



The Outreach

The newsletter of the Milford United Methodist Church
Milford, NH, Rev. Dr. John Whitley, Pastor
December, 2024

Pastor's Corner

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Beloved in Christ,

Let me be the first to welcome you to Advent! I have to say for myself this year that I feel my heart exhaling a long, pent-up "at last" in finding myself here in this season because, in addition to being ready for lights and festivity, lately I have been sensing God's call to prayer and reflection on business that I take to be Advent business. Advent, of course, is the first season on the church year's calendar and, traditionally, its themes call us to ponder our preparations for the second coming of Christ and our ultimate hope as we make ready for Christmas (a making-ready for the second advent even as we prepare to commemorate the first), but it has often struck me that somewhere, tucked away in this season's spiritual invitation, is something that speaks universally to the human situation, something that addresses itself broadly to a core problematic of the life of the spirit. Call it waiting, call it hope, call it expectation, call it navigating the painful paradox of living between the already and the not yet. Martin Luther spoke of it in terms of living in two kingdoms at the same time. More simply put: advent is an invitation to engage in the hard spiritual work of centering our life today around hope and God's promises of joy and deliverance for tomorrow even while today remains a place of fears, discomforts, and blessings that may go unrecognized.

This year in Advent, I'm going to be spending some time with Mary. Think about it: Mary's pregnancy sort of typifies what Advent is about in a certain kind of way (even as it exemplifies some of its on-the-ground blessings and adversities). Mary's journey began with a future-oriented annunciation by an angel full of hope and promise and yet, very soon, Mary discovered how difficult living fully within the joy of that promise would be. She discovered that pregnancy is uncomfortable. She discovered that alongside its excitement for what's coming can also come fear and anxiety. She also discovered a unique sort of companionship in sharing her journey with a fellow traveler in her sister-in-law Elizabeth. Yet, all the while, Jesus' birth (his advent) was still on its way. For Mary (as for us) that end-result is something to celebrate, of course, but I find myself wondering what Mary and what Advent have to teach us about surviving and thriving spiritually along the way, and is there something about learning to survive and thrive on the way that prepares us for the joy at the end? I think there is and I think Mary might have a few things to

Pastor's Corner Continued

teach us about that. And so I don't just want to welcome you to Advent; I want to invite you into Advent. Through this season I'm going to be reviving our old Wednesday night gathering time as an occasion to pray and reflect on where God is among all the stuff we're carrying. We'll gather at 6:30pm for some time of reflection and prayer with some light desert refreshments. Of course, there are a number of other ways to enter into the journey around the life of the church this year—the Christmas fair, Bell Ringing, the Christmas concert. Whatever your way is of accepting this year's Advent invitation, I pray that it meets you with that same "at last" that it meets me with. May it be a time of refreshing, unburdening, remembering our hope and our joy. May it equip us with tools of the spirit for living a life that can be so full of so many blessings and challenges. May it be a season of reminding, recentering, and filling and may it truly be a blessing to all of your hearts.

In Christ! *Pastor John*

Crop Walk For Hunger ***From Pat Rafter***

The Greater Nashua Crop Hunger Walk on Nov 3rd was a great success! To date \$51,584.83 has been raised. Of that MUMC walkers contributed \$4,214.48. With Heidi Rocha topping the group with over \$1,000 from her sponsors Way to go Heidi!

There were 22 persons and 4 dogs representing MUMC. The weather was perfect until the sun started to go down, then it got pretty chilly.

Thanks once again to Temp Beth Abraham for hosting this awesome event.

Share Christmas Adoption ***From Diane Miller***

We are adopting a family for Christmas.

There is a tree in the narthex and most of the tags have already been taken but take a look for that one calling your name.



Please remember to return these gifts by December 8th.

Gifts should be unwrapped with a gift receipt and the tag taped to it.

If you have any questions, please contact Diane Miller at 401-864-1737 or damil-

Salvation Army Bell Ringing ***From Pat Rafter***

This year we will only be ringing on Saturdays and Christmas Eve but at both Shaw's and Market Basket. 1 hour slots beginning at 10am to 2pm unless we have an abundance of volunteers we can start earlier and go later. At the time of writing, there 14 slots still to be filled.

We have 4 coordinators that will each be in charge of a Saturday, so you will be getting reminders calls/texts from either Sue Kostuk, Diane Miller, Shannon Short or myself, depending on the day you sign up for.



Talk it up with friends, family and neighbors, it's always fun to have a ringing partner! Please sign up as soon you can and save coordinators from making extra calls. Thanks for considering this mission and remember 25% of monies raised comes back to this area.

Our MUMC Family Out in the World

Here are some of MUMC Family spreading Joy in November. Where are YOU?



Lincoln Biron celebrating his birthday



Cecil Rowlett celebrating his birthday!



Jenn & Ben Erdody at the Wicked Premier at Chunky's



Kathy Holland happy about the UK Wild-cats win!



Kathy Gray performed at the SNHU Orchestra. Beethoven & Mozart

MUMC Cookbook

There is still a *pinch of thyme* to contribute a recipe to the MUMC cookbook, please send the recipe to : office@milforumc.org

Showing Up From Janet Hromjak

Part of the promise I made to myself this year was that I'd 'show up for stuff'. So back in late October I attended an event at the Congregational Church in Amherst. It was put on by the Anti-Racism Ministries Group (ARMg) of the NH Conference, United Church of Christ and the Racial Justice Team (RJT) at the Congregational Church of Amherst. It was a pot-luck (cause you have to have food at a church event!) where people interested in anti-racism could discuss some of the many ways we can be involved in the mission and ministry of promoting anti-racism in our church and community.

About 29 folks attended, some from different churches in Nashua. We discussed things such as where our churches were in doing this work, where we individually were, and what we had done so far to fight racism ourselves.

It was time well spent with curious, involved people. They gathered everyone's information so we could know of similar events happening in our area – so stay tuned for things you might want to get involved in!

In December SHARE Is Collecting.

Condiments, Cooking Sauces & Seasonings, Cooking Oil, Pasta Sauce, Tomato Sauce, Tomato Paste, Diced Tomatoes



Missions

From Diane Miller

This is an extremely busy time of the year.

Thanks to Steve T. for heading up the Operation Christmas Child collection. He said there were 62 boxes donated, which is 2 more than last year. Way to go!

Our SHARE adoption is underway and the Salvation Army bells have started ringing out! We still have a few spots left for bell ringers. See the sign up poster in the Narthex.

After you have enjoyed the blessings of your Christmas greeting cards, please don't throw them away. We are collecting the fronts of cards to be recycled at St. Jude. They will not accept any trademark designs like Disney and the like. If you're not sure, just include them and we will sort them out. There is a collection box in the Narthex.

The SHARE dinners continue the 3rd Tuesday of the month starting again in January. Keep an eye out in the Narthex for sign up sheets to help out.

Please think about joining the missions committee. It's a great way to get involved. We meet the 4th Tuesday of each month at 5pm both in person and online. If you'd like to be added on to the missions email distribution list, please email Diane Miller at damil-ler719@gmail.com or let the church office know.

Noise Offering for Wanakee

December 8, 2024

This collection will happen the 2nd Sunday of the month. Quiet Money is always welcome too!



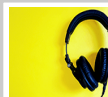
Capital Campaign

From Diane Miller

Thank you, thank you to all the bakers and buyers of pies! This was a real success in raising at least \$700\$ for the capital campaign. This brings us to almost \$30,000 raised since the beginning of the campaign in September 2023. A huge thank you to Callie who headed up the effort.

We will be coming up with more fundraisers in the near future. Currently, we are thinking about a talent show in the early spring. Maybe over those long winters nights, you could practice that standup routine or hula dance! As soon as the holidays are over, we will bring you more information on it.

There are envelopes near the collection plates so that you can make donations anytime. If you don't use the envelopes, please note on the check that it is for the capital campaign. Remember that we still need you to make your pledged contributions as this is the money that we use for all our expenses.



Can we help?



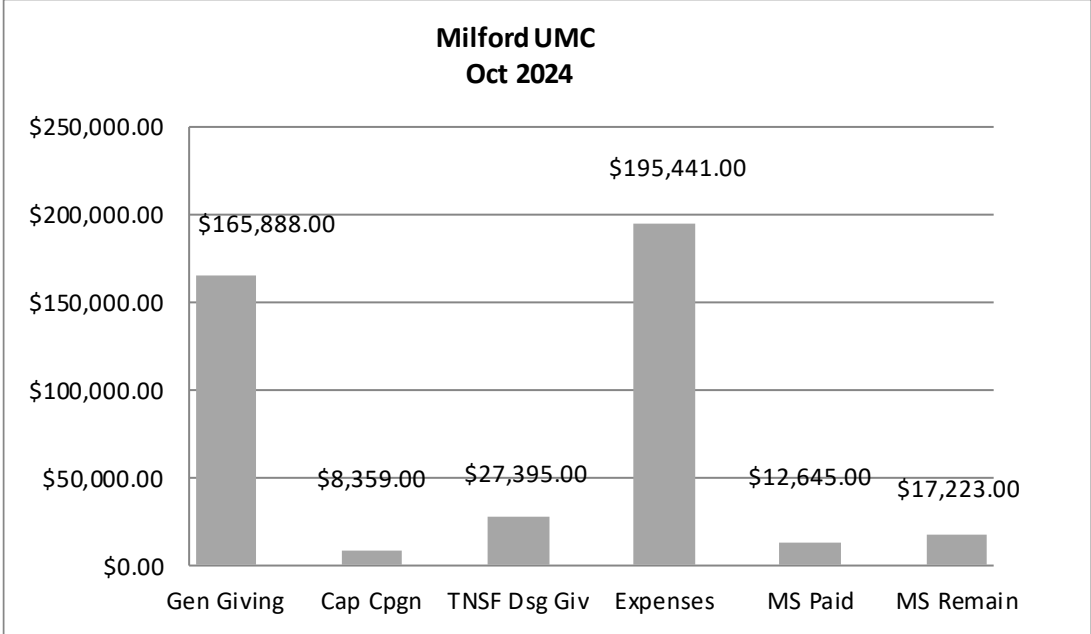
Do you need extra help to hear the service or to read the bulletins or hymnal? Call the office and let us know how we can help you. 603-673-2669. Leave a

Think before you spritz or spray. Someone will thank you.!

Scents can make some people sick.

Financial Reports

From Kirk Randlett, for the Finance Committee



General Giving	\$ 165,888.00
Cap Campaign	\$8359.00
TSF Dsg Giv *	\$27,395.00
Expenses	\$195,441.00
Mission Shares Paid	\$ 12,645..00
Mission Shares Remain	\$17,223.00

*Dsg = Designated giving accounts that are being used to fund items that show up in the Expense category.



Milford UMC
Church of Christ
<https://givy.com/15A2ZaWNC2cc>

The miracle of giving is that giving makes miracles.
—Bishop Robert E. Goodrich

MUMC giving QR Code

Family Life

LeeAnne Steenhoek Director Youth and Family Ministry, MUMC

Advent is upon us! Advent is the darkest time of the year in the northern hemisphere. We have fewer hours of daylight, and it gets cold! It's an actual time to slow down and *be still*. We know that God is present and with us in each moment. We quiet ourselves and wait for the Light of the world to be received into the world at Christmas.

Who can *be still* in the midst of Holiday parties and performances? Who has the inner quiet to pause and receive God's message in the midst of mayhem? Who trusts God is present with us in and through it all? I do. Yes, I do and you can too!

Can you receive Christ and be one with God's intention and purpose for your life in the midst of it all? Si, se puede! Yes, you can! You are the only one that God made exactly as you are. You are so special and powerful and important that God made only one you. You are a miracle! How did you begin?

We all begin as a baby.

Think about a baby with me now in your mind's eye. Imagine the weight in your arms and the tiny fingers curled around your finger. Consider their little button nose and that sweet softness and smell as you kiss the top of their peach-fuzz head. Are you able to receive the gift of presence even as you simply imagine? Each baby, every single one is God's beloved child.

Did you not know? Have you not heard? The Virgin Mary had a Baby boy and they

said that his name was Jesus.

When the world was dark and troubled, and people were struggling in chaos and despair; God responds. God's answer is a baby! A baby is Love and Light and Hope for what is to come. A baby. Jesus shows us the way to live and love and become all of who God made us to be.

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

John 1:5

This Advent Season in Children's Church, we'll be reading a book called *All Creation Waits* by Gayle Boss and illustrated by Sharon Spitz. We'll learn about painted turtle and porcupine, black bear and whitetail deer, northern cardinal, and firefly and how each one has its own preparations to cozy in, settle down and prepare the way for life's next chapter. Boss writes:

The dark is not an end. It's a door. It's the way a new beginning comes.

December 20th: Save the Date! Join us! We will have a Children's Church Christmas Party from 5-7. Wear some cozy pajamas or your favorite elegant sparkles! We'll share a simple meal, do a craft and sing! Bring a favorite Christmas item to share. It could be your favorite stuffed animal, a stocking, baby picture or Nativity Scene. This is an opportunity to share a little of your joy and anticipation with your church family. Please speak to LeeAnne if you would like to help with a craft or food. The bringing things and sharing makes it festive. Please know that the biggest gift for your church family is your participation and presence. Come as you are.



DECEMBER Birthdays & Anniversaries 2024

If you see any of these folks around town, be sure to wish them a happy day!

Birthdays:

- December 3:** Jim Kostuk
- December 4:** Marilynn Edmondson
- December 7:** Holly Philbrick
- December 8:** Jason Lambert
- December 11:** Wendy Ayotte
Lily Eves
Bruce Houston
- December 12:** Amanda Quintans
- December 17:** Jonah Farnsworth
- December 18:** Rich Rudolf
- December 23:** Amy Holland
Becky McMahon
- December 24:** Steve Rafter
- December 25:** Carol Rowlette
- December 30:** Elaine Driscoll
Diane Bellerose

There were no anniversaries on my calendar this month. Hope we didn't miss yours.

We would love to include you on the birthday and anniversary list. Won't you share your special dates at office@milfordumc.org



This Month's Lectionary

December 1: Jeremiah 33:14-16, Psalm 25:1-10, 1 Thessalonians 3:9-13
Luke 21:25-36

December 8: Malachi 3:1-4, Philippians 1:3-11, Luke 1:68-79, Luke 3:1-6

December 15: Isaiah 12:2-6, Zephaniah 3:14-20, Philippians 4:4-7, Luke 3:7-18

December 22: Micah 5:2-5a, Psalm 80
Hebrews 10:5-10, Luke 1:39-55

December 29: 1 Samuel 2:18-20, 26
Psalm 148, Colossians 3:12-17,
Luke 2:15-21



Driving Ministry

If you are in need of a ride and have no place to turn, call the office and we will notify the driving ministry to help you out. This program is primarily directed to our handicapped and seniors, but anybody who needs a ride and can't find one is eligible. There is no charge for this service. Office 603-673-2669 Steve Takacs 603-672-5118

office@milfordumc.org
trumpetchoo@msn.com



Choir News

From Jenn Erdody

Chancel Choir is eagerly preparing for the Christmas concert, which will be held on Sunday, December 15 at 4:00!

We're thrilled to have some guest singers with us as well; it's always fun to welcome new singers to our group! Our program for the concert reflects Pastor John's Advent sermon series, "Waiting With Mary". We hope you will join us for the concert!



Look Upon Love



Let us then meditate upon the Nativity just as we see it happening in our own babies. I would not have you contemplate the deity of Christ, the majesty of Christ, but rather his flesh. Look upon the baby Jesus. Divinity may terrify people. Inexpressible majesty will crush them. That is why God took on our human flesh and blood, that God should not terrify us but rather that with love and favor God would console and comfort us.

—Martin Luther

A photograph of a nativity scene, likely a stage set or a diorama. The scene is lit with warm, golden light. In the center, the Virgin Mary is seated, holding the baby Jesus. To her right, a man in a green robe stands. In the background, a donkey and a manger are visible. The scene is framed by dark, geometric shapes.

MUMC
**Christmas
Concert**
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15 AT 4:00
CHANCEL CHOIR
HAND BELL CHOIR
PRAISE BAND
QUARTETS

News from the Handbell

Corner

From Heidi Rocha

If anyone ever asks if handbell ringing is easy.....hmmmm.....well, let's just say it takes commitment, perseverance, fabulous attitude, smiling face (even when panic sets in) and most of all, making beautiful music to enhance our worship experience and fill our hearts with thanks and praise. So , YES, it IS easy.

We would love to have you join us. We have lots of bells to go around. Don't be shy....just try! This group of ding-a-lings is like no other. I love each and every one of these ringers. If you see them on Sunday morning, give them a high five and let them know YOU KNOW how much they are appreciated. I am ever grateful for their dedication. Thank you for the privilege of being their nudge of a leader. Blessings and peace to you all as we enter into this advent season.



A Glorious Hope



Let us today go down to Bethlehem, and in company with wondering shepherds and adoring Magi, let us see him who was born King of the Jews, for we by faith can claim an interest in him, and can sing, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given." Jesus is Jehovah incarnate, our Lord and our God, and yet our brother and friend; let us adore and admire. ... Let us reverently bow before the holy child whose innocence restores to [humankind] its ancient glory,; and let us pray that he may be formed in us, the hope of glory.

C.H. Spurgeon, *Morning and Evening*

MUMC Christmas Happenings

December 7 Christmas Fair 9-1 December 8 Messiah Sing 4PM
December 15, Christmas Concert December 21 Blue Christmas 6pm
December 25, Christmas Eve, 5, 7 & 11 pm
December 29th Combined Service 10:30 am
Merry Christmas Happy New Year

Committees, Groups and Ministries

If you are interested in becoming involved with, or learning more about, a committee or group on the

Administrative (Ad) Council: Janet Hromjak
Reviews monthly committee meetings, discusses pending issues and votes on church-wide decisions.

Adult Mission Trip Steve & Pat Rafter

Bell Choir: Heidi Rocha
For adults and older kids interested in hand bell ringing.

Christian Aftercare Ministry: Callie McMahon
Serving primarily men leaving prison, helping them settle in new homes and productive, positive lives.

Chancel Choir: Jennifer Erdody
Open to adults and teens interested in singing in the Chancel Choir at the second service.

Community Supper: Kerri-Lynn Kimner
A supper we host at SHARE in Milford every 6-8 weeks. Volunteer to help bake or prep ahead of time, or to work at the supper itself.

Driving Ministry– Steve Takacs
Provides transportation for those in need of help. Call the church office for contact information.

Finance: Andy Baver
Oversees church financial commitments

Home Groups: Steve Rafter (Thursday) or Callie McMahon (Friday) *hold due to covid*
Expands spiritual experience in a social context, meeting at a host's homes.

Lamplighters: Carol Rowlette & Elaine Driscoll
A Bible-study group for women.

Nominations: Pastor John. *Matches people with the committees they might be interested in serving on.*

Outreach: Is now Mission/Outreach Diane Miller

Sue Kostuk *Focuses on ways our church can reach out to the local, regional and international community.*

Children & Family : LeeAnne Steenhoek

Focuses on involving Children and Families in church events and spiritual growth.. Family Worship room available during service

Children's Church: LeeAnne Steenhoek
10:40 Sunday morning year round.

Praise Band: Steve Rafter, Lisa Payne, Rudy Rumohr
Contemporary Christian music that plays at the first service on Sunday.

Staff Parish Relations (SPR): Sue Rudolf
This committee acts as liaison between our staff and the congregation.

MUMC Care Team: Callie McMahon
Provides confidential one-on-one Christian care with trained lay ministers.

Trustees: Steve Rafter
Oversees and facilitates the care and keeping of the church building and parsonage.

White Tops: Everett Gale
A social group for retired men of all denominations.

Worship Committee: Carol Rowlette
Plans and facilitates Sunday service needs and organizes special Sundays

Worship Design: Steve Rafter
Plans music and worship for the contemporary Sunday service.

Vacation Bible School: LeeAnne Steenhoek, Karin Harvey Olson

Usually happens in July. A time for the kids to be immersed in learning about Jesus.

VOICE *Giving voice to the marginalized in our community. Janet Hromjak, Claire Holston, Callie McMahon. Esther Thayer, Kerri-Lynn Kimner, Kathy Wood, Annika Weis*

Men's Group: Jim Lawler
For men interested in fellowship and service. Meet Sunday Evenings

Youth Mission Trip Tom Knapp



December 2024

For Virtual Services starting at 10:30 a.m. Sunday, join Us On-Line from our Facebook page Milford United Methodist Church, A Reconciling Congregation or YouTube milfordumc or from the Website milfordumc.org

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

1 8:30 Spirit Celebration 9:40 Children's Church, Adult Sunday School 10:30 Traditional Service 5 p Men's Group	2	3 7 p Praise Band 6 p Finance	4 8:45 Coffee w/Pastor. Union Coffee	5 5:30 –7:30 Choir 7p Bells	6	7 Christmas Fair 9am – 1 pm
8 8:30 Spirit Celebration 9:40 Children's Church, Adult Sunday School 10:30 Traditional Service Messiah Sing 4pm	9 7p Trustees	10 7 p Praise Band	11 8:45 Coffee w/Pastor. Union Coffee 9 Whitetops 1 Lamp-lighters	12 5:30 –7:30 Choir 7p Bells	13	14
15 8:30 Spirit Celebration 9:40 Children's Church, Adult Sunday School 10:30 Traditional Service 4p Christmas Concert 5 p Men's Group	16 Voice 5:45p	17 7 p Praise Band	18 8:45 Coffee w/Pastor. Union Coffee 9 Whitetops 1 Lamp-lighters	19 5:30 –7:30 Choir 7p Bells	20	21
22 8:30 Spirit Celebration 9:40 Children's Church, Adult Sunday School 10:30 Traditional Service 5 p Men's Group	23	24 Christmas Eve Services 5, 7, & 9 pm	25	26 5:30 –7:30 Choir 7p Bells	27	28
29 Combined Service 10:30 5p Men's Group	30	31				



Milford United Methodist Church

327 No. River Rd
PO Box 476
Milford, NH 03055
(603) 673-2669
www.milfordumc.org

December 2024

Sunday Worship Times:

8:30a. Spirit Celebration, 10:30a. Traditional Service, 9:40a Adult Sunday School & Children's church. Watch Us Online Facebook & YouTube @10:30 Rev. Dr. John Whitley, Pastor

Milford United Methodist Church

A Reconciling Church

Discover the Joy!

Rev. Dr. John Whitley, Pastor

Our Mission:

The Milford United Methodist Church exists to help **all** people discover the joy of knowing and serving Jesus Christ.

Our Vision:

We will help all people discover the joy of knowing and serving Jesus Christ by:

- Providing joyful and meaningful worship experiences.
- Establishing and encouraging small groups for study, support, prayer, fellowship and service.
- Empowering people to discover, develop, and deploy their gifts for ministry.
- Reaching out beyond our congregation in Christian love and service.

Our Values:

We commit ourselves to:

- Know scripture and live it.
- Act with integrity.
- Be faithful to Jesus Christ, our families, and our church family.

- Strive for excellence in all we do for the Lord.
- Celebrate the ministry of all Christians, lay and ordained.
- Treat all people with respect and sensitivity.
- Encourage people to grow in Christ.
- Care for the spiritual, emotional, and physical needs of all people.

Welcoming & Inclusion Statement:

Milford United Methodist Church is a welcoming and inclusive church which celebrates that all persons are created in God's image and are of sacred worth. We welcome and serve persons without regard to age, race, culture, sexual orientation, gender identity, family configuration, religious background, economic status, or developmental and physical abilities. Milford United Methodist Church recognizes the diversity of the Body of Christ and gives thanks to God for this divine gift. We invite ALL to discover the joy of knowing and serving Jesus Christ.