



Vol. 8 Issue 1 • January-February 2017  
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## Pastor's Corner

*Rev. Jo Shelnut, Interim Pastor*

### ***I AM THE CHURCH! YOU ARE THE CHURCH!***

Many of us can remember this song from our days in Church School, complete with hand motions showing a church steeple and all the people around the world following Jesus. This song teaches the children and reminds the adults that it is the people, the *gathered community*, which makes us a church — not our historic and beloved church buildings.

“The church is not a building,  
the church is not a steeple,  
the church is not a resting place.  
The church is a people!”

We lavish a great deal of time, money and love on our church buildings. And they are, indeed, Holy Places, holding the memories of joys and sorrows shared over decades and centuries of life together. But it is the presence of the worshiping community and its individual sense of calling that makes our worship spaces sacred and turns us ordinary folks into a community that we call **The Church**.

This past week we witnessed the terrible grief of a congregation watching their beloved sacred space go up in flames. It will surprise no one of faith that even in the midst of such sadness, the first two concerns of pastor and church members was “Where will we gather for worship this Sunday?” and “How do we continue to serve the community”?

We gather to celebrate God’s grace and to be instruments of grace for others. That is the church. Each gathered church, of course, does that in its own individual way. Just as each village and city in Vermont are unique unto themselves, so are our churches. Our current task in the search process is to accurately and enthusiastically describe *this* church and *this* community to potential candidates.

We are about to enter the second half of the pastoral search process. Your Pastor Search Committee (PSC) has been seeking ideas and input from everyone involved in The Tunbridge Church community and the wider community. They are working hard to draft the document which will become your church resume, or **Church Profile**.

As part of the church, you have two tasks to perform before we can enter the final phase of the search process. 1) Attend a congregational meeting to read/hear the Church Profile. You can approve, make comments, suggestions, additions, corrections for the PSC to include before they finalize the Profile. 2) Attend a congregational meeting to vote on a change in the bylaws which pertains to calling a new pastor.

These are the final two ways for church members and friends to participate in the process (until the PSC presents a candidate for the church to vote on!!). Friends of the church are encouraged to attend the meetings and share their ideas.

The new year for the church began on the first Sunday of Advent. We enter

this new year together — a called and caring community. The next few months will be exciting ones in the search process. I will keep this gathered community in my prayers as you walk faithfully together into your future ministry. Please keep your beloved community in your prayers as well.

*With you on the journey, Pastor Jo*

## Thank You To The Pageant Participants

I want to send out a special thank you to everyone who participated in the Christmas Eve Nativity Pageant. We had a wonderful multi-generational cast and crew. Thank you all for jumping in to try something a little new and providing the community with a beautiful, moving Nativity Story.

Our core cast members reached out to friends and neighbors and we had several new folks come join in with us. Thank you for attending practice, inviting others, practicing the music, narrating in verse, helping with the set pieces, coordinating the many costumes and for the great spirit all of you brought to the enterprise.

We were disappointed on the morning of Advent IV when church and pageant were iced-out. But we managed to rearrange the Christmas Eve service and cast and crew rallied, providing a lovely experience for the entire community.

A special thank you to Judie for being the orchestra and to the choir for being flexible and unflappable.

It was a very Holy Night. Thanks and blessings to all.

*Pastor Jo, your very happy director!*



Pastor Jo, front right, and the cast members were caught in this candid photo at the end of the pageant dress rehearsal the week before Christmas. Cast names are on pages 5 and 6.



While waiting for pageant dress rehearsal to begin Mary (Olivia Swayze) makes an adjustment to baby Jesus under the curious eye of the Cow (Cameron Putney).

## Parish Council

*Kay Jorgensen*

This column is short because much of the news to be shared is in the columns from Pastor Jo and the Pastor Search Committee. At this writing I still have a foot of snow, the forecast is for freezing rain and January feels like a good time to hunker down.

We can look forward to two social events in February: a potluck supper before the Feb. 5 Annual Meeting and

the second annual Just Desserts on Feb. 11. Come to the Town Hall from 7-10 for live musical entertainment, treats, silent auction and prizes to support church painting and capital projects.

Both the Search Committee and Parish Council are meeting this week after the newsletter was written. Because of the timing a few dates may not be decided, so watch for specifics in upcoming Sunday and online announcements. The Search Committee wants a time (probably after a shortened worship service in January) to share highlights of the church profile it is writing. The Council must approve and decide when to present bylaw amendments for a vote (probably at the Annual Meeting).

This is a good time to remind everyone that while church friends are invited to all programs and the Annual Meeting and are welcome to ask questions, members alone have voting privileges on officers, bylaws and, later this year, the most important vote we will have had since 2009 — calling of a new minister. Contact a Parish Council member if you would like to become a member or confirm if you are a member.

## **Pastor Search Committee**

The Pastor Search Committee's work to prepare a church profile before advertising the position of permanent (settled) pastor is drawing to a close. In late January the committee hopes to share its findings with church officers and members before making the last revisions.

The final document, which will be available to prospective candidates in various denominations, will use text and photos to tell candidates about the church and town, including qualities desired in a new minister based on responses from personal meetings and the survey that was mailed.

After prospective pastors have replied by a set date the search committee will enter a private and confidential period. No one outside the seven-member committee will be involved and no information will be shared. Committee members alone will read resumes, check references and interact with candidates. An update on where the committee is in that part of its work will be given in the March/April newsletter.

The Search Committee began meeting in June. It produced church history timeline display panels to which members were invited to add their memories and important dates. The panels were first displayed at a July 27 pizza party which kicked off the search.

During the fall members met with dozens of church members and friends to talk about the church now and in the future. In November the committee mailed a survey and membership update to people with past and current membership or interest in the church. A brief survey was also sent to groups that use the Parish House or have a relationship with the church.

All during these months the Search Committee provided information about its process through bulletins, the newsletter and at worship services, as well as The Herald, Tunbridge Quarterly and Front Porch Forum. Written questions were solicited and answered in July. During the past month paper and pens were provided in the pews for comments to be left in a box in the vestibule. We appreciate the input we received and serious consideration given to our church's future.

In addition to writing the profile, the Search Committee is recommending bylaw amendments to the Parish Council for presentation to and vote by the members.

If you have any questions or comments please contact a committee member:

Euclid Farnham, chair, 889-3458  
Connie Button, secretary, 728-3336,  
buttoncm@comcast.net  
Lisa Amodeo, 889-3245,  
ljamodeo@gmail.com  
Amy Frost, 889-3739, asf802@gmail.com  
Nan Frost, 889-3766,  
nanfrost3@gmail.com  
Kay Jorgensen, 889-5528,  
kjayvt@gmail.com  
Ben Wolfe, 889-9467,  
benjaminmwolfe@gmail

## Community Food Shelf

*Sue Barnaby*

The Tunbridge Church Community Food Shelf served 29 families this holiday season. Each family received the food to make a ham dinner with all the fixings for Christmas. The project was organized by the Tunbridge Church Outreach Committee.

The Tunbridge community, both church and townspeople, has always been very generous. The Tunbridge Central School families, staff and teachers had a food drive, while the Student Council wrapped the boxes that the Christmas food packages were gathered into.

The Tunbridge Recreation Committee gave all of the proceeds and food donations from its December breakfast and from a 50-50 raffle — well over \$1,000 — which paid for much of the food purchased. The Clever Clovers 4-H Club from this area made and decorated Christmas cookies for every box.

Many other individuals gave food, monetary donations and gifts for the tables from which families could choose gifts for their families. We also worked with the Toys for Tots organization for the families with children that had signed up. Chrissy Flesch from Tunbridge helped us organize so that we would offer many families toys,

games and art supplies for their children for Christmas presents. She then went after, bundled together and distributed them to parents.

You see, it really does make things better when many hands are helping! THANK YOU to all who helped make Christmas special for so many families!

## January/February Events

### *Regular Events:*

Sunday Service: 10 a.m. Congregational Church in Tunbridge Village.

Making Change: Wednesdays,  
Parish House, 5:30 p.m.

Community Food Shelf: Fridays,  
Parish House, 4-6 p.m.

### *Special Events:*

Feb. 5  
Potluck dinner and Annual Meeting  
after the worship service, Town Hall

Feb. 11  
Just Desserts, 7-10 p.m., Town Hall.

## News and Thanks

### **Ready for Winter**

Nancy Chapman not only made the pretty quilted window curtains that help insulate the Parish House, but she rehung them for another winter — and will take them down again when warm weather returns. The windows stand out beautifully to passersby when it is dark and the inside lights are on. Ed Howe and Bob and Margaret Rogers buttoned the Parish House up for winter, putting on storm windows and storing the picnic furniture.

## Thanksgiving

Many people helped continue the Outreach Committee's Thanksgiving Bags community service tradition. Cash donations were used for the cards, fruits, cocoa, tea, cheese, crackers and decorated bags and napkins. Thanks to many bakers there were plenty of homemade cookies and breads (special items for diabetics). Volunteers filled 11 double and 14 single bags and a box of treats for Riverbend Home residents.

We know from verbal and written thank-yous that the seniors appreciate the Thanksgiving remembrance. Fifteen volunteers filled the bags, delivered them or did both. They are: Sue Barnaby and Elaine Cilley, Shirley Boles, Nancy and Randy Chapman, Euclid Farnham, Mary Fisk, Carley Howe, Elaine Howe, Pat and Alan Howe, Kay Jorgensen, Marybeth Lang, Margaret Rogers and Judy Tucker.



A tall ladder and tall Josh Amodeo were needed to place the star on top of the Christmas tree. Tony Welch, Sharon Mee and Dominick Amodeo watch while Mom Lisa is hidden behind Josh.

## Decorating for Christmas

The Amodeo family gave the church a beautifully proportioned tree for the front of the sanctuary. They were among the volunteers who decorated the tree and got the sanctuary ready for Christmas on Dec. 4. Randy Chapman set up the creche. Pastor Jo played the piano for a small backup choral group.



Zach Welch also was decorated.

Thanks to the many helpers, including Josh Amodeo who carried plastic tubs with decorations from the Parish House second floor, and Outreach Committee members Lisa Amodeo, Sue Barnaby, Nancy Chapman, Elaine Howe, Dawna Neron and Judy Tucker for the delicious soups, chili, breads and pastries that the church decorators enjoyed.

Pam Dietz gave the three large poinsettia plants in memory of her husband, Joseph Dietz.

## Caroling

Cold temperatures on Dec. 16 didn't deter close to 20 carolers who serenaded residents at both ends and sides of town and in between. A poinsettia was left at each stop. The caroling groups ended their rounds at the Amy and Matt Frost home for refreshments. The caroling continues a tradition that began decades ago with the church youth group.

## Pageant & Christmas Eve

The Dec. 18 church service was cancelled because of ice. Pastor Jo and Organist Judie Lewis revised the Christmas Eve service and incorporated the Nativity Pageant which had been scheduled for the cancelled service. The

pageant and candle lighting made for a meaningful Christmas Eve.

Pastor Jo directed the pageant and Saturday rehearsals. Sixteen cast members, seven narrators, Judie and the choir, and helpers with costumes, prompting, manger transport and setup, props and cleanup were involved.

Olivia Swayze and Ben Wolfe portrayed Mary and Joseph. Elaine Howe was the innkeeper. Josh Amodeo, Wright Frost and River Terami were the shepherds. Eleanor Frost and Lydia Welch portrayed the announcing angels. Tony Welch was the guardian shepherd of the donkey, cow, sheep and dove: Duncan Klinck, Cameron Putney, Lorelai Putney and Zachary Welch.

The three Magi, who each sang a solo verse, were Isabella Amodeo, Margot Frost and Rose Terami. Narrators were Euclid Farnham, Priscilla Farnham, Amy Frost, Elaine Howe, Kay Jorgensen, Dawna Neron and Kathi Terami. Corey Chapman, Eve-Lynne Ermer, Rob Howe, Dawna Neron, Bruce Zug and Marcus Zug gave behind-the-scenes help.

Isabella, Margot and Rose did a quick change from their Magi costumes to be



Waiting for pageant rehearsal to begin are the three Magi, from left, Margot Frost, Isabella Amodeo and Rose Terami, and Olivia Swayze and Ben Wolfe as Mary and Joseph. the candlelight service leaders, singing

the "Morning Star" verses. During the service Nan Frost played the flute, Janet Zug played tambourine and Eve-Lynne Ermer and Pastor Jo sang solos.

## Happy Birthday

### JANUARY

01 – Liz Zaroogian  
05 – Judie Lewis  
07 – Cameron Putney  
15 – Dawna Neron  
16 – Wright Frost  
17 – Maggie Serviss  
20 – Tom Wells  
24 – Abby Gross  
28 – Carley Howe  
30 – Margaret Rogers

### FEBRUARY

02 – Marybeth Lang  
04 – Judy Tucker  
14 – Bunchie Angel  
15 – Chuck Ashton  
26 – Robert Brinkley  
29 – Emily Howe

## Church Positions

### Parish Council

Kay Jorgensen, President  
Dawna Neron, Vice President  
Sue Barnaby, Secretary  
Townsend Swayze, Treasurer  
Nancy Chapman  
Rob Howe  
Jim Sweeney  
Judy Tucker  
Ben Wolfe

### Staff

Rev. Jo Shelnut, Interim Pastor  
Judie Lewis, Organist/Choir Director  
Hoyt Bingham, Administrative Asst.  
Euclid Farnham, Sexton  
Rev. David Wolfe, Pastor Emeritus  
Rev. Gordon Mitchinson, Parish Assoc.

Elsie Farnham, Recording Treasurer