

Lovell United Church of Christ

1174 Main St., Lovell, Maine



December 2023

January 2024

The Circuit Rider

PO Box 232 Lovell, ME 04051 www.lovellucc.org Office:925-1321 email:info@lovellucc.org



No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you're welcome here...

Dear friends,

We are beginning the season of holidays (holy-days). For the Christian faith it is Advent followed by Christmas and then Christmastide which includes the Sundays from Christmas through Epiphany (January 6th). For our Jewish neighbors they will be celebrating the holy days of Hanukkah. For those of African ancestry (but not limited to) there is the Celebration of Kwanza. If you are of the mind to seek more harmony with the natural world (as we all should be!) you might be celebrating the Winter Solstice.

"Hanukkah sameach!" which means "Happy Hanukkah!" or "Chag urim sameach" which means "Happy Festival of Lights." A Jewish festival commemorating the recovery of Jerusalem and subsequent rededication of the Second Temple. Associated with it is the account of the miracle of the one-day supply of oil miraculously lasting eight days.

The name Kwanzaa derives from the Swahili phrase *matunda ya kwanza*, meaning "first fruits". Kwanzaa is more of a cultural holiday than a religious one. But it carries an inherent spiritual quality because of its ties to the provisions of the earth's bounty.

The greeting for each day of Kwanzaa is *Habari Gani?*, which is Swahili for "How are you? Or "What is the news?"

The Winter Solstice falls on December 21st this year at 10:27 p.m. to be exact. It marks the point at which the Sun reaches its lowest point in the sky in the northern hemisphere. When here in the north we experience the longest hours of darkness. It symbolizes themes such as rebirth, renewal, and the return of the light. As days start to grow longer again, it is often seen as a time of hope and new beginnings.

"May you find peace in the promise of the solstice night, That each day forward is blessed with more light." is a Winter Solstice Blessing

Unfortunately, my Islamic acquaintances, of which I have known but a handful, do not have a holy day to celebrate during the Gregorian calendar months of November and December. Theirs fall through the year in other months.

I say if you know a person's faith or cultural heritage and perspective it's okay to wish them a "*Chag urim Sameach*" (Happy Festival of Lights) or "*Habari Gani?*" (What is the News? in Swahili) or "*May you find peace in the promise of the solstice night.*" And even a "*Merry Christmas!*" If you don't know their preference "Happy holidays" works for me as well. Especially if we understand the root meaning of the words of the greeting "*Happy Holy Days!*"

Let us seek to honor another's traditions and cultures for perhaps then we will begin to realize the Christmas greeting/prayer from the Christian tradition (loosely based on the angels' greeting to the shepherds, "*May there be peace on earth good will toward all.*"

Yours in the spirit of this holy season,

Pastor Neil Wilson

Ladies Circle

The Kitchen Clean-Up volunteer for November was Carolyn Carter. Nancy Olmsted, Sunshine Lady, reported she had sent out 11 cards. The program following the business meeting was making bows, wiring cones and packaging note cards. The Dec. 2 Snowflake Fair included: Greens, Food, Berry Bowls, Gifts, Fir Pillows, a Soup & Sandwich Lunch, and a special Thrift Shop Christmas booth. The group voted \$1650. For Christmas gifts. Sue DeWire will be hostess for the Dec. 12 Christmas Celebration at The Olde Mill Tavern in Harrison. Following the meeting, the possibility of the church office administrator taking over the Ladies Circle treasurer's job was approved by the ladies and was forwarded to the Trustees for approval. The Circle's schedule is shown below:

Dec. 12 12:00 Christmas Celebration Meeting & Lunch at The Olde Mill Tavern in Harrison

There are no membership requirements for Ladies Circle so all are welcome to join the group as schedules allow. Contacts: Carolyn Carter 928-2080, cecarter1994@gmail.com or Linda Libby 925-3661, lindalibby12345@outlook.com

Lovell Girl Scouts

Daisy Troop 146 and Cadette/Brownie Troop 58 are meeting in the New Suncook School Art Room on Mondays, 2:30-4:00. Both of these troops for girls in grades K-2 are still accepting girl registrations. Troops 146/58 have been working on try-its and petals and held a Juliette Lowe birthday party and Halloween celebration on Oct. 30. These troops are both in need of another leader. A two-part on-line training is available, and a background check is required. Lovell Girl Scout Troop 3149 for grades 3-6 is full but is adding girls to a waiting list. These girls and leaders meet on Fridays, 2:30-4:00 in the NSS Art Room. An outing has been planned for each meeting, if weather permits, and on Dec. 1 the girls will be decorating a tree on the Lovell Land Trust trail. For information, contact: Linda Libby (207)925-3661, or lindalibby12345@outlook.com

Boards and Committees

TRUSTEES The Lovell UCC Board of Trustees met on Monday, Nov. 13, 7:00pm, in person and with ZOOM thanks to Kathy Dunham. This meeting included financial reports, investment reports, Pastor's report, old business and new business items. Projects on the "to do" list include replacing the heating register in the left bathroom, repairing or replacing the door handle/bar at the Thrift Shop entrance, looking into purchasing a new lap top, ZOOM costs, curtains for the vestry to help with the sound issue, generator for the church, water filter to help with water issues, snow shoveling, parsonage and church furnace cleaning, plus the 2024 budget. Joe Dorner volunteered to rough draft the budget which is a huge help to the Trustees. The board also continues to update The Lovell UCC Policies and Procedures Book. Sixteen Employee Evaluations were received and meetings will be held with both the Pastor and Office Administrator. The next regular meeting is scheduled for 7:00pm on Dec. 11.

JOIN US
for
LUNCH

DRIVE-UP LUNCH

SATURDAY, JANUARY 27

**LOVELL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
1174 MAIN ST., LOVELL, MAINE**

10:00-1:00 (or until we sell out!)

\$5 PER PERSON

American Chop Suey, roll & dessert

**Just drop by or call Joyce at
928-3132 to reserve your meal**

**All proceeds from this lunch will be donated to our
local food pantries**

**Thank you for your
support!**

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION **Bible Adventures for December will be held on December 10th from 9:00-10:00 am for children age 4 and up.** Call the church office for more information.

MISSIONS Nineteen Christmas baskets are being assembled this year for families in our community. Thank you to everyone who has helped make this project possible. We continue to support our local food pantries with donation boxes available in the church vestry. If you, or someone you know, is in need of a frozen meal or emergency food items, please contact the church office.

CABINET Monthly Cabinet reports are available upon request. Please email Mary Heroux, Clerk at meheroux@gmail.com.

ONGOING PROGRAMS

CHILDREN

Bible Adventure classes for children in grades K-6 are offered once per month, November-May. Call the church office for more information.

EVENING BIBLE STUDY

This group meets on the 2nd & 4th Wednesday of each month (Oct-May). 6:30-9:00 pm. FMI contact Vicki at 925-1444.

MUSIC-CHOIR

Choir rehearsals are held Sunday mornings at 9:30 am followed by the choir's participation in worship.

MUSIC-HANDBELLS

Handbells rehearse Wednesdays from 9:30-10:30 and perform during worship monthly.

LADIES CIRCLE

This group meets on the second Tuesday of each month for a business meeting and throughout the year for special programs and events. All ladies are welcome to come as their schedule permits. FMI contact Linda Libby at 925-3661 or Carolyn Carter at 928-2080.

Pastor's office hours:

Monday 9:00-1:00

Wednesday 9:00-1:00

Email: pastor@lovellucc.org

Call or text (260)849-1512

Office Administrator's hours:

Monday 9:00-2:00

Wednesday 9:00-2:00

Office 925-1321

STAY IN TOUCH

COME SEE US

1174 Main St.

PO Box 232

Lovell, ME 04051

CALL US

(207)925-1321 (office)



Follow us on Facebook

VISIT US ONLINE

www.lovellucc.org

Email:

info@lovellucc.org

LUCC Thrift Shop

OPEN WEDNESDAYS & SATURDAYS

10:00-2:00

We continue to receive LOTS of great merchandise. Stop by and see! \$2/Bag sale the last Wednesday and Saturday of each month. Follow us on Facebook @Thrift Shop Lovell United Church of Christ for additional sales.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

PLEASE LET US KNOW IF YOU CAN HELP.

The Circuit Rider submission deadline for February is January 21st

Lovell United Church of Christ

Sunday Worship 10:30 am

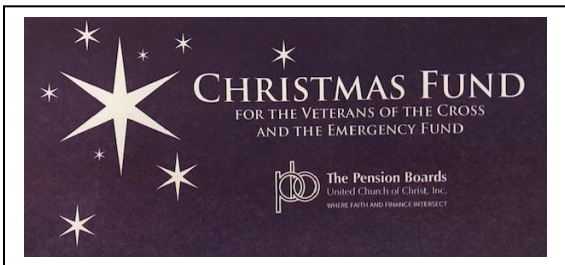
www.lovellucc.org

Rev. Neil H. Wilson, Pastor

Dan Moore, Director of Music

Heather Sawin, Office

The Helen Coe Trust Fund has a few funds available upon request for the remaining 2023 year available to nonprofit organizations serving the residents of Lovell, ME. Interested non-profit organizations should draft a letter of request for specific purpose, the amount of money needed, if the said organization has looked at other places/avenues for funds, an indication about how many Lovell residents are serviced, and how the amount of money requested will benefit the Town of Lovell residents. Please include a copy of the current operating budget including anticipated expenditures and revenues for the current operating or upcoming fiscal year. The letter of intent has a deadline of February 2, 2024 and can be sent to: Helen Coe Trust P.O. Box 185, Center Lovell, ME 04016.



CHRISTMAS FUND OFFERING/ Veterans of the Cross

The Christmas fund provides “care and compassion” in times of need for clergy and families who have faithfully served. “Our gifts help retired clergy, church staff and their surviving spouses pay bills, maintain their health insurance, and meet emergency needs. These servants of the church have spent lifetimes baptizing and blessing, teaching, and preaching, marrying and burying, comforting and empowering God’s people. Now through the Christmas Fund, we have an opportunity to sustain and empower them.”

In 2022, gifts to the Christmas Fund enabled:

- Monthly pension supplementation for 218, retired clergy and lay employees (\$1,042,726)
- Health benefits supplementation for 86 retired clergy and lay employees (\$181,389)
- Emergency grants for 55 individuals and families (\$138,022)
- Christmas “thank you” gift checks to 479 retired clergy and lay employees (\$278,500)

Please share love and compassion to our servants of the cross by giving to the CHRISTMAS FUND. Gifts may be shared throughout the month of December in the offering plate or by mailing a check to Lovell UCC, PO Box 232, Lovell, Maine 04051. (Please write “Christmas Fund” in the memo line.) In addition, the Christmas Eve Offering will be received for the “Christmas Fund”.



Please join us as you can. All are welcome here!

December 3 First Sunday of Advent - 10:30 am worship followed by a pizza lunch and “Hanging of the Greens”

December 10 Second Sunday of Advent - 10:30 am worship

December 15 Community Caroling event. Meet at the Lovell United Church of Christ at 3:45. We will travel by bus around town and return to the church at approximately 6:00 pm. All children must be accompanied by an adult.

December 17 Worship at 10:30. This will be a service of special music-Christmas carol sing, special choir music and performance by our Handbell Choir.

December 24 Christmas morning worship service at 10:30 am. Christmas Eve service at 7:00, a service of lessons and carols.

December 25 Merry Christmas! Church offices CLOSED