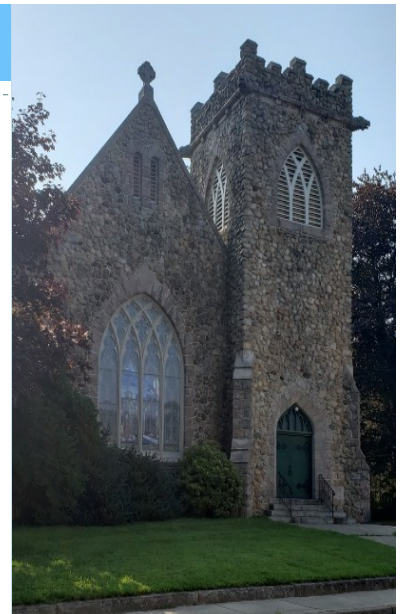


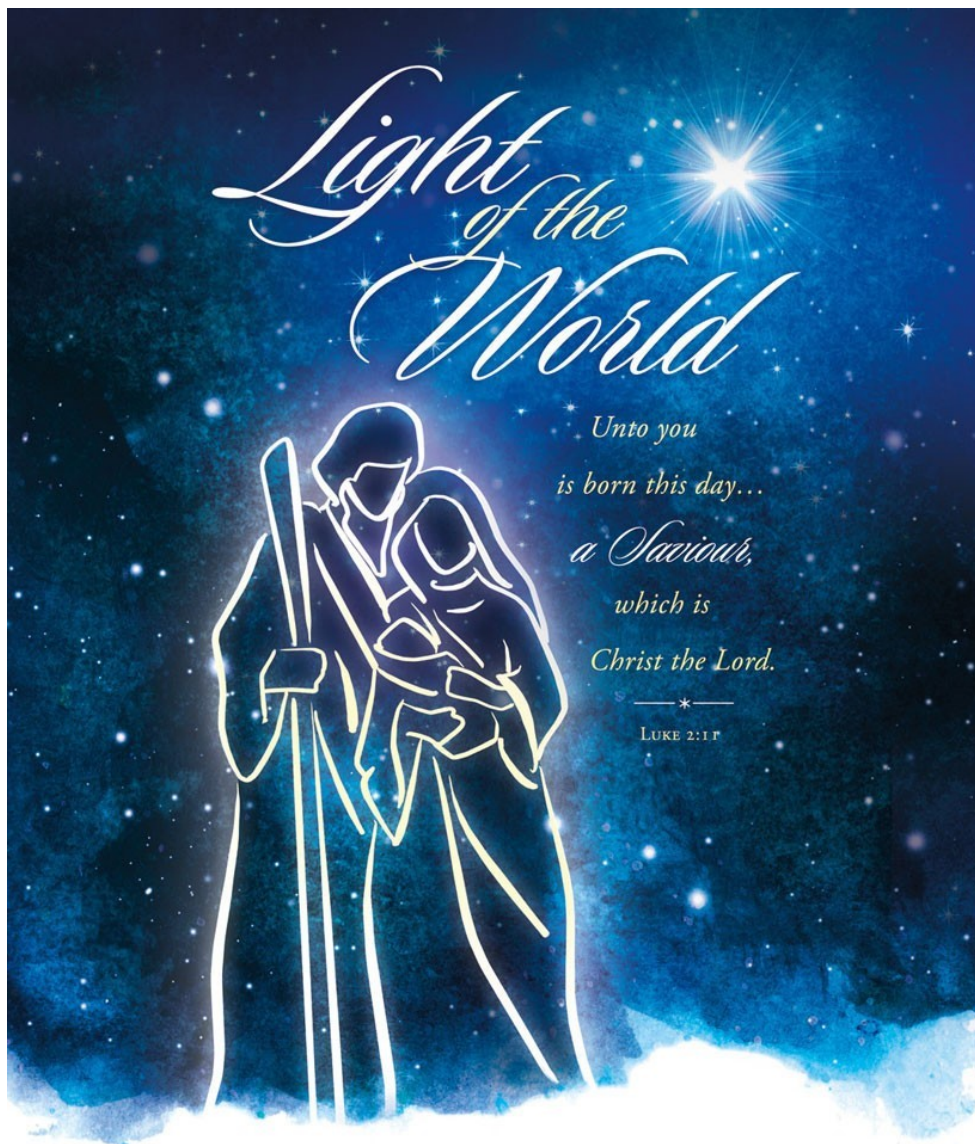


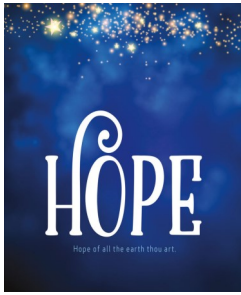
# The Gargoyle



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## PASTOR'S MUSINGS

**Advent Greetings to you all,**

On Sunday morning, we launched this year's Advent Season with the message of Hope. Before coming to Worship, I read a quote by Thomas Merton in which he reflected that "on that first Christmas, there was no room at the inn for Joseph and Mary... nor for Jesus in the inn of the world." Merton asked the question: "Is there room for Jesus in the inn of your heart this year?" What would that mean if you did? Would it change the way you go through this season? The way you buy presents this year?

{For all of us, please take some time to read the other messages in this Gargoyle to add to your Advent adventure, experiences, and wisdom.}

During the Worship Service, in my Children's Message, I invited those present to "take a look around at the Advent decorations that have transformed our sanctuary and consider what speaks to you this day that may nurture your spirit during this season. As we go through this month, see what happens as you look at it each week, or if something else jumps out at you. How does it help you to consider how the coming of Jesus into the world can deepen the love in *your heart* this year?"

I also encouraged us all to "be alert" for those moments when we become the messenger or angel in a situation because we have opened our hearts and minds to let the teachings of Jesus transform us. Then, our compassion and choice for love can help dispel a disagreement or power struggle and we may be surprised as we witness the move into a place of peace instead and can give thanks.

Back in 1982, I did a cross-stitch wall hanging of the *Prayer of St Francis* that has influenced my life for decades. It has called to me down through the ages and helped me to expand my mind and heart to welcome him in. May they also offer you some guidance this year.

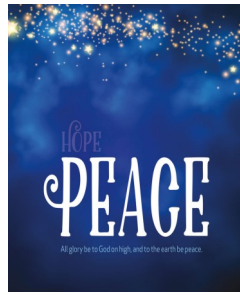
Peace and blessings to you all in this holy season,

Rev Lee Ireland

### **Prayer of St. Francis**

Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace;  
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;  
Where there is injury, pardon;  
Where there is doubt, faith;  
Where there is despair, hope;  
Where there is darkness, light;  
And where there is sadness, joy.  
O Divine Master,  
Grant that I may not so much seek  
To be consoled as to console;  
To be understood, as to understand;  
To be loved, as to love;  
For it is in giving that we receive,  
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,  
And it is in dying that we are born to Eternal Life.  
Amen.

## DEACON'S MESSAGE



### “Do You Hear What I Hear?”

One of my favorite pieces of Christmas music is the song “Do You Hear What I Hear?” It’s not an old chestnut like “O Tannenbaum” (1824) or “Good King Wenceslas” (1853); it was written in 1962 by Noël Regney and Gloria Shayne as a plea for peace during the Cuban Missile crisis.

Each aspect of the song touches me deeply. The lyrics, the meter of the poem, the use of the imagery, and the lovely melody are beautiful. It makes my heart swell each time I hear it. And, although it is not Biblically correct (Herod was not a nice king), the beauty of the song itself brings hope and light into the darkest corners of despair. It asks if we are listening for, hearing, and seeing all that is good in this world, given to us through the birth of the Christ child.

This Advent season, I hope we pause to listen, hear, see, and know that God’s love is with us through all the challenges and changes we face every day. I hope that we seek and find, God in the face of a little baby born to bring us goodness and light.

Light and Peace,

Sue Blaisdell

### “Do You Hear What I Hear?”

Said the night wind to the little lamb  
Do you see what I see  
Way up in the sky little lamb  
Do you see what I see  
A star, a star  
Dancing in the night  
With a tail as big as a kite  
With a tail as big as a kite

Said the little lamb to the shepherd boy  
Do you hear what I hear  
(Do you hear what I hear)  
Ringing through the sky shepherd boy  
Do you hear what I hear  
(Do you hear what I hear)  
A song, a song  
High above the trees  
With a voice as big as the sea  
With a voice as big as the sea

Said the shepherd boy to the mighty king  
Do you know what I know  
(Do you know what I know)  
In your palace warm mighty king  
Do you know what I know  
(Do you know what I know)  
A child, a child  
Shivers in the cold  
Let us bring him silver and gold  
Let us bring him silver and gold

Said the king to the people everywhere  
Listen to what I say  
(Listen to what I say)  
Pray for peace people everywhere  
Listen to what I say  
(Listen to what I say)  
The child, the child  
Sleeping in the night  
He will bring us goodness and light  
He will bring us goodness and light  
He will bring us goodness and light

## WEEKLY MEETINGS

**Sunday Worship**  
**December 5th, 12th,**  
**19th, & 26th**  
**10am**

**Christmas Eve Service**  
**7pm**

**Wednesday Prayer & Bible Study**  
**December 1st, 8th, 15th,**  
**22nd, & 29th 6pm via**  
**Zoom**

**Handbells:**  
Thursdays-6:30pm  
**Sr. Choir:**  
Thursdays-7:30pm

## MONTHLY MEETINGS

**DEACONS:**  
**DECEMBER 14TH**  
**5PM**

**LEADERSHIP:**  
**DECEMBER 14TH**  
**7PM**

**STEWARDSHIP:**  
**DECEMBER 26TH**  
**11:30AM**

**TRUSTEES:**  
**DECEMBER 12TH**  
**11:30AM**

**MISSIONS:**  
**DECEMBER 19TH**  
**11:30AM**

**WOMENS' FELLOWSHIP:**  
**DECEMBER 15TH**  
**12:00PM**  
**POTLUCK & YANKEE**  
**SWAP**

**SEARCH COMMITTEE:**  
**MONDAY EVENINGS VIA**  
**ZOOM**





## DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

**SUE BLAISDELL**

**ANJA BROOKS**

**PETER CHAPPELL**

**BRETT GULLICKSON**

**JAMES KERRIGAN**

**WAYNE SCHAFER**

**HAZEL SHEPHERD**

**PAUL SHINN**

**BETTE THOMSON**

**ANNE VENDITTI**

**JILL WILSON**



## STEWARDSHIP



While the 2022 Stewardship Campaign may have officially concluded, we'd like to think that its theme of "Rooted in Love" continues. We hope that the visuals of the rooted and growing plant has provided a perspective on the importance of and the appreciation for your continued support of Groton Congregational Church and its ministries.

If you haven't yet taken a plant home, there are more in Dutton Hall – please take one or two or three... While there, we hope that you can sit a bit and work on a puzzle. The time is often contemplative and perhaps there will be someone else there, also working on the puzzle, to engage in conversation – or just to enjoy the physical presence of another person.

It's never too late to submit a pledge card! Additional cards are located in Dutton Hall and can also be obtained from the church office. Please let us know if you did not receive a letter and we will make sure that you get one. Pledging allows you to make intentional decisions about your financial giving and in doing so, you make a conscious choice that reflects your faith and values.

There are many ways to fulfill your pledge: you can bring it on Sundays to be collected during church service; perhaps you live nearby and while taking a walk, you can place it in the door slot; you can mail it in. You can even set up direct deposit – see Bill Blaisdell or James Kerrigan for details.

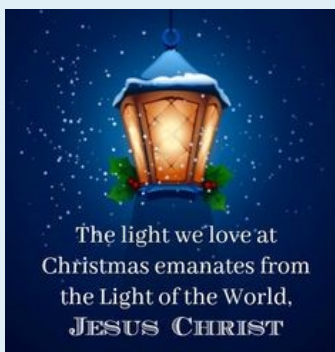
During 2022, we're going to promote what's been called "5 for 5." This is how it works: there are four months during the year where there is a fifth Sunday (January 30, May 29, July 31 and October 30). We are asking that on those Sundays, if you are able, to put in an extra \$5 (or any amount) in the collection plate. Thanks to Jill Martin for sharing the idea of "5 for 5."

"You cannot get through a single day without having an impact on the world around you. What you do makes a difference, and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make." Jane Goodall

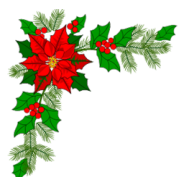
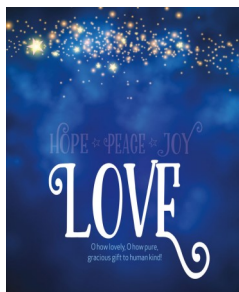
God's blessings be upon you.

Your Stewardship Committee,

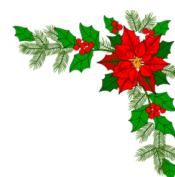
Cathy Johnson  
Sue Stottlemeyer  
Phyllis Meyer  
Doris Pulaski



## TREASURER'S MOMENT



### A Treasurer's Message Written on the First Sunday of Advent



The Stewardship Committee had a well organized campaign that ended with a very nice luncheon. One Sunday, as Cathy Johnson was showing us the progress of her nasturtium plant

to demonstrate the promise contained in the little seed from which it germinated, I was reminded of a time when my father was involved with a stewardship campaign in this very congregation. The plant he referenced at the time was a turnip and something about how an extremely successful stewardship chairman was described as someone who could squeeze blood from a turnip. I was so young then that he had to explain to me that it was only a saying. The imagery of plants grown from a tiny seed lends itself better to a positive stewardship message that pictures of getting blood from a turnip or from a stone.

Today is the First Sunday of Advent. James Kerrigan and I lit the candle of Hope. In the sense of Advent Hope is far more than a *wish*, it is the *expectation* of the arrival of Jesus as foretold by the prophets and, indeed, the Hope candle is sometimes called the Prophecy candle.

To switch to a less theological theme, but to something that kind of parallels the above: As acting treasurer I always *wish* for a higher level of donations to make my job easier and less stressful, but I have learned that one can have the *expectation* that the members and friends of Groton Congregational Church come through with sufficient support.

In order to fulfill that expectation please remember that our annual budget meeting is in January. The Board of Trustees must develop a budget to present at that meeting and they will need me, the staff, and committees to provide budget requests in time to go into a report to be made available by the second week in January. The most important part for the treasurer is to be able to make a projection of income with some confidence. I would urge everyone in the congregation who is planning to pledge for 2022 to do so as soon as possible. Also, in order to keep us from having to pull funds out of our investments please keep your pledges current. It was necessary at one point this past year to draw \$5,000 from our investments. A second time we came very close to making another draw down, but that was avoided because some pledges were brought up to date.

At the moment we have reached about 75% of the level of last year's pledges. In very rough round numbers our budget has been around \$150,000. Pledges are about \$100,000. Income from investments and plate collections cover much of the rest, but also we avoid depleting our endowment only when committees do not spend their budget, or we go without a CE director, or, as now, a number of our members volunteer to clean the building instead of paying a janitorial service. Not infrequently a member will also buy various supplies and not ask to be reimbursed. It is clear that we do have a very tight budget and need everyone of support as they are able. On the other hand we are blessed with angels among us.

It is common to take a few more weeks to reach, and hopefully surpass, the level of pledges from the previous year – so my hopeful expectations for the financial support by congregation are not diminished.

Have a Blessed Advent Season,

Bill Blaisdell



### A Message From Our Parish Visitor

If you know of anyone in need of a phone call or a visit, please contact Connie Stoddard or the church office.

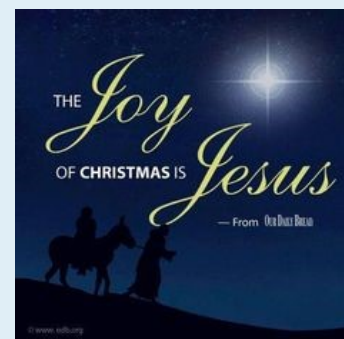
### Sanctuary Flowers

Honor that special person or occasion with a floral donation to the Sanctuary.



To do so, please contact Lisa at the church office if you would like to have your floral donation dedication printed in the bulletin and announced at worship.

For more information, please contact Janice Kimball.





## I WISH YOU ENOUGH



### I Wish You Enough

by Bob Perkins

Recently, I overheard a Mother and Daughter in their last moments together at the airport as the Daughter's departure had been announced. Standing near the security gate, they hugged and the Mother said: "I love you and I wish you enough."

The Daughter replied, "Mom, our life together has been more than enough. Your love is all I ever needed. I wish you enough, too, Mom."

They kissed and the Daughter left.

The Mother walked over to the window where I sat. Standing there, I could see she wanted and needed to cry. I tried not to intrude on her privacy but she welcomed me in by asking, "Did you ever say Good-Bye to someone knowing it would be forever?"

"Yes, I have," I replied. "Forgive me for asking but why is this a forever Good-Bye?"

"I am old and she lives so far away. I have challenges ahead and the reality is the next trip back will be for my funeral," she said.

"When you were saying Good-Bye, I heard you say, 'I wish you enough.' May I ask what that means?"

She began to smile. "That's a wish that has been handed down from other generations. My parents used to say it to everyone." She paused a moment and looked up as if trying to remember it in detail and she smiled even more. "When we said 'I wish you enough' we were wanting the other person to have a life filled with just enough good things to sustain them". Then turning towards me, she shared the following, reciting it from memory:

"I wish you enough sun to keep your attitude bright.

I wish you enough rain to appreciate the sun more.

I wish you enough happiness to keep your spirit alive.

I wish you enough pain so that the smallest joys in life appear much bigger.

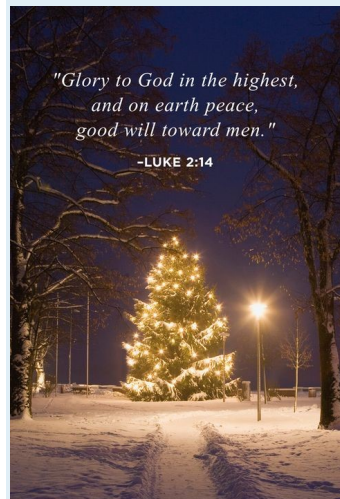
I wish you enough gain to satisfy your wanting.

I wish you enough loss to appreciate all that you possess.

wish you enough hellos to get you through the final good-bye."

She then began to cry and walked away.

They say it takes a minute to find a special person. An hour to appreciate them. A day to love them. And an entire life to forget them.



*"Glory to God in the highest,  
and on earth peace,  
good will toward men."*

-LUKE 2:14



## THE MOST REPRINTED EDITORIAL IN HISTORY

**DEAR EDITOR:** I am 8 years old.  
Some of my little friends say there is no Santa Claus.  
Papa says, 'If you see it in THE SUN it's so.'  
Please tell me the truth; is there a Santa Claus?  
**VIRGINIA O'HANLON.**  
115 WEST NINETY-FIFTH STREET.



**VIRGINIA**, your little friends are wrong. They have been affected by the skepticism of a skeptical age. They do not believe except they see. They think that nothing can be which is not comprehensible by their little minds. All minds, Virginia, whether they be men's or children's, are little. In this great universe of ours man is a mere insect, an ant, in his intellect, as compared with the boundless world about him, as measured by the intelligence capable of grasping the whole of truth and knowledge.

Yes, **VIRGINIA**, there is a Santa Claus. He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist, and you know that they abound and give to your life its highest beauty and joy. Alas! how dreary would be the world if there were no Santa Claus. It would be as dreary as if there were no **VIRGINIAS**. There would be no childlike faith then, no poetry, no romance to make tolerable this existence. We should have no enjoyment, except in sense and sight. The eternal light with which childhood fills the world would be extinguished.

Not believe in Santa Claus! You might as well not believe in fairies! You might get your papa to hire men to watch in all the chimneys on Christmas Eve to catch Santa Claus, but even if they did not see Santa Claus coming down, what would that prove?



Nobody sees Santa Claus, but that is no sign that there is no Santa Claus. The most real things in the world are those that neither children nor men can see. Did you ever see fairies dancing on the lawn? Of course not, but that's no proof that they are not there. Nobody can conceive or imagine all the wonders there are unseen and unseeable in the world.

You may tear apart the baby's rattle and see what makes the noise inside, but there is a veil covering the unseen world which not the strongest man, nor even the united strength of all the strongest men that ever lived, could tear apart. Only faith, fancy, poetry, love, romance, can push aside that curtain and view and picture the supernal beauty and glory beyond. Is it all real? Ah, **VIRGINIA**, in all this world there is nothing else real and abiding.

No Santa Claus! Thank God! he lives, and he lives forever. A thousand years from now, Virginia, nay, ten times ten thousand years from now, he will continue to make glad the heart of childhood.


Francis Pharcellus Church , 1897







## A MESSAGE FROM SALLY TURNER

Words cannot express how much my family and I appreciated all the many cards, phone calls and love expressed for BURT and us. BURT so loved the church and the community of friends there. I'm sure his spirit will remain in the music sung and played. Thank you all from the bottom of my heart. I love you all. 

Sally Turner



## WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Women's Fellowship Holiday Fair on November 13<sup>th</sup> was a huge success. Thank you to the many creative and talented members of our church who put so much time and effort into making it such a special day. Thank you to all the people who donated baked good and those that came and made purchases. Bless you all!!

Our next meeting is on **December 15<sup>th</sup> at 12 noon**. We will have a brief meeting and then enjoy a potluck luncheon. Following lunch, we will have a **Yankee Swap** with gifts of \$10.00 or less exchanged. We so missed this last year! Women of the church are invited to join us. It is a great time to get together and give thanks for the many blessings that surround us.

Sally Turner





**Faith Brings Hope That No Pandemic Can Quench**  
 by [John Dorhauer](#) | published on Nov 26, 2021  
 In his 2021 Advent letter to the church, United Church of Christ General Minister and President John C. Dorhauer acknowledges the world's second COVID Christmas.

Dear Friends in Christ,  
 The world has changed.

Familiar patterns in life, in worship and in work have been closeted in order to secure the safety and health of ourselves, our loved ones, our classmates and colleagues.



New patterns will arrive, some of which we will welcome, some of which we will not.

Grief upon grief has been visited upon us all. Hope and joy are harder to locate these days; while virulence and distrust, anger and vitriol appear around every corner.

In his Advent hymn “Night of Silence”, Marty Haugen has composed these lyrics:

*Cold are the people, winter of life.  
 We tremble in shadows this cold endless night.  
 Frozen in the snow lie roses sleeping.  
 Flowers that will echo the sunrise.  
 Fire of hope is our only warmth.  
 Weary, its flame will be dying soon.*

His poetic lyrics capture our collective ennui. He names it: cold are the people. Frozen in the snow lie roses sleeping, flowers that will echo the sunrise. With every aching bone in our body we want this winter to come to an end and for the shadows of this cold, endless night we have been living through to accede to the light of a new sun.

The final verse of this beautiful hymn of Marty’s speaks again of the hope faith engenders from the shadowed valleys we have been navigating with deepening depths of despair. He gives voice to our longing for new light – a light we once knew when love was incarnated in Jesus:

*Spirit among us, shine like the star  
 Your light that guides shepherds and kings from afar  
 Shimmer in the sky so empty, lonely  
 Rising in the warmth of your Son’s love  
 Star unknowing of night and day  
 Spirit we wait for your Loving Son.*

Spirit, we wait.

We have waited long.

Month after long, lonely month.

We wait for your Loving Son.

“Come, O Come, Emmanuel,” we sing.

O come, thou Dayspring from on high, and cheer us by thine advent here.

Disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death’s dark shadows put to flight.

We need Thee, O we need Thee. Every hour we need Thee.

From the shadowed valleys we cry our “Emmanuel, come!” — waiting for the dayspring to cheer us, knowing that frozen in the snow lies roses sleeping.

This is our hope. No pandemic can quench the flickering flames of faith deep within us.

We await again the dawning of another rising son.

Come, o come – our Emmanuel.

Happy Christmas,  
 The Rev. Dr. John C. Dorhauer  
 General Minister and President  
 United Church of Christ



## DECEMBER WORSHIP SERVICES

<b>First Sunday of Advent</b> November 28, 2021 Sermon: "Be alert"	<u>Jeremiah 33:14-16</u>	<u>Psalms 25:1-10</u>	<u>1 Thessalonians 3:9-13</u>	<u>Luke 21:25-36</u>
<b>Second Sunday of Advent</b> December 5, 2021 Sermon: "Preparing our Hearts"	<u>Baruch 5:1-9</u> or <u>Malachi 3:1-4</u>	<u>Luke 1:68-79</u>	<u>Philippians 1:3-11</u>	<u>Luke 3:1-6</u>
<b>Third Sunday of Advent</b> December 12, 2021 <i>Lessons &amp; Carols</i>	<u>Zephaniah 3:14-20</u>	<u>Isaiah 12:2-6</u>	<u>Philippians 4:4-7</u>	<u>Luke 3:7-18</u>
<b>Fourth Sunday of Advent</b> December 19, 2021 Sermon: "My Soul Magnifies the Lord"	<u>Micah 5:2-5a</u>	<u>Luke 1:46b-55</u> or <u>Psalms 80:1-7</u>	<u>Hebrews 10:5-10</u>	<u>Luke 1:39-45, (46-55)</u>
<b>Nativity of the Lord - Proper I</b> <b>December 24, 2021</b> <b>7 PM Service</b> Sermon: "For Unto Us"	<u>Isaiah 9:2-7</u>	<u>Psalms 96</u>	<u>Titus 2:11-14</u>	<u>Luke 2:1-14, (15-20)</u>
<b>First Sunday after Christmas Day</b> December 26, 2021 HYMN SING	<u>1 Samuel 2:18-20, 26</u>	<u>Psalms 148</u>	<u>Colossians 3:12-17</u>	<u>Luke 2:41-52</u>

# December 2021



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
			Prayer Meeting via Zoom 6pm			
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Worship Service 10am			Prayer Meeting via Zoom 6pm			
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Worship Service 10am Lessons and Carols			Blue Christmas Service 7pm			
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Worship Service 10am			Prayer Meeting via Zoom 6pm		Christmas Eve Service 7pm	<i>Merry Christmas</i>
26	27	28	29	30	31	
Worship Service 10am Hymn Sing			Prayer Meeting via Zoom 6pm			

# Church Events



A SERVICE OF  
**LESSONS  
& CAROLS**

Sunday, December 12th 10am

Featuring the  
Handbell & Senior Choirs

*Blue*  
**Christmas**

a service of remembrance and hope

December 15th 7pm



Christmas Eve Service



7pm



**Hymn**  
Sing

Sunday  
December 26th  
10am

New Directory Will Be Available Soon

**CHURCH DIRECTORY**  
*Update*

Please contact the office with your  
current information for inclusion



## Grammies Jammies

Please turn in your tags & PJs for  
the children at the Early Childhood  
Development Center by  
December 10th





# Church Events

**Pop- up Pageant**  
**Sunday, January 2, 2022**  
**10 AM Worship Service**



Tap into your inner child to re-enact the story of Jesus' birth. This pop-up production will allow you to star in the role that you choose. Have you ever wanted to be an angel, a shepherd, wise seeker or animal at the manger? This is your chance.

If you will be joining us on January 2 and would like to participate in the pageant on the spur of the moment, please join us. All are welcome. There will be a sign up in Dutton Hall along with a variety of costumes from which to choose.

We will also be looking for a Reader to help tell the story.

Please contact Anne Campbell with any questions; [ascampbell1126@gmail.com](mailto:ascampbell1126@gmail.com), 860-917-2194.



## Virtual Poinsettia Drive

Honor your loved ones this Christmas with a virtual poinsettia by donating to one of the church funds.

The list of loved ones and donors will be included in the December 26, 2021 Church Bulletin. Please make your check payable to "Groton Congregational Church" with a note indicating the fund you're donating to, your loved ones' name, and the donors' name. Checks may be mailed or dropped off in the church mailbox. Please write "Attention Stewardship" on the envelope. The Deadline is December 19, 2021.

You may donate to any of the following funds: Restoration, General, Memorial, Memorial Scholarship, Community Meals, or Deacons.



## Local Events



*Lantern  
Light Village*

**A MEMORABLE  
HOLIDAY EXTRAVAGANZA**  
Mystic Seaport

December 10, 11, 17, 18, 20, 21 and 22

Cappella Cantorum Master Works Chorus Presents

ANNUAL  
HANDEL  
**MESSIAH**  
SING  
or  
LISTEN

December 19th 4pm

The Kate  
300 Main St.  
Old Saybrook

Tickets \$10.00 pp



**33rd Annual  
Niantic Light Parade**  
December 11th 5pm

Main Street, Niantic



**Live Nativity Scene**

December 11th 1pm-3pm

Parade Plaza, New London

The Three Kings will accept  
non-perishable food items for the soup kitchen

Performance by The Greater New London Community Choir



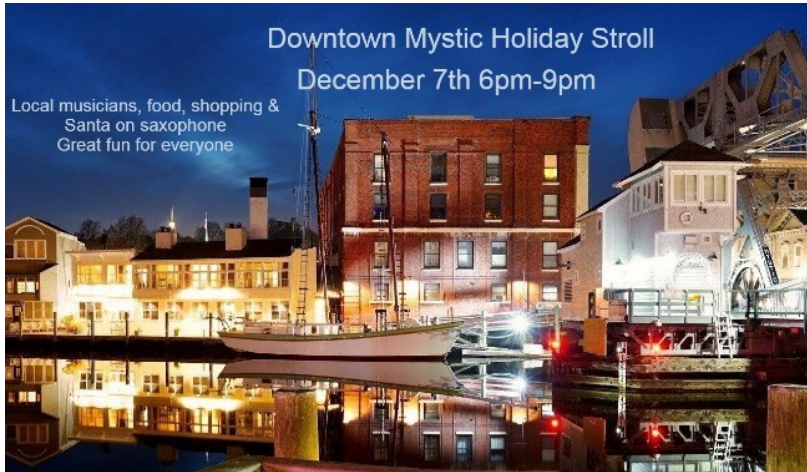
***Holiday Shop By the Sea***

Sunday- December 5, 2021  
from 11- 3pm  
at the  
Port and Starboard Ballroom at  
Ocean Beach - New London

Free Admission- Live Music- Family Friendly  
Meet Santa and some of his  
Friends from the North Pole!



# Local Events



Downtown Mystic Holiday Stroll

December 7th 6pm-9pm

Local musicians, food, shopping &  
Santa on saxophone  
Great fun for everyone



The Garde Arts Center

December 12th 11am

THE NUTCRACKER

Tickets on Sale Now

Families, Kids, & PETS Welcome!

Ledyard Congregational Church

Hosted By Ledyard C.H.A.I.N.



Ledyard Animal Control Presents...

Whiskers In Wonderland



December 4th 1pm-4pm

Raffles, Baked Goods, Crafters, Vendors & SANTA  
Proceeds benefit the Ledyard Animal Shelter



### Our Vision

To continue our three-hundred year tradition of spiritual presence and service to the community

To live and grow in the spirit of Jesus Christ

To share our time, talents and resources in support of community and other missions, through which Jesus Christ might be made known to others

To welcome into the Groton Congregational Church family all those who share our love of Jesus Christ and our mission of community service.

To continue a tradition of caring, comfort and support for all those within the Groton Congregational Church family.



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## Bring Your Family to Our Family. We are here to celebrate Jesus Christ with you.

Located near historic Fort Griswold, by the banks of the Thames River, The Groton Congregational Church welcomes you with open hearts, minds, and arms. We offer a warm and progressive environment for worshippers from all walks of life. Our motto is; *No matter who you are or where you are Life's Journey you are always welcome here.*

If you want to know the love of God and the wonderful plans God has in store for you, come and celebrate the love of Jesus with us through the spoken word and the joy of music.

**Sunday Worship begins at 10am.**



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