

The Covenant Contact

December 2024

Make Room for Waiting



We barely need to wait in line anymore – we can order online, and someone brings it to us. We are out of practice with waiting.

I've seen Christmas decorations in the store as early as June. And it often seems like most of it is gone by October. Halloween happens, and then "BAM," the stores are playing Christmas music. Even in my own mind, winter begins as soon as Thanksgiving is over. Sometimes, if there is early snow, I am ready to play Christmas music.

Ultimately, Advent is the time of waiting between Jesus' first coming, all those years ago, and his second coming, which is unknown to us. We are in an Advent now and have been since Jesus left this earth. And we set aside this time in the 4 weeks leading up to Christmas Day to do more than celebrate Christmas . . . but to wait, to long for. We long for Jesus to come back, because we know that when he does, all will be made right again.

Historically, the people of God are very familiar with waiting. Whether it was waiting for them to be released from slavery to Pharaoh, waiting to reach the Promised Land after years in the wilderness, waiting to be released from their exile in Babylon, or waiting for God to give them the king they begged for . . . often, a great deal of waiting was involved in being God's people.

And when I think about impatience, I often think about the prophet Habakkuk.

Habakkuk was God's prophet in a politically turbulent time. Assyria had ruled Judah with a heavy hand for well over a hundred years, inflicting punishment and tribulation. Still,

Assyria was beginning to weaken, and soon Babylon would be the world power. Judah, God's nation, had become morally and spiritually corrupt, and Habakkuk was complaining to God that he had to wait too long before God would do something about this moral corruption.

God answers Habakkuk's impatience:

*For the revelation awaits an appointed time;
it speaks of the end and will not prove false.*

*Though it linger, wait for it;
it will certainly come and will not delay.* (Habakkuk 2:3)

The whole book of Habakkuk is a conversation between God and this prophet, with Habakkuk continually dissatisfied with God's answers, and the waiting he has to do, because God's wasn't fixing the moral corruption of his people NOW.

But God tells him to wait: "*Though it linger, wait for it.*"

As we wait and prepare to celebrate Christmas, consider how waiting can be passive and active in your life. We may not be able to do something to get Christmas to arrive faster, but we can notice what God is doing in us as we wait . . . how he might be refining us, using the time of waiting to strengthen our trust in his good and perfect plan. Make room for that waiting to be something powerful.

What often happens in our waiting is that God is providing a restoration and growth that we may not even realize we need.

In Christ, Pastor Stephanie

Julotta

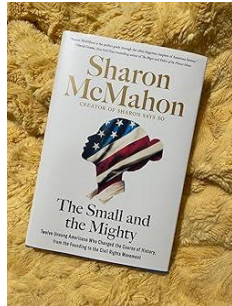
Julotta worship on Christmas morning at 6:30. This traditional service usually is followed by a continental breakfast, **but only if someone volunteers** to host it. Contact: Ruth Johnson (cmouse@covchurchthomaston.org or 860-605-80410).

Women Ministries



Women Ministries events are for all women of the church and their friends.

- **The WM Christmas Party** will be Monday, December 9, at 6:00 pm in the Fellowship Room. Join us for food, fellowship and fun! Bring an appetizer or dessert to share, a \$10-\$15 grab bag gift, and a friend!
- **Kitchen Detail:** Wednesday, December 4, 9:00 am
- **Book Club** The book for January 8 is *The Small and the Mighty* by Sharon McMahon. We will meet at 6:00 pm at Jean Morton's.



Summary: Board Meeting of November 24

The Board met briefly to consider a plan to reduce the number of meetings the Boards and the Congregation have during the year. The goal is to allow people to have more time to do ministry instead of meeting so often. Article VI. Meetings, of the Bylaws governs the process: 1. The change is presented to the Board to be approved for presentation to the Congregation. 2. The change is presented to the Congregation at any regular business meeting, and 3. The congregation votes on the change at a following business meeting. The Board approved the proposed change to the bylaws for presentation to the Congregation at the December Quarterly meeting.

The Board also authorized the Music Committee to arrange for needed repairs to the electronic keyboard (the "organ").

John Bedosky, Chair

Visual Advent Experience

- Every Christmas season we read about the importance of "making room for Jesus" . . . because the season can feel frantic.

What if we stopped to listen and experience what God is doing around and among us?

You are invited to three Sunday evenings, December 1, 8, and 15, at 4:30 in the Gathering Room to step away from the chaos, take a breather, and experience God in a different way.

Using artwork of the Christmas story painted by Bette Dickinson, we will take one hour to learn a new spiritual practice . . . and take a breath during a time when we all need it.



Annual Meeting Reports Due

Our annual meeting will be January 19, 2025.

Annual Reports: Reports to be included in the Annual Report that are already typed are due in the Church Office by January 4. If your report will need to be typed, please submit it no later than noon on Monday, December 30. Reports are needed from:

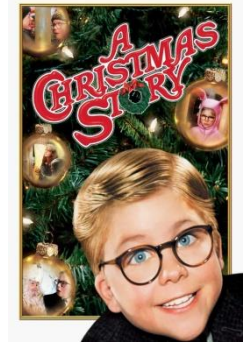
Pastor (including entries into the church record and membership summary)	CE Board Chair
<i>Financial Secretary</i>	Sunday School Supt.
Treasurer/Budget	Sunday School Treasurer
<i>Nominating Committee (slate of officers)</i>	CHYG Youth Group
M & E Board Chair	UNITE Fund
M & E Treasurer	Trailblazers/Pathfinders Group
<i>Diaconate Chair</i>	<i>Women Ministries Chair</i>
<i>Diaconate Treasurer</i>	<i>WM Treasurer</i>
Trustees Chair	Investment Funds
	<i>Memorial Fund</i>
	Men's Ministry Fund

All boards and committees are reminded to meet before the January Annual Meeting to elect officers. Diaconate, Trustees, Christian Education, and Missions & Evangelism Boards must also appoint a representative to the Nominating Committee. *(If you were Chair of any Board or Committee in 2024, please convene an organizational meeting, before the Annual Meeting, of that group even if you will not be serving with that group in 2025.)*

Auditor Bill Dayton must audit all financial records before the Annual Meeting on January 19. *(Leave clearly marked records at Red's Hardware for Bill or give them to Ken Hopkins to deliver to Bill.)* These include the **Church operating and savings/restricted accounts, Investment Funds, Women Ministries Fund, Missions & Evangelism Fund, Diaconate Fund, Memorial Fund, Sunday School Fund, Men's Ministry Fund, and the UNITE Fund.**

Christian Education

- **Christmas Fellowship Night:** On Friday, December 13, at 6:00 pm we will have a hot chocolate bar and snacks and watch "A Christmas Story" together. Invite a friend and come hang out at the Potter's House.



- Our annual **Sunday School Christmas Program** will be given during Worship on December 15.
- **Youth Retreats: Winterfest** for students in Grades 9-12, January 3-5, 2025, is at Pilgrim Pines in Swanzey, NH. More than just another weekend retreat! There will be great food, an amazing program, and great recreational activities. Contact: Beth Campbell. The cost is \$185. Register online at pilgrimpines.org. Registrations close December 31!

Winterblast for students in Grades 6-8, January 31 - February 2, 2025, is at Pilgrim Pines. A great weekend of fun, games, dynamic speakers, and camp-style worship. Contact: Beth Campbell. The cost is \$150. Register online at pilgrimpines.org. Registrations close January 29!



Youth Groups

Trailblazers/Pathfinders is for students in Grades K-6. Leaders are Brenda Tousignant, Lori Vigeant, and Haley Morton. They meet once a month

1/1 11:30 am Caroling



D/C (Discipleship/Confirmation) is for students in grades 7-8, a two-year journey, exploring who God is and what God means in our life. All junior high students are welcome to attend. Pastor Stephanie is the leader. They meet on Sundays at the 9:00 am Sunday School time.



CHYG (Covenant High Youth Group) is for all students in grades 7-12. The leaders are Beth Campbell and Sue Sundell.



12/8 4:00 Regular meeting (@ Beth Campbells')
12/22 4:00 Caroling & Christmas Party (start at church)

1/3-1/5/2025 – **Winterfest (Grades 9-12)** @ Pilgrim Pines.
Register at pilgrimpines.org by 12/31. Cost \$185.

1/31-02/2/2025 – **Winterblast (Grades 6-8)** @ Pilgrim Pines. Cost \$150. Register online by 1/29/2025.

Liturgical Dance is for girls in grades 1-8. The leader is Jessica Bedosky. Practice times vary and are in the Sanctuary.



Banquet of Blessing

- **Need:** canned chicken, canned fruit, tomato soup, snack bags, sandwich bags, gallon food storage bags, aluminum foil, paper towels, toilet paper.
- **No perishable foods. Check expiration dates.** We don't give away out of date food.
- **No canned mixed vegetables or vegetarian vegetable soup right now.**

Prayer Chain

Contact Prayer Coordinator Mary Butkevich for prayer concerns and rejoicings.

Meal Coordinator

Providing a meal to someone during a difficult time is one way to show how much we care. If you know someone who might benefit, contact Sandy Dunn.

Crafty Fridays

In the Potter's House, 6:00-8:00 pm. If you have a craft to do, bring it. If you don't have a craft but would like to visit and chat, that's okay! Contact: Ruth Johnson.

Giving Made Easy

- Give online in just two minutes. You can opt for one time, weekly or monthly donations. Just open the camera app on your phone and scan the QR Code. You will then be taken right to the Giving Page on our website.

Covenant Church of Thomaston

[Giving Page QR Code](#)



December 2024

(Rev 11/26/2024)

For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.

Romans 12:4-5

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1* 11:30 Diaconate (Conference Room) 11:30 M&E (Youth Room) 11:30 Trailblazers/Pathfinders (caroling) 4:30 Advent Event (Gathering Room)	2 10:45 39ers Study (Fellowship)	3 9:30 Women's Study (Conference.) 4:00 Prayer (Church Office)	4 9:00 Kitchen Detail 6:30 NA (Fellowship)	5 7:30 NA Subcommittee (Gathering)	6 6:00 Crafty Fridays (Potter's House)	7
8* 11:30 Quarterly Business Meeting (Sanctuary) 4:00 CHYG (@Campbell's) 4:30 Advent Event (Gathering Room)	9 10:45 39ers Study (Fellowship) 6:00 WM Christmas Party (Fellowship)	10 9:30 Women's Study (Conference.) 4:00 Prayer (Church Office)	11 6:30 NA (Fellowship)	12 6:30 CE Board (Potter's House)	13 6:00 Fellowship Movie Night (Potter's House)	14
15* S.S. Christmas Program during Worship 11:30 Trustees (Conference Room) 4:30 Advent Event (Gathering Room)	16 10:45 39ers Study (Fellowship) 6:30 Tres Dias Secretariat (Fellowship)	17 9:30 Women's Study (Conference.) 4:00 Prayer (Church Office)	18 6:30 NA (Fellowship)	19 6:00 Crafty Fridays (Potter's House) 6:30 Tres Dias Secuela (Fellowship)	20	21
22* 4-7 CHYG Caroling & Christmas Party	23 10:45 39ers Study (Fellowship)	24 4:00 CHRISTMAS EVE FAMILY WORSHIP	25 6:30 JULOTTA WORSHIP 6:30 NA (Gathering)	26	27	28 9:30 "Chosen" Group (Esme's & Ruby's)
29*	30	31 4:00 Prayer (Church Office)	*Sundays: 9:00 Sunday School; 10:00 am Worship; 11:15 Fellowship Sunday worship services are recorded and posted on the church website (covchurchthomaston.org). Worship bulletins, which include the weekly announcements, also are posted on the church website.			

Volunteers: . . . through love serve one another. Galatians 5:13b

Coffee Fellowship sponsored by: Missions & Evangelism Board **

****Only beverages are needed and are provided by the church. If you provide a snack, at least one that is gluten-free, please.**

NURSERY		ALTAR FLOWERS		LAY READERS:	
12/1	1/5	12/1	Communion – none	12/1	Gina Whaley
12/8	1/12	12/8		12/8	Ted Ryan
12/15	1/19	12/15		12/15	Liz Montambault
12/22	1/26	12/22		12/22	Peggy Schwetz
12/29		12/29		12/29	Dawn Roaix
		1/5	Communion – none	1/5	Dave McClay
		1/12		1/12	Jessica Bedosky
		1/19		1/19	Gina Whaley
		1/26		1/26	Ted Ryan

Sunday School Staff

K &-Pre-K Grace Duke	3-4 Mary Butkevich	7-8 (D/C) Pastor Stephanie
1-2 Lori Vigeant	5-6 Ruth Hopkins	Class Helpers: Christy Barrett, Drew Gomes, Patricia Vigeant, Haley Morton

Youth Staff

CHYG (Grades 7-12) Beth Campbell Sue Sundell	Trailblazers/Pathfinders (Grades K-6) Brenda Tousignant, Lori Vigeant, Haley Morton
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Liturgical Dance (Girls, grades 1-8) Jessica Bedosky, Peggy Schwetz, Britta Saghafi

December Birthdays and Anniversaries

Birthdays		Anniversaries
4 Holly Herbert	23 Peyton Montijo	3 Becky & Rob Morton
5 Nick DeLotto	28 Jack Holway	7 Nancy & Tom Stange
10 John Butkevich		
14 Nancy Stancavage		
15 Vic Whaley		

Connections:

- Pastor: Stephanie Nelson: pastor@covchurchthomaston.org or 860-283-9146 (study)
- Church Chair: John Bedosky: jbedosky@outlook.com or 203-770-5304
- Diaconate Chair: Cathy Fredlund: cbfredl@optonline.net or 203-841-7239
- Treasurer: Ken Hopkins: khopkins195@yahoo.com or 860-283-5031
- Office "Churchmouse" Ruth Johnson: cmouse@covchurchthomaston.org or 860-605-8040
Office/Kitchen: 860-283-5071
- Meal Coordinator: Sandra Dunn; 860-483-2015 or daytondunn@mac.com
- Prayer Coordinator: Mary Butkevich; 860-514-4343 or marybutkevich@gmail.com