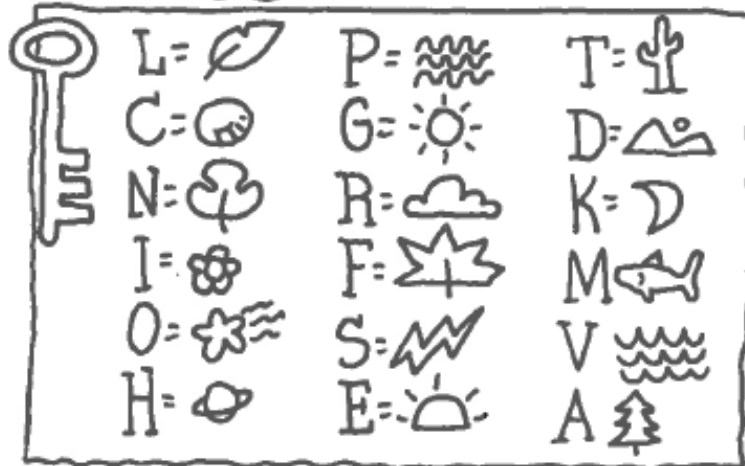
# ★ COME AND ★ WORSHIP!

Read Matthew 2:1-11 which tells the story of the wise men. Then fill in the puzzle using the clues given. The shaded squares will spell the name of an important city.



1. When they found the child, they \_\_\_\_\_ down (v. 11).
2. Magi from the \_\_\_\_\_ came to Jerusalem (v. 1).
3. "We saw his \_\_\_\_\_" (v. 2).
4. Herod asked them where the \_\_\_\_\_ was to be born (v. 4).
5. They presented him with gifts of \_\_\_\_\_ (v. 11).
6. The child's name was \_\_\_\_\_ (v. 1).
7. The child was born during the time of King \_\_\_\_\_ (v. 1).
8. Jesus was born in a town in \_\_\_\_\_ (v. 1).
9. \_\_\_\_\_ came from the east to Jerusalem (v. 1).

# Jesus Is Baptized



Matthew 3:13-17 tells us of the baptism of Jesus. But what happened when Jesus was baptized? Use the code to find the answer.





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