



THE MEETINGHOUSE

Nelson Congregational Church
830 Nelson Rd.
Nelson, NH 03457

DECEMBER 2023

Volume 40 Issue 9



SIMPLE ACTS By Rev. Eliot Fay

When I was younger, I always enjoyed the Coca-Cola Polar Bear commercials that were featured during the holidays. In one of the first bear commercials that I saw in the 90's, a bear family is shown stumbling across the Christmas celebrations of a group of penguins. The penguins are playing together as snow falls and Christmas music plays in the background. Suddenly, the snow gives way beneath a bear cub, and she slides down a snowbank into the middle of the penguin party whereupon the music stops and the festivities cease as all the penguins stand uncertainly looking at the small polar bear. Then the group of penguin onlookers part and out walks a baby penguin with a bottle of Coke, which he shares with the cub. She drinks the Coke and smiles as her bear parents come down to join her. They themselves are then given bottles of Coke by nearby smiling penguins. The music starts again and the festivities resume with the bear family now joyfully participating.

I wonder if one of the reasons that I and so many others found these commercials so hopeful and uplifting is the idea that a simple act of kindness or sharing could actually foster feelings of peace, unity, mutual kindness, and friendship – the desire for which many of us especially feel at Christmas time. It is easy to feel small in the face of governments and systems, powers and influences that seem to be pushing our society and world away from peace and goodwill. It is somehow a hopeful thought that the simple, loving actions of individuals might help to push back. In the Christmas story, I think we find reason to believe that this is in fact God's very strategy...

At Christmas, we celebrate God's willingness in the person of Jesus to enter into the midst of our broken world. The angel announcing his coming speaks of the in-breaking of peace and goodwill, of light and hope. And yet our story tells us that Christ didn't come wielding political or military power or the influence of money or position. His revolution came through sharing meals with new friends; crying with those who mourned and laughing with those who celebrated; showing kindness to those whom he might have regarded with disdain; investing time and interest in the lives of friends and family. Most of Christ's life was spent in ways that we might ordinarily regard as trivial with respect to making an actual difference in the world...and yet Christ insisted that these are the very things that make the most difference.

This Christmas season, may we be heartened by the message embodied in the coming of Jesus – and depicted in the ad for my favorite, carbonated beverage – that our simple acts of sharing and loving and helping and serving can and do make a difference.

Merry Christmas!



OPEN & AFFIRMING MEETING GUEST SPEAKER

HANGING OF THE GREENS & 250TH CELEBRATION

The annual decorating of the sanctuary for Christmas will take place on Saturday, December 2nd at 4:00. Select members of the Nelson Town Band will play holiday music. Everyone in the community is invited to come at 4:45 to listen to the band and to help celebrate the church's 250th anniversary of ministry in Nelson. Birthday cake and coffee, hot chocolate & cider will be served. The celebration will conclude with going outside to light the Christmas tree and the singing of carols.



GIVING TREE

Our Giving Tree is in the narthex. We have a couple families in need and one observes Hanukkah so we did our tree earlier this year. If you took an ornament last Sunday with a yellow or blue tag please be sure and return your item, unwrapped by next Sunday, December 3!! Traditional Christmas tags will be on the tree next Sunday. Those unwrapped gifts and tags need to be returned by December 15. If you have questions or can't make it to church to pick a tag you may contact Deanna dezilske@gmail.com or (603) 852-9223



Sunday December 3 following worship service we will welcome Nick Ferriolo. Nick spent thirty years in Corporate America, working his way from entry-level manufacturing to Senior Leadership and is now the owner of Elm City Coaching. He is a Certified Professional Coach and an Energy Leadership Index Master Practitioner. When Nick came out as transgender, he struggled with his desire to be true to himself in an environment where colleagues made assumptions about him based on his gender identity. Nick shares his story to help businesses, organizations, and schools understand the challenges a transgender person faces through workshops on gender identity. Nick's hope is to inspire others to live true to who they are.

If you can't be at our meeting on December 3, Nick will also be speaking at the Marlborough Federated Church, Sunday, December 10, 11:15 am, 16 Pleasant St. Marlborough, NH 03455



CALENDAR

DEC 2 HANGING OF THE GREENS 4PM & 4:45 PM 250th CELEBRATION

DEC 3 ONA MEETING AFTER CHURCH

DEC 5 1ST TUES TEA 10AM

DEC 10 WORSHIP 9:30 COUNCIL MEETING

DEC 13 BIBLE STUDY 5PM

DEC 17 MEMORIAL SUNDAY 9:30

DEC 24 WORSHIP 9:30 CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICE 7PM

DEC 31 WORSHIP 9:30



Come sing carols every Sunday throughout Advent starting at 9:15 prior to church services.



TUESDAY TEA

We hope you can join us for First Tuesday Tea on December 5 at 10 am. Betsey Church will be our hostess and will provide coffee and tea. Participants bring a goodie to share. It's so nice to be able to get back together again for wonderful fellowship! Hope to see you there. Betsey lives at the end of Log Cabin Rd. Last driveway on the left.

POINSETTIA ORDERS

Again this Christmas season, we will feature poinsettias as part of the decorations in the sanctuary. We will be accepting donations for the purchase of the poinsettias in memory or honor of loved ones. Names of the donors and those honored will be listed in the Sunday Bulletins. Donations will be accepted until December 12th. The cost is \$10.00. If interested, please see Judy Walton in church or contact her at 603-847-3228 or email judywalton222@gmail.com.



ADVENT COLLECTION

The pocket boards are available to pick up at the church and fill with coins through Advent. Bring them back to church after Christmas and the youth will decide what charity to expend the funds on.

BIBLE STUDY

Bible Study on Extravagant Welcome – On December 13th at 5pm, as part of our ONA learning opportunities, we will hold a Bible study on passages that invite us to welcome all as God welcomes all. We will also briefly touch on passages that have traditionally been used against LBGTQ+ inclusion.



MEMORIAL SUNDAY

We invite all of you to join us on December 17th at our Sunday service, where we will take time during this holiday season to remember loved ones we have lost. We will celebrate and honor their memory in prayer and by placing candles on the altar. We invite you to bring a favorite or special candle from home to use, or choose one from those that the church will make available. The candles will remain lit throughout the service.



CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

There will be two services on the 24th. Morning Worship at 9:30 and then our traditional Christmas Eve Candlelight service at 7pm. A special offering will be taken. Please join us for both services if you are able or especially for the evening Christmas Candle Light service.



- DEC 5 Max Nunemaker
- DEC 13 Pat Price
- DEC 15 Bill Waterston
- DEC 16 Tom Buttrick
- DEC 17 Ian Frederick
Jocelyn Vest
- DEC 19 Joy Birdsey-Smith
- DEC 20 Charlotte
Chamberlain
- DEC 22 Bert Wingerson
- DEC 23 Sandy Ferguson
- DEC 24 Bryan Lothrop
- DEC 31 William Hollister

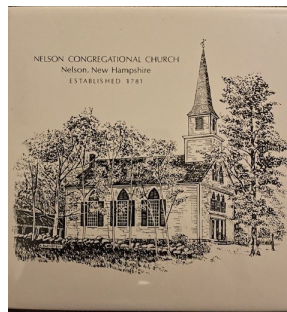


- DEC 15 Max Nunemaker
& Lisa Sievert



CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

The monthly meeting was held on Zoom on Nov. 13. at 7 p.m. Detailed minutes are available in a binder in the church office. We debriefed on our very successful Pie and Coffee event, held on Veterans Day to honor vets and volunteers. About 70 people demolished 16 homemade pies and socialized with friends and neighbors. We plan to do this again next year! Hanging of the Greens, on Dec. 2 (Saturday), will start at 4 p.m., with volunteers decorating the sanctuary. Members of the Nelson Town Band will play Christmas carols in the balcony. At about 4:45 p.m., the public is invited to join in a celebration of 250 years of ministry in the Nelson church, with cake and beverages in the sanctuary, followed by the lighting of the Christmas tree outside. Advent and Christmas: the first Sunday in Advent is Dec. 3. Each week, we will sing carols starting at 9:15, and also have a special Advent candle lighting and reading during worship. Sunday, Dec. 24, is the last Sunday in Advent, and that night is Christmas Eve. We will celebrate with two services that day, at 9:30 a.m., and a candlelight service at 7 p.m. All are welcome! We will again be collecting spare change in the Advent pockets, which we will collect after Christmas. The youth of the church will decide on the cause to support with the money. We've traditionally donated to the Heifer Project, but will let the youth decide.



GIFT OPPORTUNITIES

We have several tiles/trivets of the church as well as lots of Tree Free note cards in many design choices. The photo just shows three possibilities. We are just asking for donations for these items. The tiles would be really great commemorative gifts especially as we are celebrating our 250th year of ministry!! The note cards are blanks so work well for any occasion. Just give us a call 603-847-3280 or check them out in the narthex on Sundays or at any church function.



GOING SOLAR

Solar Panel installation is scheduled to begin 11/27. Panel installation should be done this week, next step will be for Eversource to come and change over the meter, that usually takes two more weeks after the panels are installed.



OPERATIONS NOTES

Updates from Eliot: The new credit card has arrived and is now available for approved purchases.

Mike Blaudschun has stepped down as the Nelson Church grounds keeper after many years. We want to thank Mike for all that he has done for the Nelson Church over the years. Eliot will have a card available on Sunday for all to sign; Hope will add a thank you to Mike in the Meetinghouse.

Marty will pick up the plowing and snow removal duties this winter. Hope made mention that the two rear stairways need to be shoveled after each storm to meet fire safety codes. The question was brought up as to whether or not we need to keep the propane tank plowed out even though we will not need to fill it in the winter due to switching to solar. Eliot will check with Bob. Eliot will buy ice melt and 2 five gallon buckets for the entrances.

Peter forwarded the just completed inspection of the fire suppression system. This shows repairs need to be done to bring us up to code; repairs are estimated to be \$1477,73. Kelly will talk to Matt to make the money available.

Matt had an estimate completed for the walkway railing at the main entrance of the church. Several options were offered and, after some discussion, it was agreed that we should meet as a group to discuss it after service this Sunday. We feel that we should proceed as soon as possible before the ground freezes up.

Kelly reported that the solar project is underway, the money has been transferred, and she has paid the bill. Work will begin 11/27 weather permitting.

The community fund raising letter will be sent out in December.

The coffee and pie get together at the church on Veterans Day was a great success. This was open to all and approximately 50 people attended and enjoyed each other's company. Martha Collins took the children upstairs to ring the bell at 11:00am, Eliot spoke about Veterans Day, and Mike Oldershaw, who is a veteran, asked people to join in for a silent prayer in recognition of all who have served our country in the armed forces.

A date needs to be set for decorating the sanctuary; the plan will be to do all decorating at one get together.

The next meeting will be January 25th @ 7:00pm; Bill will lead the meeting.

Closing prayer from Eliot; meeting adjourned at 8 :00pm.
Submitted by Brian

A HEARTY "THANK YOU" MIKE BLAUDSCHUN FOR HIS MANY YEARS OF TAKING CARE OF OUR PROPERTY AS GROUNDSKEEPER!

At the end of October, Mike stepped down as groundskeeper for the church. He has served the church in that role for many years, mowing and tending shrubs and flowers over summers, and keeping us plowed out throughout long winters. He has always done a beautiful job, often adding special touches such as mums on the stairs in fall and wreaths on the front doors at Christmas. Mike, we offer our heartfelt thanks to you for all your work over the years. You will be missed, though we're glad we'll still get to see you around town!!



NH CONFERENCE

Conference Office Reminder □

You are cordially invited to join your Conference Staff for the Annual Advent Open House. Wednesday, December 6th 3:00 to 6:00 pm at the Conference office. Refreshments, music and merriment will be provided.

The Pilgrim Press has the 2023 Advent-Christmastide devotional now available. [Link to order](#)

Get ready for Prepared to Serve—February 24

Signup for the NHUCC weekly news and stay informed:

<https://nhcucc.org/weekly-news>

PRAYER REQUESTS

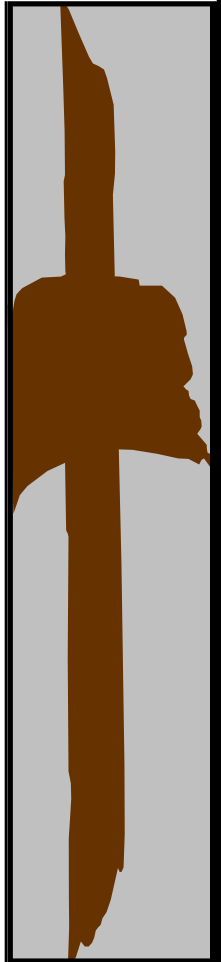
We hold in our prayers: The Street family at the passing of Betsy's mom Ann; The Lothrop family at the passing of Rick; Pat Steeves

We also pray for families and friends seeking to heal divisions, those in our community struggling with addiction and mental health, our service men and women, and front-line workers.

(All requests will remain on the prayer list for 2 months. Please email or call the Church Office to be added to or removed from or remain on our Prayer List.)

Meetinghouse

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