

ON THE COMMON

December 2023



A Few Thoughts...

BY REV. KORTE

Hello Slatersville Congregational Church.

I hope you are all able to take a breath, and make time to rest and wait for the birth of Jesus and don't get too overwhelmed by the hustle and bustle of the Christmas season. Actually the Christmas season begins with Christmas Day and lasts 12 days. No, that doesn't come from the song. The song comes from that tradition!

This time of waiting, which we begin Sunday December 3rd, is the liturgical season of Advent, not to be confused with the Hallmark Christmas movie season or Christmas shopping season... we're talking apples and oranges.

This year SCC has produced its very own Advent Devotional. Each day begins in the spirit of prayer, a short scripture reading followed by a reflection written by one of the friends and members of Slatersville Congregational Church. It is an affirming experience to read a devotional as a community whether it be Lenten or Advent, but there's something very special about beginning each day with a reflection written by someone from the community. These booklets have been mailed to friends who love this community but live too far away to attend. They have also been brought to friends in assisted living so they can follow along as well. In fact, you may notice that a couple of the reflections have been written by our friends abroad.

Margaret and Michell really made the actual physical production of the booklets a reality. Each day's reading will also be posted on Facebook daily and delivered to those on the constant contact e-mail list at the beginning of each day, thanks to Jenni, Margaret and Donna. But most importantly perhaps, the devotional was made possible by all of the folks who took a chance and wrote reflections even if they didn't quite feel comfortable doing so. They took a risk and they trusted their community, much as April and Bob did when they were singing solos up front in church. It takes a willingness to look like a fool, to trust and to take chances in order to really grow spiritually. Individuals don't grow playing it safe and neither does a community. As a community we need to put ourselves "out there" the way the folks in this devotional did. As a community grows through spiritual practice and trust, they are able to project to the world around them who they are in a powerful way. It's not a mystery what they stand for, it's obvious. That one of my hopes for SCC.

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2023 OFFICERS OF THE CHURCH

- Jenni Hull, Moderator
- Ruth Mills, Clerk
- Jean Meo, Financial Clerk
- Margaret Hanoian, Treasurer

CHURCH STAFF

- Korte Yeo, Bridge Minister
- John Staples, Director of Music
- Jill Boday, Handbell Choir
- Hope Paul, Nursery Attendant
- Romeo Mendes, Sexton

2023 COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

- Ruth Mills, Caring
- Michell Eskeli, Diaconate
- Alma Morin, Hospitality
- Bob Meo, Stewardship
- Martha Hunt, Music
- Rick Stelle, Property
- Gretchen Westhoven, Missions
- George Briggs, Christian Ed
- Bob Meo, Fundraising
- Bob Meo, Projects

DIACONATE

- Michell Eskeli, Chairperson
- Christine Bonas
- Marilyn Briggs
- Marsha Brodeur
- Richard Brodeur
- Sandy Gamache
- Martha Hunt
- Darlene Magaw
- April McAllister
- Stephen Wowk

A Few Thoughts... (Cont.)

BY REV. KORTE

The ONA Core Team introduced the idea of purchasing a UCC “Be the Church” banner at our last council meeting with the motion being quickly approved. The banner has already arrived and been placed between the pillars in front of the church by Steve and Jim, with Bob taking on a supervisory role.

January 7, we will have a short meeting after church with prospective new members. If you have been hanging out with the good folks at SCC for some time now, maybe this is the time to consider joining! As of today, I believe we have 6-8 people planning to join. The ceremony will occur during the service on January 28th, the day of your annual congregational meeting. December 17th we will have a baptism for baby Elena, with soon-to-be members (and adoring parents) Jessica and Matt Silva. December 31st we will be baptizing baby Violet, the beloved granddaughter of Karen Yetter and Karin Marchessault.

The sign-ups for Bible study and crucial conversations are available on the kitchen counter at coffee hour. We will have a brief meeting after church at coffee hour on January 14th to discuss the details of the Bible study. If you have mentioned to me more than once that you sure wish there was a Bible study at Slatersville Congregational Church, I had better see your name on that list! About 10 or 12 of you have either read crucial conversations or portions of it. Someone has already purchased the small group leadership book. If improved collaboration and the success of this community is important to you, please sign up for this group. It will be lay led.

The holiday season is a joyous one, but also carries with it much sadness for many. For some it will be the first or second Christmas without a beloved one, a spouse, child or parent, maybe a sibling or friend. For others the holidays come with painful memories or sadness around estranged family or friends or strained relation. For some of us holidays are difficult. With that in mind, at 7pm on Wednesday evening, December 20th there will be a “Longest Night”, sometimes referred to as a “Blue Christmas” service. It will be a time of reflection, remembrance and a place where it's OK to not be ecstatically happy for a few moments. Far from depressing a longest night service is a time to be supported and show support for those who may struggle during the holiday season. Please let friends in grief groups and recovery groups know about this special service.

And, well, it's a little early, but MERRY CHRISTMAS!



Adopt a Family for Christmas

Missions Moment

BY ALISON KRAUSE

The North Smithfield Food Pantry remains a strong support for so many in our community who are in need. When the Pantry reached out to Missions asking if Slatersville Congregational Church would be able to help out with gift cards to complete the Thanksgiving baskets, we were able to meet their need thanks to the generosity of our congregation. Missions purchased 65 \$35 Stop & Shop gift cards for a total of \$2,275. The Food Pantry and their clients were deeply grateful.

In recognition of Veterans’s Day and the depth of gratitude that we feel for all who have served, Missions voted to give \$500 to Operation Stand Down Rhode Island. OSDRI is Rhode Island’s primary nonprofit resource for homeless and at-risk veterans. The organization offers a wide-range of services including supportive permanent and transitional housing, legal and VA Benefit representation, intensive case management, basic human needs assistance (for example, food and clothing), and employment training programs. Our donation will help to strengthen the veteran community by providing wrap-around services to veterans in need.

Believe it or not, it is time for our Annual ADOPT-A-FAMILY gift drive. Our church will be supporting 3 families in the community this year. Please help us out by selecting a gift request slip during Coffee Hour on December 3rd. After you have made your purchase, please wrap your gift and TAPE THE SLIP to the bottom of the wrapped package. Return your gift on or before Sunday, December 17th and help make a family’s Christmas one to remember



NS Food Pantry - December

BY DENISE BRANDENBURG

The North Smithfield Food Pantry has need of the following items in the month of December: Pasta, Beans and Tuna

The Pantry hours for DECEMBER will be:

- Saturday, December 16th at 10am
- Tuesday, December 19th at 5:30pm
- Saturday, December 23rd at 10am
- Saturday, December 30th at 10am





Christmas Dates to Remember...

December 3rd at 8:30am
Breakfast with the Wisemen.

December 8th at 7:00pm
Christmas Caroling Service @ East
Blackstone Quaker Meeting House.
Snow Date is December 15.

December 9
Delivery Date for Memorial
Poinsettia Plants. (Forms on the
Lobby Table).

December 10
Mitten Tree Sunday.

December 17th
Adopt a Family Deadline

December 20th at 7pm - Longest
Night Service. A Candle light
Service of Healing and Hope

December 24th - Christmas Eve
10am - Worship Service
5pm - Family Christmas Eve Service
11pm - Candle Light Service

2024 Volunteers Needed!

Our Church Committees are running a little short-handed lately, and WE NEED YOU!

As we welcome new people to our church family and we try new things, there is always room for new voices and ideas. Why don't you add yours?

Most of our committees are meeting virtually, or on Sundays, so it's easier than ever to participate. We can find the right "fit" for your talents, interests, and your availability – just say YES!

If you're willing to join in this effort, even in just small way, please call or text Jenni Hull at 508-958-4830, or send an email to slatersvillechurch@gmail.com. She can help you find the right opportunity for you in 2024!

You can play an IMPORTANT role in creating a bright future for our Church!!

Stewardship Update

BY JEAN MEO

Thank you to all who have returned their pledge cards for our Stewardship Campaign. As of December 1st we have received a return of about 40%. We would appreciate a response by December 17th to enable the Finance Committee to develop our 2024 budget. Thank you again and enjoy the holidays!



OUR SINCERE THANKS

BY JOHN STAPLES

The Senior Choir is so excited about the new Choir Robes! We would like to thank a couple of people. Thank you Rick Stelle who led the charge with another Trivia Night in benefit of the purchase of the robes. The evening raised \$500!



We would also like to express our deepest gratitude to a Donor who would prefer to remain anonymous, for donating the funds for the remainder of the cost for the purchase of the new Choir Robes. Your kindness and generosity has our deepest gratitude. Thank you both so very much for your generous efforts and contributions.



December 21st, the winter solstice, is the longest night of the year. With the holidays and the increased amount of darkness, this time of year can be especially difficult for those suffering with grief, loss, or depression in the face of the death of a loved one, the loss of a job, or a struggle with addiction.

If you are struggling in this way we want you to know you aren't alone, others are searching to find light in the midst of the darkness as well. Therefore, we invite you to join us for this opportunity for worship, prayer, reflection, and we pray also for hope and healing, this holiday season as we gather the night before the solstice for the Longest Night: A Service of Rest & Reflection.

Wednesday, December 20th,
7:00pm

Slatersville Congregational Church