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*Last year Interim Pastor Rev. Jo Shelnuutt shared this Christmas season message. Since she will lead our December worship services it seemed appropriate to repeat her suggestions for how we can cope.*

### **Pastor's Corner**

*Rev. Jo Shelnuutt, Interim Pastor*

#### ***A GIFT FOR THE HOLIDAZE***

Remember how the day after Thanksgiving used to be the signal to start the mad, mad dash to Christmas? And have you noticed that now, when you go into a store to buy material for that intricately handmade Halloween costume (or grabbing something quick and chintzy off the rack), you can also buy your Thanksgiving tablecloth, plates and decorations *and* your Christmas cards, wrapping paper and stockings?

And I'm talking September, during back-to-school shopping. If your car is big enough and you are strong enough, you can roll it all into one huge seasonal, holiday blob. How special!

Well not really. Nothing unfolds in its due season, with real attention and anticipation and grace. For those of us who have one foot in that mushed-together world and the other in the rhythmic unfolding of the seasons and the church year, there is a great early holy days gift: **ADVENT**

What a gift Advent is to us. This season calls us to be introspective, to be prayerful, mindful of our true selves and mindful of others. At this season, more than any other, that is a gift. It gives us one hour a week to step aside into quiet meditation and preparation. One hour to let go of lists and obligations and let our minds stop spinning and bodies stop running.

We light the Advent candles, we focus on the unfolding story, we become watchful and prepare ourselves for the priceless gift to come. If we take this one practice home with us, gathering one time each day to light the Advent candles, some of that glow, that anticipation may move even deeper into our hearts and minds.

#### **But what can we bring into that other world of which we are all part?**

First, realize that much of it is joyful and uplifting. It's not all good "in here" and bad "out there." People need to enjoy the events and get-togethers. But we all know that so much of what comes along with our celebrations is detrimental to our mental, physical and spiritual well-being.

Here is my list of ways to let Advent help us thru the craziness. See what works for you.

#### ***Let consumerism and technology help you***

- If there is Christmas stuff for sale in September, buy it then and don't go back till New Year's. You'll miss long lines, angry shoppers and loud annoying Christmas songs.

- Shop on line. You can still buy locally and ethically — and save gas and lower your carbon footprint! And, again, no canned music.

- Unplug the TV (seriously) for most of November and December. Rent or Roku and Hulu movies to watch when and what you want.

The bonus is you and your family won't be bombarded with hours of advertising.

#### ***Meditate in Public***

- In that long check-out line, breathe deeply. Silently repeat a prayer or poem. Earplugs can block out all the noise, but it works without too. You just

discovered an extra 20 minutes for yourself.

- Take mini-cell phone breaks. Turn off the ringer while waiting in line.
- Find yourself in a traffic jam or at a really long light? This is more found time. Look at the pretty red and green lights — how festive! Turn off the radio, put in a CD (or listen to silence). Use this gift of time to count your blessings. Wow — that light was too short!

*Make a list - check it twice*

- List one: the things you want to do every year and never find time for. Pick one or two and put them on your calendar.
- List two: the things you “have” to do every year that you don’t like. Find a way to eliminate one or two. Substitute something from list one.
- List three: What Christmas giving feels right to you? Mark two dates on your calendar when Christmas is long over on which to give time or money to that same person or organization again.

*Love Thy Neighbor*

- Your house is overrun and the relatives are driving you crazy. Give everyone a break. Take a plate of goodies to a household of just one or two. Not everyone’s house is overrun with family and friends. You’ll enjoy the quiet, your neighbor will enjoy the company and the family will survive without you for an hour.
- Remember leaving little bags of gifts and treats on people’s door knobs, ringing the bell and running away? Let your children or grandchildren ring and run — you drive the getaway car. Giving without getting back will fill the empty places of your hearts.

**Here is my wish for us this season:** That we will practice Advent together. That we will hear the voices of mystery and prophecy above the din. That we will find balance between our outward and inward lives. That we will come to Christmastide prepared for joy.

Blessed Advent to you and to your household.

*With you on the journey,  
Pastor Jo*

## Parish Council

*Kay Jorgensen*

As Thanksgiving, Advent and Christmas approach our church will be sharing the meaning and bounty of the season with our neighbors.

On Nov. 18 volunteers will pack and deliver Thanksgiving Bags of goodies and holiday cards for older residents in the community.

Baked goods and donations to buy fruit are welcomed. The bags will also include cheese, crackers and other treats. Come to the Parish House at 1 p.m. if you would like to help.

In December the Outreach Committee and Community Food Shelf will fill Christmas boxes with ham, all of the fixings for dinner and decorated cookies. Families will be invited to choose presents they would like to give from items on display.

Donations of gifts and funds for food purchase are welcome. Items may be left from Nov. 26-Dec. 15: at the Parish House on Fridays from 4-6 p.m., the church on Sundays from 9-11, or Elaine Howe’s porch at 97 Route 110. Monetary donations may be mailed to Food Shelf Treasurer Euclid Farnham, 24 The Crossroad, Tunbridge, VT 05077.

Church decorating begins at 6:30 p.m. on Dec. 8. On Dec. 15, carolers will sing and deliver poinsettia plants at local seniors’ homes. All voices are invited. Meet at the Parish House at 5:45. Refreshments at the Amy and Matt Frost home will follow the caroling.

The Rev. Jo Shelnuttt will lead the Christmas Eve Service on Sunday, Dec. 24, at 7 p.m.

Many people deserve thanks for their donations and support of recent improvements to our properties in the Tunbridge Village Historic District. We will begin the new year with the church building in good shape with two coats of paint and upgraded wiring. The sanctuary has new pew cushions and a sound system. And the Parish House has a paved front walk, accessible porch and freshly painted trim.

We will share The Tunbridge Church's story in the new year, for it was 40 years ago —1978 — when the town's Baptist, Congregational and Methodist congregations established this church.

## November/December Events

### *Special Events:*

Nov. 18: Thanksgiving Bags packing

Dec. 8: Church tree decorating, 6:30

Dec. 15: Christmas caroling from the Parish House 5:45 p.m.

Dec. 24: Christmas Eve Service, 7 p.m.

### *Regular Events:*

Worship Service: 10 a.m.

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

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

## News and Notes

### **Thanksgiving Bags**

The Tunbridge Church organizes this communitywide time to remember our older neighbors. On Saturday, Nov. 18, at 1 p.m. Thanksgiving Bags will be packed at the Parish House. There are some 50 individuals in town who will receive a delivery of fruit, cookies and goodies.

Please plan to join us to help pack baskets, bake us some cookies or muffins or give us a donation toward buying the fruit. We do need folks to help us deliver the baskets too. Call Sue Barnaby (889-3736) for information.

### **Community Thanksgiving**

The 20th Annual Free Community Thanksgiving Dinner will be served Nov. 23 from 11:30-1 at the Vermont Law School's Chase Community Center. Area residents, churches, farms and

businesses sponsor the dinner. Meal preparation will take place at the school's Café from 3-7 p.m. the three days before Thanksgiving. Helpers are needed on Thanksgiving Day in the kitchen, to, set up and clean up and deliver meals. Donations of pies, rolls, squash and cranberry sauce are requested. For information and to sign up contact Shannon Leach at 831-1456 or sleach@vermontlaw.edu

### **New Church Member**

The Parish Council is pleased to welcome Anne Peters as a member of The Tunbridge Church.

### **Choir News**

Choir rehearsals are at 7 p.m. on Thursdays. There is an open invitation to join the choir at anytime. The choir sings three times a month and for special services until June. Advent music rehearsals will begin in early November and music for Christmas Eve in early December.

### **Super Senior Luncheons**

The Outreach Committee hosted the last of this year's four Super Senior Luncheons on Oct. 28. The menu included beef stew, rolls and apple crisp.

Lunches will resume in April. More than 30 seniors attended each Town Hall luncheon. Rides were provided for those who needed transportation.

Cooks and helpers for the October lunch were Lisa Amodeo, Sue Barnaby, Nancy Chapman, Lydia Flanagan, Elaine Howe, Kay Jorgensen, Dawna Neron, Margaret Rogers, Olivia Swayze and Judy Tucker.

### **Funeral Fellowship**

The Funeral Fellowship Committee provided refreshments after the Sept. 30 committal service for Hazel Ordway and the Oct. 29 committal service for Elaine Anthony.

## Thank You

The Fair Service drew more than 100 participants and congregants. Judie Lewis led the musicians and chorus, with Dale Post playing the piano. Josh Amodeo, Elaine Howe, Felicity Swayze and Janet Zug gave the readings and the Rev. David Wolfe said the benediction.

Vocal soloists included Isabella Amodeo, Connie Button, Eve Ermer, Priscilla Farnham, Maria Lamson, Dawna Neron, Larry Owen, Olivia Swayze and Ben Wolfe. Nan Frost, Randy Hough, Timothy James Howe, David Indenbaum, Norm Labrecque, Peter and Rich Meijer, Scott Paulson, Barbara Smith, Bob Sparadeo, provided special music. Thanks to all of them.

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Weather cooperated for the October Fun Run/Walk 5K on Spring Road. Chair Margaret Rogers thanks everyone who walked, ran, strolled and volunteered. The \$537 that was raised will help support the Community Food Shelf and its weekend student backpack program. Special thank you to Dandelion Acres, Tunbridge Fair and John Blakeney for their donations.

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The annual Anything Apple event – lunch, apple treats and silent auction – was a success due to the help and patronage of many people. It netted \$2,100 for the church painting fund. Local cooks donated a variety of apple treats from soups and caramel-dipped apple slices to pies, cakes and bars.

Portia and Barry Wampler were pie judges extraordinaire. They selected three winners after carefully tasting and grading five apple pies. Town Hall helpers for dining and auction setup, food service and/or cleanup were Sue Cain, Kate Caldwell, Pam Dietz, Elaine Howe, Nancy and Ed Howe, Rob Howe, Kay Jorgensen, Marybeth Lang, Joyce Miller, Jacque Norris, Fred Pond, Margaret and Bob Rogers and Judy Tucker.

Auction baskets, certificates and items were donated by Boardway & Cilley,

E.C. Brown's Nursery, Brocklebank Brewery, Middle Branch Market & Deli, Saturday Sewing Circle, Tunbridge Recreation Commission, Tunbridge Store, Union Agricultural Society, Vermont Magazine, Vermont Technical College, and Betsy Berger, Lori Berger, Pam Dietz, Joanne Goodnow, Nancy Howe, Rob Howe, Kay Jorgensen, Felicity Swayze and Jen Thygesen.

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New pew cushions were installed before the Oct. 22 church service. The contributions of generous donors were supplemented by the church's Anne Comstock Fund. Thanks to Nancy and Randy Chapman, Rob Howe, Kay Jorgensen, Judy Tucker and Portia and Barry Wampler who removed old cushions, unpacked and set out the new ones and to Rob who also disposed of the old cushions and boxes.

## Birthdays & Anniversaries

### November

05 – Nancy Howe  
06 - Gordon Mitchinson  
21 – Eleanor Frost  
22 – Sebastian Fraser  
24 - Nancy Howe Rogers

### December

03 - Pam Dietz  
12 – Felicity Swayze  
16 - Ken & Kim Danforth (Anniv.)  
21 - Addison Danforth  
23 – Bob Rogers  
26 - Nancy & Dennis Rogers (Anniv.)  
27 – Mary Fisk

## Parish Council

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