The Nov/Dec Uniter

A Newsletter from The United Church of Chester

An Open and Affirming Church

P.O. Box 383, 29 West Main Street, Chester, CT 06412

OVERLOOKING JENNINGS POND

Rev. W. Alan Froggatt

Poetry often soothes our souls and broadens our horizons in times of turbulence. I offer you this prose-poem by Naomi Shihab Nye, a contemporary Arab-American poet, for your contemplation and consideration.

Gate A-4.

Wandering around the Albuquerque Airport Terminal, after learning my flight had been delayed four hours, I heard an announcement: "If anyone in the vicinity of Gate A-4 understands any Arabic, please come to the gate immediately."

Well—one pauses these days. Gate A-4 was my own gate. I went there.

An older woman in full traditional Palestinian embroidered dress, just like my grandma wore, was crumpled to the floor, wailing. "Help," said the flight agent. "Talk to her. What is her problem? We told her the flight was going to be late and she did this."

I stooped to put my arm around the woman and spoke haltingly. *"Shu-dow-a, Shu-bid-uck Habibti? Stani schway, Min fadlick, Shu-bit-se-wee?"* The minute she heard any words she knew, however poorly used, she stopped crying. She thought the flight had been cancelled entirely. She needed to be in El Paso for major medical treatment the next day. I said, "No, we're fine, you'll get there, just later, who is picking you up? Let's call him."

We called her son, I spoke with him in English. I told him I would stay with his mother till we got on the plane and ride next to her. She talked to him. Then we called her other sons just for the fun of it. Then we called my dad and he and she spoke for a while in Arabic and found out of course they had ten shared friends. Then I thought just for the heck of it why not call some Palestinian poets I know and let them chat with her? This all took up two hours.

She was laughing a lot by then. Telling of her life, patting my knee, answering questions. She had pulled a sack of homemade *mamool* cookies—little powdered sugar crumbly mounds stuffed with dates and nuts—from her bag—and was offering them to all the women at the gate. To my amazement, not a single woman declined one. It was like a sacrament. The traveler from Argentina, the mom from California, the lovely woman from Laredo—we were all covered with the same powdered-sugar. And smiling. There is no better cookie.

And then the airline broke out free apple juice from huge coolers and two little girls from our flight ran around serving it and they were covered with powdered sugar, too. And I noticed my new best friend—by now we were holding hands—had a potted plant poking out of her bag, some medicinal thing, with green furry leaves. Such an old country tradition. Always carry a plant. Always stay rooted to somewhere.

And I looked around that gate of late and weary ones and I thought, This is the world I want to live in. The shared world. Not a single person in that gate—once the crying of confusion stopped—seemed apprehensive about any other person. They took the cookies. I wanted to hug all those other women, too.

This can still happen anywhere. Not everything is lost.

Upcoming Events and Meetings

November 2nd - Chester Garden Club Tea - 2:00 pm

November 12th - Chester Garden Club Meeting - 7:00p pm

November 17th - Annual Budget Meeting - 11:00 am

November 23rd - Thanksgiving Card Drive - 10:00 am to 1:00 pm

December 7th - Christmas Fair - 9:00 am to 1:30 pm

December 14th - Chester Public Library Book Sale

December 14th - Stuff-A-Cruiser - 10:00 am to 1:00 pm

December 22nd - Christmas Cantata - 10:00 am

Ongoing Events

Mondays - Irish Dance Group - 5:30 pm to 9:30 pm

Tuesdays, Thursdays - Restorative Yoga - 8:30 am

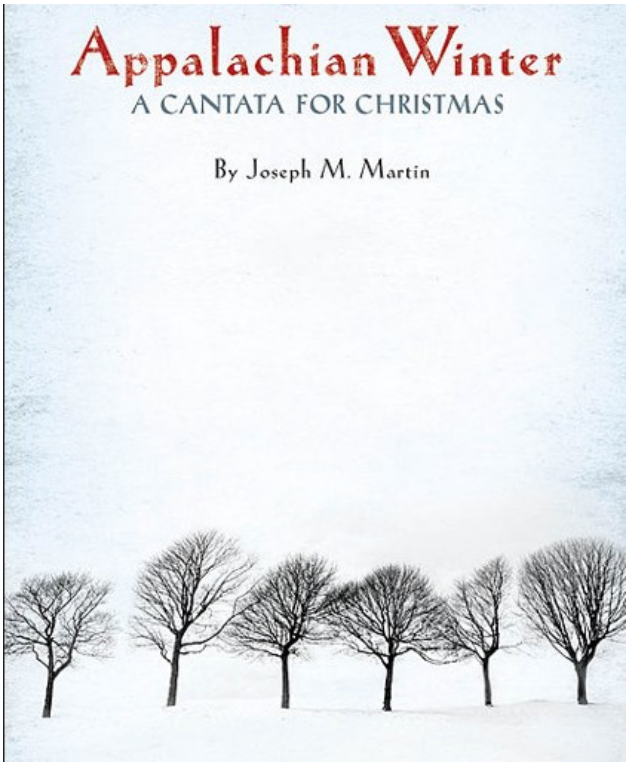
Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays - Cub Scouts - 5:30 pm to 8:30 pm

Wednesdays - TreeHouse Players after school program - 3:15 pm to 6:15 pm

Second Tuesday of the Month - Chester Garden Club - 7:00 pm

Thursdays - Choir Rehearsal - 7:00 pm

Bold items are UCC events



December 22nd

Appalachian Winter a cantata by Joseph Martin, will be performed during the 10:00 am service. Joining our choir will be soloists and an instrumental ensemble including a percussionist.

From the Trustees:

A reminder to keep doors closed as the weather gets cooler to save on heat.

Yoga Class Update

Yoga meets in the choir room each Tuesday and Thursday at 8;30 - 9:30 AM. Our instructor, Megan Spaulding comes once a month for an in person class and we record her on video. We use the videos in the other classes. It is restorative yoga which aids in flexibility and daily life. There is no charge for the classes, however donations are accepted. The donations help support the church and help defray the cost of the class. For more information you can call Bob Luther 203-640-3706 or Liz Luther 203-640-9019.

Outreach - Clothing Collection

The Outreach committee is collecting new children's clothing to be distributed to local children during the holidays. Items needed are hats, mittens, gloves, hoodies, sweatpants, pajamas and underwear. Clothing can be dropped off anytime during church office hours which are Tuesday - Friday 9:00 am to 1:00 pm. Please contact the church office at 860.526.2697 or Sue Germini-Humble at 860.395.4340 with any questions. Thank you!

Friday Coffice Hours

At 8:15 a.m. Alan will be at:

November 1	**Simon's Marketplace**
November 8	**The Villager**
November 15	**Simon's Marketplace**
November 22	**The Villager**
November 29	**No Coffice Hours**
December 6	**Simon's Marketplace**
December 13	**The Villager**
December 20	**Simon's Marketplace**
December 27	**The Villager**

THE CHRISTMAS FAIR

DECEMBER 7, 2024 from 9:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

The Christmas Fair is only a few weeks away and we could use your help. Here is a list of dates and ways that you can help.

Saturday, November 30th at 9:00 am there are a few members that will be baking cookies at the church. If you would like to join us, please let me know. We sell out of cookies very quickly and could really use more this year. If you would like to bring your favorite already-made cookie batter recipe to bake, that would be great too.

December 2nd through December 6th - We will be decorating Fellowship Hall and getting Grandma's attic organized at around 6:00 p.m. each day. We will be accepting greens donations as of December 2nd and throughout the week as well (examples of greens – pine boughs, holly, bayberry, etc.) to make Christmas sprays starting at 9:00 a.m. on Friday, December 6th.

OTHER WAYS YOU CAN HELP OR DONATE:

Bake – cookies, brownies, pies, breads, muffins, fudge, cupcakes, candies, etc. (Contact Peggy Phillips)

Prepared foods - quiches, macaroni & cheese, jams, and jellies, etc. (Contact Peggy Phillips)

Gift Baskets -picnic, camping, craft, dog, cat, candle, bath and body, wrapping paper, baking, tea, coffee, gardening, gameboards, golf, sports, girls, boys, baby, book, movie, eco-friendly, etc.

Grandma's Attic Christmas Items - We are accepting Christmas related items only (contact Jen Gill for acceptable items).

Grandma's Attic Boutique – We are accepting gently used winter coats, winter sweaters/ clothing, hats, scarfs, pocketbooks, wallets, puzzles, books, (contact Marie Ready for acceptable items).

Knitting - Barb Tomasi could use your help securing knitting.

Silent Auction Items - Kathy Merola could use some help securing items for the Silent Auction - give her a call and offer your services or an item! Contact her at 860-526-9262, merolaland@att.net, or text at 860-391-4442.

Thursday, December 5th between 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. – Margie Warner will be having her nut ball baking night. Nutball recipe is available in Fellowship Hall.

Friday, December 6th at 9:00 a.m. - We will be making the sprays and finishing up whatever needs to be done. We could really use some volunteers to help make the sprays this year.

Saturday, December 7th – It would be great to have enough volunteers throughout the day to give a break to the chairpersons at each table. We especially could use help to clean up immediately after the fair is over.

The sign-up sheets are hanging up on the Sign-up Board in Fellowship Hall. Please consider volunteering, even if it is for just a couple of hours – it is a lot of fun and your help would be greatly appreciated. Please contact Judy Schondorf at (860) 399-7772 if you have any questions.

Judy Schondorf and Brenda Johnson, Christmas Fair Chairpersons

Christmas Fair Schedule of Activities - At a Glance

November 30th Cooking Baking - 9:00 am

December 2nd through December 5th Christmas Fair Set-up - 6:00 pm

December 5th - NutBall Night - 4:00 pm

December 6th Making Christmas Sprays - 9:00 am

December 7th Christmas Fair - 9:00 am to 1:30 pm

December 7th Christmas Fair Clean-up - 1:30 pm

Christmas Fair Donations Needed

Grandma's Attic Boutique

Doing some fall cleaning? Don't forget Grandma's Attic for the Christmas Fair! Grandma's Attic will be accepting the following items; gently used winter clothing, books, Christmas Decorations, jewelry, etc. Any questions please contact Marie Ready at 860.526.1487 or Judy Schondorf at 860.399.7772.

Christmas Attic Christmas Items

"The elves working the Christmas-y Ornament & Festive Doo-Dad Rummage table once again ask for your donations so our table sparkles. We take all things Christmas-themed, including (but not limited to): ornaments, festive mantel garland, tree-toppers, mugs & platters, manger scenes, center pieces, fabric snowmen, wrapping paper, ribbons & bows, tins and yard décor (no live reindeer, please!)" Any questions contact Jen Gill

Margie's NutBall Recipe (makes 96 balls)

4 sticks of butter

1 cup of sugar

4 tsp. vanilla

¼ tsp. salt

4 cups of flour

4 cups of chopped walnuts

Confectioner's sugar to roll balls in once cooled.

Preheat oven at 325 degrees.

Cream butter, sugar, and vanilla until fluffy. Add flour and salt. Blend well. Add nuts. Blend again. Shape into 1-inch balls.

Bake 20 minutes. Do not brown. Cool. Roll in sugar.

This recipe doubles easily. You may also cut it in half easily for about 50 cookies.

Poinsettias for our Treasured Friends

Please contact the church office at 860 526-2697 or Peggy Phillips if you are interested in contributing to poinsettias to deliver to our Treasured Friends (homebound folks) a couple of weeks before Christmas and to decorate the sanctuary so that they can be enjoyed throughout the holidays or use the order form below:

If you prefer to have a large plant placed on the altar **that you plan to take home on December 19th** the cost will be $15 per plant. (If enough plants aren't ordered for the altar, the Deacons will see to it that we continue to have a spectacular altar display.) In other words, unless you intend to take a poinsettia home, please simply contribute to the Flower Fund.

Whether you purchase or donate, you may still fill out this form designating names you wish listed "in memory of," "in honor of," or "in celebration of," and they will be mentioned in the holiday bulletins. This practice will insure that our shut-ins will receive holiday plants in a timely manner (instead of after Christmas), and will also prevent the waste of plants since we always have more left here than we can deliver.

Forms must be turned in by Friday December 13th.

_____ I promise to pick up my plant after the service on December 22.

(Please print exactly as you would like it to appear in the bulletin.)

FROM:_____

IN CELEBRATION OF:_____

IN MEMORY OF:_____

Christmas at United Church of Chester

Saturday, December 7 **Christmas Fair** **9 am to 1:30 pm**

The annual Christmas Fair features crafts, homemade goods and foods, a silent auction, alternate gift giving opportunities, and much more.

Saturday, December 14 **Stuff a Cruiser** **10 am to 1 pm**

Donate and deliver specific new, unwrapped toys for local children who might otherwise not have any Christmas presents. Gift tags are available at UCC and Essex Savings Bank located in Chester. Donations are accepted at UCC from now until **Thursday, December 14th.**

Sunday, December 22 **Christmas Cantata** **10 am**

Appalachian Winter a cantata by Joseph Martin, will be performed during the 10:00 am service. Joining our choir will be soloists and an instrumental ensemble.

Tuesday, December 24th **Christmas Eve Worship Service** **5 pm**

We will have our candlelight service at 5:00 pm

Advent Wreath Lighting - Volunteers Needed

We are looking for 5 families or groups of folks to participate in the annual Advent Wreath lighting ceremony. The readings will be provided for you in advance. The dates are the 4 Sundays in Advent - December 1, 8, 15, 22, and Christmas Eve 5:00 pm. Please contact Alan or the church office if you are interested.

Birthdays

12 Karla Tessitore
20 Michele Procko
23 Emma Abramson
24 Sue Saltus
25 Matt Robida
30 Abigail Jewczyn

Anniversaries

10 Steve & Kathy Merola

Birthdays

1 James Rutty
3 Briana Jewczyn
5 Dominique Bester
9 Jeffrey Moore
15 Scot Mills
19 Skip Weisenburger
20 Kim Howley
29 Anne Skagen

Anniversaries

23 Tim Napier & Barbara-Jan Wilson
31 Christian & Melissa Whitney