

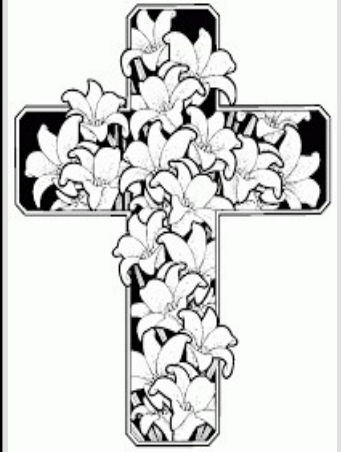


# THE MEETINGHOUSE

Nelson Congregational Church  
830 Nelson Rd.  
Nelson, NH 03457

MARCH 2024

Volume 41 Issue 2



## ABUNDANT LIFE

By Eliot Fay with poem by Naomi Shihab Nys

In John's gospel, we read that as Jesus reflects on his life and ministry, he makes the comment that he has come "so that they might have life, and have it in abundance." As grand and dramatic as this statement sounds, I think that quite often the ways and places that we find and experience life abundantly is in the small and mundane parts of life...when we stop waiting for life to be miraculous, and start finding ways to make it or recognize it to be miraculous.

I recently read a beautiful prose poem that captures for me this idea of finding abundant life in the regular spaces of life. I hope you find it to be as touching as I did.

### Gate A4 by Naomi Shihab Nye

Wandering around the Albuquerque Airport Terminal, after learning my flight had been detained four hours, I heard an announcement: "If anyone in the vicinity of Gate 4-A understands any Arabic, please come to the gate immediately." Well – one pauses these days. Gate 4-A was my own gate. I went there. An older woman in full traditional Palestinian embroidered dress, just like my grandma wore, was crumpled to the floor, wailing loudly. "Help," said the Flight Service Person. "Talk to her. What is her problem? We told her the flight was going to be late and she did this." I stooped to put my arm around the woman and spoke to her haltingly. "Shu dow-a, Shu-bid-uck Habibti? Stani schway, Min fadlick, Shu-bit-se-wee?" The minute she heard any words she knew, however poorly used, she stopped crying. She thought the flight had been cancelled entirely. She needed to be in El Paso for major medical treatment the next day. I said, "You're fine, you'll get there, who is picking you up? Let's call him." We called her son and I spoke with him in English. I told him I would stay with his mother till we got on the plane and would ride next to her.

She talked to him. Then we called her other sons just for fun. Then we called my dad and he and she spoke for a while in Arabic and found out they had ten shared friends. Then I thought just for the heck of it why not call some Palestinian poets I know and let them chat with her? This all took up about two hours. She was laughing a lot by then. Telling about her life, patting my knee, answering questions. She had pulled a sack of homemade mamoool cookies – little powdered sugar crumbly mounds stuffed with dates and nuts – out of her bag – and was offering them to all the women at the gate. To my amazement, not a single woman declined one. It was like a sacrament. The traveler from Argentina, the mom from California, the lovely woman from Laredo – we were all covered with the same powdered sugar. And smiling. There is no better cookie. And then the airline broke out the free beverages from huge coolers and two little girls from our flight ran around serving us all apple juice and they were covered with powdered sugar too. And I noticed my new best friend – by now we were holding hands – had a potted plant poking out of her bag - some medicinal thing, with green furry leaves. Such an old country traveling tradition. Always carry a plant. Always stay rooted to somewhere. And I looked around that gate of late and weary ones and thought, this is the world I want to live in. The shared world. Not a single person in this gate – once the crying of confusion stopped – seemed apprehensive about any other person. They took the cookies. I wanted to hug all those other women too. This can still happen anywhere. Not everything is lost.



## TUESDAY TEA

We are going to meet on March 5 at 10 am. Judy Walton will host at 489 North Shore Rd at Granite Lake. Coffee and tea will be provided. Please bring a goodie to share. There are, usually plenty of refreshments available so don't feel you can't come if you don't bring anything!!! Hope to see you there!



## BIBLE STUDY

We are currently meeting each Wednesday evening from 7-8pm for our winter Bible Study. Most weeks the study is held over Zoom. The zoom link can be found on our webpage ([nelsonchurch.org](http://nelsonchurch.org)), or contact the church office to be added to our email list. However, on the last Wednesday of each month, we will hold the Bible study in-person in the church fellowship hall at 5:30pm. For those gatherings we will have coffee and dessert, or if we're feeling ambitious, perhaps even a potluck dinner! Regular attendance isn't necessary so feel free to join the study whenever you are able to!



## EASTER FLOWERS

Orders are being accepted now for flowers to decorate our sanctuary on Easter. They will cost \$10.00 and may be taken home after the service. To order, please email [judywalton222@gmail.com](mailto:judywalton222@gmail.com) or call her at 603-847-3228. There will be a signup sheet in the narthex. The last day to request flowers is Monday, March 18.

## HOLY WEEK



**PALM SUNDAY**  
**MARCH 24**  
**WORSHIP 9:30**

**MAUNDY THURSDAY**  
**MARCH 28 7PM**



**GOOD FRIDAY**  
**MARCH 29**  
**2-6 PM**  
**CHURCH OPEN FOR**  
**REFLECTION AND**  
**PRAYER**



**EASTER**  
**SUNRISE SERVICE**  
**WORSHIP SERVICE 9:30**  
**EASTER EGG HUNT FOR ALL**  
**AGES AFTER WORSHIP**

## CALENDAR

- MAR 3** Worship with Communion 9:30
- MAR 10** DAYLIGHT SAVINGS  
Worship 9:30  
Council Meeting After worship
- MAR 17** Worship 9:30
- MAR 18** Congregational Life/Community Care via Zoom 7pm
- MAR 24** PALM SUNDAY
- MAR 28** Maundy Thursday Service 7pm
- MAR 29** Good Friday Church open for contemplation and prayer 2-6pm
- MAR 31** EASTER Sunrise Service 7 AM  
Worship 9:30  
Easter Egg Hunt



## CONGREGATIONAL LIFE/COMMUNITY CARE

At the February 11 Council meeting, members spent time talking about the church organizational structure and how to improve it. As a one-year trial, Congregational Life and Community Care will merge, to try to even out the workload over the year. We are hoping to find more volunteers to help with summer events.

We also learned that the vote on whether to become an Open and Affirming church in the United Church of Christ was overwhelmingly positive. Church members voted by secret ballot to move forward in deepening and opening our understanding of LGBTQIA+ people and their families and offering loving welcome.

Next Council Meeting: Sunday, March 10, 10:30 a.m.

Next Cong. Life/Community Care Meeting: Monday, March 18, on Zoom, 7 p.m.

## OPERATIONS GROUP

Meeting called to order at 7:00pm by Betsy. Attending: Hope, Eliot, Kelly, Brian, Betsy, and Matt. Opening prayer from Hope.

Betsy reports that the community giving campaign is nearing \$5K and will be coming to an end soon. The stewardship campaign will be once per year going forward and will be run by the ops committee.

The Service Credit Union ac-

count has been closed; this will result in less paperwork and accounting overall.

Betsy is moving forward on the internet options working with Fiber-cast. There are several ways to go; she is going to try to get us a residential account vs a small business which would be less expensive. Ryan has been helping Betsy with this project.

Our bookkeeping structure needs some work going forward. Eliot, Kelly, and Betsy will have a short meeting after this meeting to discuss those changes.

Kelly reports that the solar is online as of January 16, 2024. She will monitor bills going forward and keep the committee advised. Kelly also completed a very lengthy paperwork submission that may result in a rebate of approximately \$15K dollars. She has done all the leg-work but needs someone to review it before submission to ensure that the details are correct. Matt believes he has someone who can do this for her.

Eliot reports that Ed Schillemat picked up all of the recyclable items from the shed. Many thanks to Ed for doing this; we need to be more proactive in letting him know when to pick up so we don't have such a large amount at once.

Organizational structure review: Everyone has the option to change the committee that they work on every year. Matt is resigning from the Operations Committee and moving to the new combined Community Care/Congregational Life Committee to work with them.

Eliot advises that the custodian



**MAR 4 Maury Collings**

**MAR 7 Bianca Dennis**

**MAR 9 Matt Snow**

**MAR 12 Gordon Peery**

**MAR 14 Kelly Wood**

**MAR 15 Peter Smith**

**MAR 16 Val Van Meier**

**MAR 22 Kelly French**

**MAR 25 Britta  
Germeroth  
Gretchen  
Tillson**

**MAR 27 Bronwen  
Trudell-Tolman**

**MAR 29 Oliver Snow**



**MAR 4 Lew & Laurie  
Derby**





## OPERATIONS CON'T

position is open; several people have suggested names who may be interested in filling the position. He will talk to the candidates and advise us going forward. The suggestion was made to maybe have more hours in the beginning to ensure that a deep cleaning gets done, Hour can then be adjusted once everything is in order.

Bob West and Brian will take on painting the new railings as weather permits. Bob has information on a type of paint that he has used in the past.



### HEATING ASSISTANCE

## HELP WITH HEATING COST AVAILABLE

This year, our Christmas Eve offering was again designated to be used to help local individuals or families that need it with heating costs. If you or your family could use a little assistance with heat this winter (wood, electric, or fuel), please contact the church office at 603-847-3280. There is no "screening" process - we trust you. Also, if you know of anyone who might need help with heating costs, please encourage them to call us. Many thanks to those of you who contributed to this fund, and if you are interested in making a donation please visit [nelsonchurch.org](http://nelsonchurch.org) or send a check with "fuel assistance" in the memo line to the church at 830 Nelson Road, Nelson, NH 03457.



## GET READY TO HELP ON SUNDAYS

Get Ready to Help on Sundays!! - We are asking everyone in the congregation to sign up to help with service support a few times a year. This is a change we are making in response to our organizational structure discussion. We are still discussing how to implement so more information about this request, what's involved with service support, and how to sign up is forthcoming!

Another way to help is through Hospitality and providing coffee, tea, and simple goodies for approximately 25 people for Coffee Hour. A new sign-up sheet has been placed on the bulletin board down stairs next to the kitchen. Make it simple, maybe just some fruit, cheese and crackers and or a quick bread/cookies. Don't go all out. You will also need to make the coffee. This will free up deacons and worship help to do actual worship related duties. and bring half and half as well as some sort of juice. Check the refrigerator as there may well be half and half and juice left over from a previous Sunday. Thank you all and remember, many hands make light work.



**UPCOMING EVENTS OF  
INTEREST FROM OUR  
UCC REPRESENTATIVE**



**Daniel Adam's Installation  
as  
Pastor and Teacher  
of the  
South Congregational Church of  
Newport,  
United Church of Christ**

**SUNDAY, MARCH 3rd  
at 3pm**

South Congregational Church, Unit-  
ed Church of Christ  
20 Church Street  
Newport, NH 03773  
Office - (603) 863-3729

If you like statistics you might find this informative. Just copy and paste the link in your browser.

The 2023 Statistical Profile of the United Church of Christ is available to read and download at: [https://www.ucc.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/2023statisticalreport.web .pdf](https://www.ucc.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/2023statisticalreport.web.pdf).

For access to more New Hampshire Conference Information use this link:

<https://nhcucc.org/>



**ECCLESIASTICAL COUNCIL  
for  
TRACEYMAY KALVAITIS**

**SUNDAY, MARCH 10th  
at 3pm**

As Traceymay's MID status is held by the Hillsborough Association, members of the Southwest Association are invited to attend in support of her process and arriving at this moment of discernment.

47 Main St.  
**Hancock, NH 03449**  
Phone: (603) 525-4626

The tentative plans for her Ordination are arranged for June 2nd at 3pm at the United Church of Christ in Keene.



# PRAYER REQUESTS

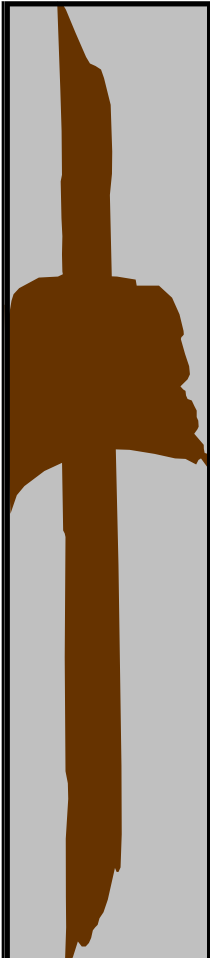
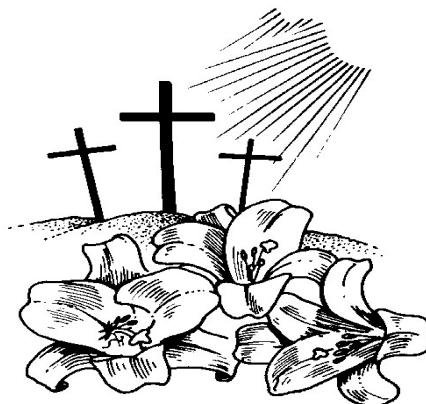
We hold in our prayers: Bob and Sue West's son Steve; Al Chamberlain and Charlotte; Pat Steeves

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, removed from, or remain on the Prayer List.)

## *Meetinghouse*

Generated Monthly  
Article deadline: 20th of the month  
Editor: Hope Lothrop  
email: [ncuccnews3@gmail.com](mailto:ncuccnews3@gmail.com)  
phone: 603-847-9045  
Pastor: Rev. Eliot Fay  
email: [nelsonchurchucc@gmail.com](mailto:nelsonchurchucc@gmail.com)  
phone: 603-847-3280 c978-473-2577  
Worship: 9:30 AM  
Website: <https://www.nelsonchurch.org>  
Church Office: [nelsonchurchoffice@gmail.com](mailto:nelsonchurchoffice@gmail.com)



Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Nelson, NH 03457  
Permit No. 101

NELSON CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH  
830 NELSON ROAD  
NELSON NH 03457  
Change Service Requested

