Pastoral Musings...

Newness intrigues us. New hobbies, new friends and new years all bring with them hope refreshed. Yet we also often falter in embracing new things. A huge percentage of new years’ resolutions dissolve before the end of January, for just one example. How might we strive to make positive changes in this year to embrace enriching newness? I find rituals can help a lot, which is why we offer opportunities for embracing newness at church every year, not because any of us needs to change for the sake of changing, but simply just in case some among us may want to try something new. Might you be in a spiritual place that desires something new? If so, you are especially invited to join in any and all of the church events which might just help you do so.

In addition to embracing the new, we are also doing many things which we always do, including our Annual Meeting and trying a fine old habit again — our periodic Worship Task Team Meetings. You will see notices about those things among the pages of this Bell tower. Whether you are seeking things new and transformational, or tried and true, you are welcome here.

Yours on the Way,
Pastor Tadd

From Your Outreach Committee

**Food Pantry**

Thanks to those who continue to donate food and personal care products to the Food Pantry; it is still well stocked and used by many. However, there has been an increased demand for refrigerated items, especially proteins. There has been a decline in volunteers willing to open and close The Pantry on Monday and Wednesday. If you wish to volunteer to open and close the pantry, you can sign up by going to the Westhampton Congregational United Church of Christ website at [www.westhamptonchurchucc.org](http://www.westhamptonchurchucc.org/) and following the link to Food Bank Volunteers.

The hours of operation have not changed. (Monday 5pm-8pm, Wednesday 5pm-8pm, Friday 11am-2pm and Saturday 9am-4pm) Again, a special thank you to all those that help us provide this service to our community.

**Take & Eat**

The Westhampton Congregational United Church of Christ and St. Philip’s Episcopal Church continue to work together on the 4th Saturday of the month to provide meals to those in need by delivering weekend meals. It takes many hands to get the job done and if you would like to participate in this worthy cause sign-up sheets are now available online at [https://www.tinyurl.com/takeandeat](https://www.tinyurl.com/takeandeat) for the January 22, 2022 meal preparation and delivery. In addition to looking for volunteers to work for this worthwhile cause, monetary donations are being accepted. Checks should be made payable to and mailed directly to the Westhampton Congregational United Church of Christ. Please indicate, Take and Eat Program, in the memo portion of your check. The money received will be used to purchase food items necessary to make the meals that have not been donated.

**Cot Shelter**

The Cot Shelter is once again up and running. The Westhampton Congregational United Church of Christ has agreed to provide a hot meal to those less fortunate, on the first Tuesday of each month. Several volunteers are needed to collectively prepare a main course, along with a vegetable or salad, rolls or bread, and dessert for approximately 25 people. The committee is also asking for a donation of milk and juice. This program will continue through April 2022. If you would like to volunteer by preparing a main course or by donating vegetables, rolls, bread, milk, juice or by making a dessert for any of the next three meals (February 1, 2022, March 1, 2022 or April 5, 2022), please contact Shirley Raymond.

**18 Degrees**

This year’s 18 Degrees request for Gift Cards was a HUGE success! Thanks to the generosity of our parishioners, a total of $850 worth of gift cards were delivered for distribution. Because of your donations, several families in need will receive new clothing, toys and stockings this Christmas.
### Regular Church Meetings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sun.</td>
<td>10:00</td>
<td>Morning Worship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>in person and by Zoom:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Meeting ID: 819 2753 9139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Password: 237347</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon.</td>
<td>5-8pm</td>
<td>Food Pantry open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6:30pm</td>
<td>Cub Scouts (bi-weekly)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7:00pm</td>
<td>WOW (4th)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wed.</td>
<td>5-8pm</td>
<td>Food Pantry open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7:00pm</td>
<td>WaS (1st) via Zoom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7:00pm</td>
<td>Council (4th) via Zoom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thurs.</td>
<td>7:00pm</td>
<td>Choir rehearsal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri.</td>
<td>11am-2pm</td>
<td>Food Pantry open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7:00pm</td>
<td>AA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat.</td>
<td>9am-4pm</td>
<td>Food Pantry open</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Women’s Fellowship Director

- **January** - Jean Webster
- **Maureen Dempsey and Rick Tracy**
- **Cheryl Fuller Malinowski**

### Coffee Hour

- **January 2** - Mark and Dolores Thornhill
- **January 9** - Bob and Pat Miller
- **January 16** - Cheryl Fuller Malinowski
- **January 23** - Bill and Janice Tracy
- **January 30** - Lynn Willard

### Flowers

- **January 2** - Poinsettias
- **January 9** - Julie and Stephen Holt
- **January 16** - Flower Committee
- **January 23** - Courtney and Stephen Campbell
- **January 30** - John and Mary Barber

### Regular Town Hours/Meetings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mon.</td>
<td>9am-12pm</td>
<td>Board of Assessors – Annex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9am-1pm</td>
<td>Administrative Ass't by appt only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7:00pm</td>
<td>SelectBoard (bi-weekly) – Town Hall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6pm-7:00pm</td>
<td>Fire Arms Permits (2nd) – Annex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tues.</td>
<td>9am-12pm</td>
<td>Town Accountant – Annex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9am-1pm</td>
<td>Administrative Ass't by appt only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5pm-7:00pm</td>
<td>by appt only – Building Inspector – Annex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5pm-8:00pm</td>
<td>Tax Collector – phone/email only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6:00pm</td>
<td>Fire Dept. (1st, 3rd) – Highway Garage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6:00pm</td>
<td>Friends of the Library (1st) – Library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7:00pm</td>
<td>Zoning Bd of Appeals (2nd) – Annex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7:30pm</td>
<td>Planning Board (2nd) – Annex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wed.</td>
<td>8am-4pm</td>
<td>Town Clerk - by appt only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9am-12pm</td>
<td>Board of Assessors – Annex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9am-1pm</td>
<td>Administrative Ass't by appt only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6:00pm</td>
<td>Transfer Station hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7:00pm</td>
<td>Conservation (1st, 3rd) – Town Hall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thurs.</td>
<td>9am-12pm</td>
<td>Board of Assessors – Annex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12:00pm</td>
<td>COA (1st) – via Zoom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1:00pm</td>
<td>Board of Health (1st) – Annex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5pm-7:00pm</td>
<td>Tax Collector – phone/email only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7:00pm</td>
<td>Library Trustees (2nd) – Library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri.</td>
<td>9:30am</td>
<td>COA Board Mtg (last) – via Zoom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7:00pm</td>
<td>AA (weekly) – Westhampton Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat.</td>
<td>9am-3pm</td>
<td>Transfer Station hours</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Church Annual Reports Due

Committee chairs / secretaries are asked to submit your Annual Reports to Julie at westhamptonchurchucc@comcast.net by Sunday, January 9, 2022. The Annual Report will then be prepared and available to everyone for review on Sunday, January 16, one week prior to our Annual Meeting, which is scheduled for Sunday, January 23. The Annual Report will be sent electronically as a PDF file to the church email list and posted to the church’s website. Printed copies will be available at the church as well.

### Nominating Committee Begins Their Work

As we gear up for another church program year, the Nominating Committee will be busy filling vacancies; please be ready to say YES! when asked to serve in some way, such as Christian Education, Worship & Spirituality (Deacons), and the other important committees. Thank you!

### Church Annual Meeting

All church members and friends are encouraged to join us after worship for the Church Annual Meeting, on Sunday, January 23. We will begin with a Potluck Brunch at 11:30am - please bring whatever you wish if you are able. After we eat we will begin the meeting, sometime after 12:00 noon. Your voice and opinion are important to the discussions and decisions that need to be made; please plan to participate in this vital part of our church life.
January Worship Themes & Texts
* Topics may change as the Spirit directs!

January 2   New Leaves for a New Year
Ecclesiastes 3:1-8; James 5:16-20
It is time for us to consider again how we can turn New Year’s resolutions into commitments to God through prayer and flash paper.

January 9   Epiphany Sunday
Isaiah 60:1-6; Matthew 2:1-12
Where do you see heavenly light guiding you in your life? Join us as we explore the Epiphany story and send the light of Christ into the world.

January 16  Baptismal Remembrance Service
Acts 8:14-17; Luke 3:15-17, 21-22
Join us to explore baptism and experience some holy water while we are at it!

January 23  Em-Body-Ment
Psalm 19; 1 Corinthians 12:12-31a
In a world which often seems oppositional, what wisdom might St. Paul offer us about being parts of one another?

January 30  Hometown Trouble
Psalm 71; Luke 4:21-30
Jesus was not always appreciated. Come find out more…

Worship Task Team
We used to gather folks to make suggestions about and plan worship together before we were all separated for a long while. So now we are back at it — and you are invited to join in on Sunday, January 9 right after worship to look forward to Lent and Eastertide and consider how we can all make them wonderful this year. I hope you’ll join us.

From Your Stewardship Committee
As of the writing of this stewardship report, we have pledges of financial support for our church of $92,732 from 40 pledging units. We expect to have roughly 20 more people pledging with hopes that that will get us up to what we got for pledges last year. We are so blessed to have such generous and supportive members. If you haven’t yet pledged, we will accept pledges at any time. That said, we hope that we will receive them before January, so please get yours at a Sunday morning service, or let someone on stewardship know and we will get one to you. Many thanks to all who bring their support by donating their time, talents, and/or treasure to keep our church open, active, and vibrant.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monthly Church Financial Picture</th>
<th>YTD Actual as of Nov</th>
<th>YTD Budget as of Nov</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pledged Local</td>
<td>90,219</td>
<td>90,786</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Pledged Local</td>
<td>7,923</td>
<td>6,417</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Local</td>
<td>22,364</td>
<td>24,077</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL LOCAL</td>
<td>120,506</td>
<td>121,280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission Pledged</td>
<td>10,054</td>
<td>10,107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Offerings</td>
<td>1,790</td>
<td>1,517</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL MISSIONS</td>
<td>11,844</td>
<td>11,624</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Youth Escape Room Outing

Sunday, January 16
Meet at the church at noon to have an adventure in an escape room at All-In Adventures in Hadley. Lunch will follow, all ages are invited, and it is all on the church! Their current policy is that vaccinated individuals are invited to gather without a mask as they feel comfortable doing so. Other individuals may join in the fun with masks. If the requirements for participations change, we will let you know.

Family Movie Night Is Back!
Friday, January 28
The CE Committee is hosting a free Family Movie night at the Church. We will provide pizza at 6:00pm, with the movie beginning in the sanctuary at 6:30pm. We will watch The Mitchells vs. the Machines (rated PG). This animated adventure comedy film is about a quirky, dysfunctional family’s road trip that is upended when they find themselves in the middle of the robot apocalypse and suddenly become humanity’s unlikeliest last hope. Feel free to bring a pillow and blanket and come enjoy pizza and a fun movie with your friends!

Women’s Fellowship - Material Aid
Tuesday, January 11
The Women’s Fellowship will have a Material Aid meeting on Tuesday, January 11th at 7:00pm at the church. We have chosen 2 projects to work on. We are collecting items for both the Welcome Home Refugee Resettlement Program run by the Catholic Charities Agency for Afghan refugees, and also the Interfaith Cot Shelter in Northampton. We will be packing up kits at the meeting for each of these deserving groups. The following lists are what we are asking for and all donations should be new.

Welcome Home household kits: dust pan and brush, shower curtain and rings, sponges and cleaning cloths, flashlights with batteries

Interfaith Cot Shelter hygiene kits: hand towel and washcloth, toothbrush, toothpaste (can be travel size), soap (can be travel size)

We will also accept money donations that we can use for purchasing any items that we might need to fill out each kit. We will have cards at the meeting that we can write out for the Welcome Home project. The meeting will include devotions and refreshments. Donations can be given to either Maureen Dempsey or Lorraine O’Keefe. If donating funds, checks can be made out to the Westhampton Women’s Fellowship. Thanks in advance for your support of these 2 projects.
Do You Qualify This Year?
Yearly, we remind you during tax preparation time to take advantage of the MA Senior Circuit Breaker Tax Credit, a refundable tax credit. Here are the 2021 qualifications; see if you qualify! The maximum credit amount you can receive is $1,170. If you forgot last year, file an amended MA personal return with your Schedule CB. If you are a senior and don’t have to file taxes, send in a Schedule CB for the amount you are due with a MA Personal Tax Return.

2021 MA Senior Circuit Breaker Tax Credit
Complete details at mass.gov/senior-circuit-breaker-tax-credit. Certain MA seniors who own or rent and occupy residential property as their primary residence are eligible for a refundable MA tax credit up to $1,170. The tax credit is based on the actual real estate taxes paid on the MA residential property you own or rent.

- You must be 65 or older by January 1, 2022.
- You must be a MA resident or part year resident.
- You must file a Schedule CB with your MA personal income tax return.
- You must own or rent residential property in MA and occupy it as your primary residence.
- If you are a homeowner, your MA property tax payments must exceed 10% of your total MA income for the tax year.
- If you are a renter, 25% of your annual MA paid rent must exceed 10% of your total MA income for the tax year.
- For tax year 2021, your total MA income does not exceed:
  - $62,000 - Single individual, not head of household
  - $78,000. - Head of household
  - $93,000. - Married couples filing a joint return

Who is not eligible:
- You receive a federal or state rent subsidy or rent from a tax-exempt entity.
- You are a nonresident.
- You are married and you are filing separately.
- You are a dependent of another taxpayer.
- For tax year 2021, assessed valuation of primary residence (prorate w/1 acre)
  - only exceeds $884,000.

HOW TO APPLY: Simply fill out a Schedule CB; MA Senior Circuit Breaker Tax Credit form. Go to: mass.gov/dor/forms or Call: DOR Tax Dept. 617-887-6367; Toll Free: 800-392-6089.

Welcome to Westhampton!
Nicole and Zach Longhi moved from Easthampton and have bought their house at 299 Main Road. Zach is a Preschool Music Teacher in Longmeadow Montessori. Nicole is Program and Communications Administrator at Springfield JCC. Welcome!

Council on Aging Events
Happy New Year!
The COA is Taking a Break in January
By the time you receive this newsletter, December will have come and gone. Thanks to the hard work of the Life Skills Hampshire Regional high students and their teachers, COA Board volunteers and the generous contribution of the Friends of COA, we will have offered the Holiday Grab-n-Go gift bags in the Town Hall parking lot and hopefully everyone will have enjoyed the tasty delectables therein. We will also have gathered virtually for the “Music & Merriment” Hampshire Regional Chorus Zoom program with chorus director Aidan Linden and his talented young singers! (December was pretty much a Hampshire Regional themed month, wasn’t it?! How lucky we are to immerse ourselves in such local talent).

But now it’s the New Year, 2022! Happy New Year to all of you! May this year bring much joy to all and a glimmer of hope that the pandemic will come to an end or at least take a back seat. For this first month of the new year – the COA Board and Coordinator are taking a much-deserved break. This time will not only give us a bit of rest but also enable us to re-evaluate where we are, find new programs of interest to our community and figure out a plan for continuing our popular Yoga classes in February, with a new teacher. In the meantime, please see the two listings below as well as the programs/events at the Library.

Joan Griswold Fitness Classes for All Levels
Looking for an opportunity to stay active and connected with others as COVID continues? Join others in the Hilltowns for Zoom exercise classes. Certified instructor, Joan Griswold has been offering a variety of exercise programs on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday mornings. All levels of exercisers are welcome! Join others who are working on their personal health. These groups will return in person as soon as it is safe for us all to gather in person. Would you like more information? Contact instructor at joan@bybhealth.com.

Computer Class with Bob Miller
2nd and 4th Mondays - 10 AM to Noon
Bob Miller will continue with computer classes at the Library. Classes are held on the second and fourth Monday of the month. Masks are required in the Library. For questions, contact Bob at miller.r.e@comcast.net.

Raise a glass to all that we have withstood!
Happy & Safe New Year!!!
At the Westhampton Library...

The library is open Mondays/Thursdays 2-8pm; Tuesdays/Wednesdays 9-noon & 1-5pm, Saturdays 10am-1pm. Closed Fridays/Sundays. Holiday closures: Saturday January 1 in observance of New Year's Day and January 17 in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day. For more info, visit https://www.westhamptonma.com/westhampton-public-library or call 413-527-5386.

Recurring Programs...

- Computer Class with Bob Miller
  2nd & 4th Mondays @ 10am
- Scrabble Group
  Mondays @ 2pm
- Knitting Group
  Mondays @ 2pm
- Playgroup with Andy
  Tuesday @ 3:30pm
  “Please check the CFCE Facebook page @HRSCDFCE to follow when Andy is at the Library. Email agoulet@collaborative.org to register.
- Storytime with Emily
  Wednesdays @ 10:30am

Book Group
Tuesday January 25 at 7:00pm

This month Book Group is reading Hamnet: A Novel of the Plague by Maggie O’Farrell -- Winner of the 2020 Women’s Prize for Fiction and the 2021 National Book Critics Circle Award for Fiction. “A thrilling departure: a short, piercing, deeply moving novel about the death of Shakespeare’s 11 year old son Hamnet--a name interchangeable with Hamlet in 15th century Britain--and the years leading up to the production of his great play… London, Tinder Press 2020. Book Group meets once a month and is open to new participants! Please email Meaghan to request a copy of this month’s book at mschwelm@cwmars.org.

Update on Public Safety Complex

Things accomplished so far:
- Police, Fire and EMS have moved in to part of the Highway garage; thanks to all that made that happen.
- building demolished
- building lot graded
- drainage to control storm water management
- onsite foundation
- septic, water line, water tank for fire suppression system
- propane tank for heating system
- underground plumbing below floor
- underground electric below floor
- cement floor was poured
- bases for outdoor lighting in the foundation
- rough grade for the driveway and parking lot

And some good news... we have a delivery date for the building. It is expected sometime during the first or second week of January. ~ Stephen Holt, Assistant Fire Chief and Public Safety Committee Chair

Westhampton Library Gallery

December 16 - January 15
“Stillness” Exhibit
Artist - Olwen Dowling

Artist Statement - “It seems each day we are feeling our equilibrium askew with a continuing barrage from outside sources that affect much more than we ever imagined. It’s almost unreal in its intensity and disturbance. No matter who or where you are from, something new and awful has occurred to us all. My way of responding is to find a way to try and live my life to its fullest and appreciate how beautiful it can be by doing my art. And, at the same time stay connected and try for change! Time will tell where it all settles. This exhibition is very personal because I decided to go back to a time of study that helped me get centered. That is Plant Biology and Nature. Nature and what it brings to our daily lives is the ultimate healer. These monotype, dry points, intaglio etchings, a few oils and watercolors will center on this experience and hopefully bring a sense of stillness and quietude to the viewer. That is my hope.” ~ Olwen Dowling

Olwen Dowling has exhibited her work extensively both in the United States and Europe. She has also worked for over two decades in professional theater. To find out more about our December/January Artist, please visit the artist’s website at owwendowing.com.

January 15 - February
“Westhampton Sugar Houses” Exhibit
Owner - Stephen Holt; Artist - Mary Montague

It started with a barter among friends many years ago. Local Westhampton artist Mary Montague needed some landscaping done, and Stephen Holt wanted a painting of Steve’s Sugar Shack for his birthday. Steve got his birthday wish and the very first painting of the Westhampton Sugar Houses Mary Montague collection was born. After that, Steve commissioned and bought a new sugar house painting from Mary every year on his birthday. His collection is almost complete, representing almost every sugar house in town. The paintings are displayed at Steve’s Sugar Shack during sugar season, then moved to the walls in the Holt home for the rest of the year. And one more painting was just gifted to the collection…Jacqueline Brodeur gave Steve a painting of his original sugar house, the one he built behind his mother Mary Holt’s house when he was 15 years old. This little treasure is among friends!

WES PTO

Happy New Year! Our first year running the Kindergarten Community Calendar was a great success; there are still copies available if you missed the original order deadline. Contact Sarah Kalmakis at 413-281-8271 to get one. We continue to collect rinsed and bagged cans and bottles for recycling. Girls on the Run program at WES this spring is looking for coaches. If you have an interest in helping with the program, contact the school at 413-527-0561 for more information.
The Bell Tower is a church and community newsletter whose intent is to inform and inspire. The Bell Tower shall promote the identity, programs and events of the Westhampton Congregational United Church of Christ. As an added service, the Bell Tower shall also provide information on community news and events to the residents of Westhampton. We invite you to join us for Sunday Morning Worship at 10:00am. Submissions to the Bell Tower for church and community articles and announcement may be sent to Julie Holt at the church email address westhamptonchurchucc@comcast.net no later than the 15th of each month prior to the upcoming Bell Tower issue.

Westhampton Congregational United Church of Christ

Mission Statement

With God as our witness, we of the Westhampton Congregational United Church of Christ, commit to our Savior Jesus Christ as our model and guide. While cherishing our heritage, we look to the future, accepting ourselves and each other as individuals uniquely created in God’s image. We covenant together to grow in our understanding of God’s will. We nurture each other in faith so we may be empowered to serve in our community and the world.

We are called to love our brothers and sisters as God loves us, freely and without reservation. Our unconditional love is inclusive of all God’s people. We denounce acts of discrimination and violence against any person. As an open and affirming church, we joyfully welcome all people into our community of faith, regardless of age, gender, race, sexual orientation, ethnic background, socioeconomic status or physical/mental abilities. Each person is invited and encouraged to participate in all aspects of our church life and ministry.

“I made a New Year’s resolution to eat broccoli. If I can’t stand it, I’ll give it up for Lent.”