



CONWAY VILLAGE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

January 2024



THE GOOD NEWS

Volume 13, Issue 11

Making a New Beginning

*“For last year’s words
belong to last year’s language.
And next year’s words
await another voice.
And to make an end
is to make a beginning.”*

T.S. Eliot

On Monday, December 18, 2023, the Brown Church was hit by a devastating flood. We have suffered physical and financial losses which we could never have imagined. At the same time, knowledgeable people responded to our call for help and have offered invaluable information. While we are facing obstacles, God has provided us with the hope we need to move forward.

T.S. Eliot wrote, *“For last year’s words belong to last year’s language. And next year’s words await another voice”*. These are prophetic words for us as a community. We can no longer proceed as we have in the past now that we find ourselves in a flood zone. A contractor entering our furnace room where our furnace was completely submerged, our water heating unit completely inundated, and air circulation system rendered useless, ask me, *“What are you looking for me to do?”* I responded, *“God wants our heating and cooling systems to be closer to heaven!”* The contractor immediately set to work to make that a reality.

We often, in times of darkness and drear, attempt to lighten the mood. It does not change the devastation we have faced nor the expense to rectify the situation. But as T.S. Eliot noted, *“... an end is a beginning”*. Our church building will never be the same again. In a flood zone, fuel oil tanks are not possible, but natural gas tanks are. *(As a fuel choice is better for the environment!)* We can no longer circulate air through our building, but new more efficient forms of air conditioning and circulation are available. Going forward the configuration of our building will be very different so we can continue our mission of supporting and serving our community’s needs. In the future we will be discussing changes with a new voice - - to promote a new vision for serving the Conway Village and the Mount Washington Valley areas.

People want to know, *“How much is this going to cost? What do you need? How can we help?”* My answer is, *“when we know, you will know”*. Contractors are pressing to get us realistic quotes, secure materials, and figure in schedules for labor. Reclamation work is being done to save flooring and walls, which must precede any work that can be done to restore the use of space and getting us up and running. We are juggling many responsibilities currently - - we are sure to drop some balls in the process. We are moving forward consistently, conscientiously. What can everyone do for the moment?

**Be Patient!
When We Know
You Will Know
(we promise!)**

*Yours through Christ,
Rev. John Hughes*

January 4, 2024





The Conway Village Congregational Church

United Church of Christ
Reverend John G Hughes, II

PO Box 333
132 Main Street, Conway, New Hampshire 03818
www.thebrownchurch.org
Tel. 603-447-3851

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING

TO: All Members and Friends of the Conway Village Congregational Church

The Annual Meeting of the Membership of the Conway Village Congregational Church will be held on Sunday, January 28, 2024, at approximately 11:00 am in the Sanctuary of the Conway Village Congregational Church after worship. The meeting will be held in person and via Zoom platform. Voting will be done via roll call method. Please email cvccwebteam@gmail.com or call the office for the phone in information.

The purpose of this Annual Meeting will be:

1. To hear reports of the officers, board and standing committees for the preceding year.
2. To approve a Budget for 2024.
3. To discuss the Council plan.
4. To elect officers, board and standing committee members for 2024.
5. To conduct any other business that may come to the floor of the meeting.

Dated at: Conway, New Hampshire, on the 22nd of November 2023

Dawn Vitters, Clerk

The Brown Church Appreciates the Kindness of Our Neighbors

The Brown Church (Conway Village Congregational Church) has learned in the past weeks that we are connected to people who reach out in times of need. First, we are most appreciative of the First Church of Christ, Congregational, U.C.C. of North Conway, who allowed us to share in their Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany worship services. Their warmth in including our pastor in the liturgy, ritual, and communion services as well as allowing our choir members to sing with their choir to celebrate the holy season, has been most gracious. We particularly want to thank Sue Davidson for her kindness in reaching out to us and the worshipping community for making us so welcomed.

Rev. Brad Mathias, Rector of St. Margaret's Anglican Church on Pleasant Street in Conway Village, offered us use of his sanctuary, to meet at an alternate time from his gathering community. Rev. Mathias was willing to open his doors and allow us to continue our own services unabated for as long as we needed space.

Then there was the call from George Weiss, Executive Director of the Majestic Theater, offered, *"Do you need space for Sunday Services? The Majestic does not hold events on Sunday mornings ... you have been such good neighbors to us for so many years, hosting concerts, lessons, rehearsals, and such, if there is anything we can do, we are happy to help."* George's offer had a Déjà vu feeling to it - - a spirit of gratitude, grace, and generosity which is characteristic of Conway Village. The Brown Church has accepted his kind offer and will be gathering for worship at 10:00 a.m. each Sunday morning for as long as necessary, until our building is restored.

The Brown Church has always been connected to people in the valley who need help and we have garnered the gifts to provide that help to make a difference and to change our community for the better. Now that we find ourselves in need of assistance, we have been overwhelmed by the gestures of all our neighbors in reaching out and supporting us. It is truly a blessing to live in such a close-knit community. We wish to thank First Church of Christ Congregational, Vaughan Community Center, St. Margaret's Anglican Church, Porter Office, and the Majestic Theater for their magnanimity in lifting our spirits while we recover and move forward.

The parishioners of the Brown Church.





Happy New Year to all. This year starts out with a big change. After fifteen years, Paul and Sylvia Weld will be stepping down as the Coordinators of the pantry. We want to thank them for all they have done in making the pantry what it is today. They will be working with the Outreach to help with the transition. They are looking for two people to become coordinators for the food pantry, starting January 1, 2024, for the second and third weeks of each month. Training will be provided. Anyone interested please contact Paul or Sylvia at peweld@gmail.com.

The biggest need will be volunteers. If we do not find a person or persons who want to take on as a Coordinator, the Outreach Committee will be looking for volunteers to fill the various tasks. Training will be available. Volunteers will also be needed in all areas of the pantry. The week starts on Monday mornings with a food pick up, with the church van, at Walmart and Shaws. Food is brought back to the church and organized for pantry day on Tuesdays.

Pantry day is every Tuesday, starting at 8:30am. Scheduled clients come in every 15 minutes, and can go as late as noon, depending on the number signed up. Two people bag the food, using a list as a guide. The third person is the cart person and takes the food out to the client's car. The day ends with sweeping up the pantry area.

Throughout the month, tasks are completed: pantry client and volunteer scheduling, financial bookkeeping, taking inventory of food and ordering from the Food Bank, USDA and Dollar Tree as needed. Also, helping with food deliveries from USDA and the Food Bank. This is not a complete list, but an example where help is needed. Melody will be able to take on the scheduling and bookkeeping. The food pick up and deliveries will need drivers and manpower to move the food to the pantry.

In the immediate future, we need a person to handle the cart on January 23rd and February 27th. The Food Bank and USDA deliveries are on the following dates through spring.

The food bank and USDA deliveries are currently scheduled for the following dates this spring, but have been placed on hold until we can reopen the food pantry.

If you can help us out, please call Melody at the office at 603-447-3851.

As I'm sure you have all heard about the flood at the Church and Food Pantry. The Food Pantry is closed till further notice. Clients are being taken care of by The Vaughan Food Pantry. The hours are Tues. 12- to 1:45 and Thurs. 1:00 to 2:45, no appointment is needed, just let them know you are from the Brown Church Food Pantry.

If Vaughan decides to extend their hours we will help them out as needed. They, along with their 150 families, are taking our 50+ families. We will keep all posted as the days, weeks and months go by. My motto is "We will rise from the ashes".

Paul and Sylvia Co-coordinators

FOOD BANK	USDA
January 4th	January 11th
February 1st	February 8th
March 7th	March 14th
April 4th	April 11th
May 2nd	May 9th



CVCC Food Pantry

Due to recent flooding at our church, Vaughan Community Center, located at the First Church of Christ, 2521 White Mtn. Highway, North Conway, has graciously offered to provide food for our pantry clients. Their hours are Tuesdays noon–1:30 and Thursdays 1–2:30. Please do NOT call them, as no appointment is necessary.



Please join us in thanking Norway Savings Bank of Fryeburg, Maine, for their generous donation to our food pantry! The check was presented by Michelle Luce, VP, Branch Manager & Kristen Charette, VP, Mortgage Loan Office. Paul & Sylvia Weld thank you all from the bottom of their hearts!



Food Pantry Statistics

<u>MONTH</u>	<u>Households</u>	<u>People Served</u>	<u>Meals Given</u>	<u>Over 60</u>	<u>Under 18</u>	<u>Walk Ins</u>	<u>New Households</u>
January - December 2023 <i>(Excludes December 19th & 26th)</i>	401	807	58,422	397	100	84	43
January - December 2022	400	851	35,742	384	143	81	42

From the Deacon's Bench

Blessings to all for a joyous New Year! I trust that you are off to a great 2024!

So, everyone will talk about resolutions, right? UGH! Talk about pressure....

My resolutions may or may not stick, depending on what I resolve to. I try. Don't we all? This year I feel, with the pressures of our world upon us, to resolve to keep it simple. Just that. Simple.

I will start with a prayer.

I will end with a prayer.

I will make prayer an essential ingredient every step of the way.

While it's important for us to do everything we can, it's more important to recognize that our abilities are never enough. When we pray, God does what we can't. He never says or does the wrong thing.

As the winter deepens, this is a resolution I can keep. Most days I realize there are more demands of me than I am able to meet. I cannot do everything for everyone. Even Jesus went to bed and still had people he had yet to heal, or sermons he had left to preach. Sometimes I feel guilty. Granted, there are times I could have been a better steward of my time. No matter how good I can be with time management, there seems to always be something left on my "to do" list. So I resolve to be faithful to the Father. I encourage you to remember that Jesus had to leave some things undone. Trust the rest to the Father.

Start and end with a prayer.

Blessings to you all for a wonderful New Year,
Louise Saxby



Deaconess of the Month

Louise Saxby

Diaconate Next Meeting

Wednesday, January 31, 2024. 4:30 pm
Judy's House

Diaconate

Co-Chairs - Louise Saxby & Judy Workman; Secretary - Beth Campbell, and Nancy Divine
Treasurer - vacant



December Worship Service

Date	In Church	On Zoom	Children	Special Day/Sermon Title
12/3	38	10	0	Communion Sunday "Where is Your Hidden God?"
12/10	7	12	0	"Let Us Prepare a Way"
12/17	45	10	1	"Confusion on The Mountain"
Thank you First Church North Conway Congregational !				
12/24	30	~	~	<i>10am Worship Service</i> First Church N. Conway Congregational
12/24	15	~	~	<i>6pm Worship Service</i> First Church N. Conway Congregational
12/31	28	~	~	First Church N. Conway Congregational

To add someone to the Prayer List

Please call 603-447-3851 or email info@thebrownchurch.org
Also, please provide the person's mailing address, so we may send cards. Thank you



Prayer Requests

- † Cathy Currier
- † Colleen Albert
- † Elise Keeney Edgerton
- † Linda Frechette
- † Alice Spear
- † Jill & Curt Reynolds
- † Tom Steele
- † Carol Baribeau
- † Sandy Stowell, Lisa Horne
- † Mark Weld
- † Debbie Kelly
- † Greg Turgeon
- † Russ Hunter & Family
- † Paula Burgess
- † Alexandra Tiresta
- † The Philippine People & the Philippines
- † Bonnie Kimball
- † Pat (Gahagen) Goetzinger
- † Erin
- † Roy Andrews
- † Suzanne & Eddie
- † Misty
- † Corey & Family
- † Marcia Dolley and Family
- † The People & Nation of Israel
- † The People of Palestine
- † Charlotte
- † Bob Bernhardt



Happy Birthday January Birthdays

- 🕯️
Elwood McClarky Jr.
- 🕯️
Laura Kenny
- 🕯️
Alice Vierus
- 🕯️
Bobby Graustein
- 🕯️
Dwight Smith
- 🕯️
Nancy Keyes
- 🕯️
Beverly Taylor
- 🕯️
Sylvia Weld
- 🕯️
Sharrene Hendersen-Bernhardt
- 🕯️
Rev. John Hughes
- 🕯️
Jill Reynolds
- 🕯️
Bethanne Graustein

What's God Doing in the Village?

Written by Rev. John Hughes, published in the Conway Daily Sun on November 22, 2023.

Matt Toning is a full-time firefighter from Rhode Island who, along with his brother Bob, a Civil Engineer, develops rental properties. The former Methodist Church at 121 Main Street in Conway Village is an example of their work and philosophy. "Bob is the Pencil, and I am the Hammer", Matt quipped. It is the second church property Matt and his brother have renovated, the first being on the U.S. side of Niagara Falls.

When the architect/engineer they were using came to Conway Village, he suggested dropping down the inner ceiling of the former sanctuary, but the brothers were against the idea, even though it would have doubled the available floor space.

"We wanted to maintain the space with its stained-glass windows and leave the exterior of the building as unchanged as possible." Matt said, adding "It's an iconic building which no longer serves its original purpose, so we wanted to preserve its past while creating a new future for it."

The property now generates property taxes for the Town of Conway and short-term-rental taxes for the State of New Hampshire, whereas the previous property was tax exempt.

Recently, Lou Woodland, a retired veteran from Eugene, Oregon, rented one of the units, a five-bed, three-bath addition with his wife, sister-in-law, and daughter. They came because he said, "We like to stay in unusual buildings. We are celebrating my recovery from surgery and came for shopping, hiking, and touring the area. We don't get the fall colors (leaves) you get here - - we don't get the oranges and reds in Oregon.", Lou added.

Sue Davidson, who was once the pastor of the church, likes what the brothers have done with the renovation. She said, "The stained-glass windows at the front of the church, which she hand-crafted, were dedicated in memory of her father, Clarence Gibboney, at a Sunday worship service in 1995. "I like the concept the brothers used, how they preserved things." Sue reflected. When the early morning light floods the living room with colored light from the church windows, there is a special feeling to the space, which displays former church signs, documents, crosses, and memorabilia found during renovation. The brothers kept the original, two-tone paint scheme for the walls.

So, while the building now hosts two kitchens and several modernizations, the feel of "sacred space" still is prevalent.

Beverly Taylor remembers singing in the Methodist choir when she first came to Conway in 2009. After several years, Cynthia Saxby, a member of the Music Committee of the Brown Church, asked if she'd be willing to do a solo for a special choir performance. After her solo, the Brown Church organist, Roger Miklos, asked if she'd be willing to join the church choir. So, until the Methodist Church was disbanded in 2013, Beverly walked between the churches for two years in order to sing in both choirs. "I have such fond memories of the old Methodist Church", Beverly said.

So one might ask "What is God doing here?" in the village. Where there were once three churches on Conway Village's Main Street – including a Catholic Sanctuary now owned by the Conway Historical Society and rented to a cCharter school, and the newly renovated former Methodist Church, now a long-term and short-term rental property – there is only one remaining active faith community, the Conway Village Congregational Church (the Brown Church).

The Pew Research Foundation notes that in the U.S. each year, between 6,700–10,000 churches close their doors.

The recent book, "The Great Dechurching", written by Jim Davis and Michael Graham with Ryan P. Burge, maintains that contemporary American life does not promote mutuality, religious/spiritual values, or a sense of the common good. What secular America promotes, the authors maintain, is radical individualism and consumerism. The promotion of individual accomplishment and financial success often leaves issues of common life and community involvement overlooked and undersupported.

If the studies are true, and the trend continues, what will happen to the 130–160 meals received at The Dinner Bell which is supported by the Brown Church? What will happen to the Food Pantry which serves not only people in cars (some clients living in them) but also walk-ins with no transportation? Where will the homeless of the Village find their support? Where will people turn for confidential guidance?

Lacking the community support for our churches, will the 35-plus years of Dinner Bell and 40-plus years of battling food insecurity come to an end? Is the social fabric of our Village being altered? It is a question worth pondering.

TRUSTEES' MESSAGE



The Trustees and Council will be busy this month preparing for the Annual Meeting. Save the date, **January 28th** after the church service. You will get an Annual Report before the meeting and we hope you will take the time to read through it. Your input is very important, so we hope to see you on the 28th.

You will read more about the food pantry in the Outreach section of the newsletter but the Trustees want to extend a thank you to Paul and Sylvia Weld for all the years they have put into the pantry. In 2024, they will be stepping back in the numbers of hours they will help out. The Outreach Committee will be looking for more volunteers in 2024.

We had a successful December 2nd event and we thank Nancy Irving and all the volunteers who made it happen.

In 2024, we would like to resume having dinners at the church. We are looking at one in February and one April. We are working on chefs for both, if you have any ideas, please share them with the Trustees.

Happy New Year to all!

Anne Getchell

Trustee

Trustee Board ~ Anne Getchell,
John Edgerton, Duddie Andrews,
Nancy Irving, Nancy Divine, &
Tom Workman, ex officio member,
Treasurer

TRUSTEE OF THE WEEK

1/7	Duddie Andrews
1/14	John Edgerton
1/21	Anne Getchell
1/28	Nancy Irving

TRUSTEE'S MEETING

Tuesday, January 9, 2024 4:30pm, Anne's House

What's God Doing in the Village cont.

Meanwhile, the Toning families still hold several weeks of time free from rental for their own celebrations.

"My birthday, July 7th, brought us to Conway for the July 4th celebration." Matt Toning told me. "My daughters (aged 7 and 9), set up a lemonade stand for the parade – people were so generous and welcoming to them. We then took the Scenic Railroad to see the fireworks and we are excited to take the Polar Express this winter. My girls are looking forward to ski lessons at King Pine.

I am so grateful for The Station Bistro, as I am on a plant-based diet," Matt continued.

Of the renovation, he said "We love old churches, their grandeur, their architecture. We hope what we've done here will be enjoyed by our families, and our renters, for years to come."

Rev John Hughes, is Pastor of the Brown Church in Conway Village, "devoting ourselves to the health of the body, mind, and spirit in the Mt. Washington Valley."

Conway Village Congregational Church Mission Statement

"We are a community of faith in Jesus Christ, open to all, and by following His teachings we willingly serve God, our neighbors and each other, through worship, fellowship and ministry."

Conway Village Congregational Church

United Church of Christ
**PO Box 333,
132 Main Street
Conway, NH 03818**

Email

info@thebrownchurch.org

Website

www.thebrownchurch.org

Phone: 603-447-3851

**Rev. John G. Hughes
Minister**

**Moderator
Carl Vitters**

**Admin. Asst./Bookkeeper
Melody Bergman**



Due to the recent flooding, the women's bible study group will be meeting at Judy Workman's home. The men's bible study will be meeting at Charles Monaghan's home.

Zoom may be available in the future.

If you would like to join a group, please contact the Church office at 603-447-3851 or email info@thebrownchurch.org

CVCC Office Hours

While we work on repairing the flood damage, the office will be operating remotely during normal hours. Feel free to contact us via phone or email. Thank you.

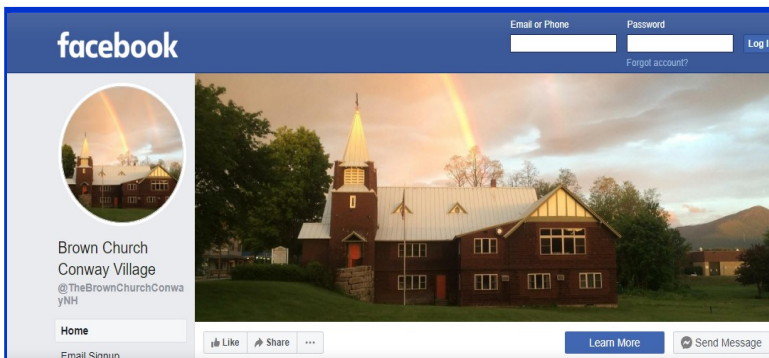
Monday 8:00 am-4:00 pm

Tuesday 8:00 am-4:00 pm

Wednesday 8:00 am-4:00 pm

Thursday 8:00 am-4:00 pm

CLOSED FRIDAYS



Our Facebook page is <https://www.facebook.com/TheBrownChurchConwayNH/> You can find it by searching in Facebook for the "Brown Church Conway NH" If you use Facebook please "LIKE" our Facebook Page by clicking the "Like" button at the top of the page. By liking our page people will see our church and know that we are well liked within the community. You will be notified on your Facebook notifications when we post something new. You in turn, if you choose to, can

share that post on your page, which is very helpful in promoting the church, particularly for promoting our events. Thank you & God Bless



To contact the web/tech team email
cvccwebteam@gmail.com



The Dinner Bell

Due to the recent flooding in the church, all Dinner Bell community meals have been postponed until further notice. Please accept our apologies!



February Newsletter Articles

Due By »
Thank you!



Sundays 10:00 AM
Sunday Worship via Zoom
To access Zoom meeting by Phone
Phone Number: 1 646 558 8656
(for audio only)
Meeting ID: 876 2425 7300
Password: 589150

Join us in person!



Please visit our website or email us at info@thebrownchurch.org to sign up for our email mailing list. Let us know which types of emails you are interested in, weekly worship, monthly newsletters, special events & volunteer opportunities, website:
thebrownchurch.org



**2023 Hometown
Christmas**





**Santa (Dan Lavigne),
Nancy Irving and
George Cleveland talk
about the Brown
Church Christmas
Fair!**

**Thanks to all the volunteers & participants who
made our Hometown Christmas Fair a great success!**



Christmas Tree decorating takes many hands! Thank you to all!

Come worship with us at the
Majestic Theatre
on Sunday's at 10am
36 Main Street, Conway.
Parking is in back of the theatre,
on Main St., at Station Bistro and
Saco Bay Physical Therapy across
the street. We thank the Majestic
staff and supporters for sharing their
venue with us.

January 2024 Worship Schedule

January Worship Schedule 2024 "Theme: Revelations"

Sunday, January 7, 2024 – *Baptism of Christ*

Scripture: Genesis 1:1-5
Mark 1:4-11

Sermon: "***What Defines Us?***"

Psalm 29

Sunday, January 14, 2024 – *2nd Epiphany*

Scripture: 1 Samuel 3:1-10, (11-20)
John 1:43-51

Sermon: "***How Do We Picture God?***"

Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18

Sunday, January 21, 2024 – *3rd Epiphany*

Jonah 3:1-5, 10
Mark 1:14-20

Sermon: "***What is Our Vision?***"

Psalm 62:5-12

Sunday, January 28, 2024 – *4th Epiphany*




Scripture: 1 Corinthians 8:1-13
Mark 1:21-28

Sermon: "***What Does God Want?***"

Psalm 111

January 2024



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 <u>Office Closed</u> 	2	3 3:30pm Diaconate	4 9:30 am Women's Bible Study	5 9 am Men's Bible Study <u>Office Closed</u>	6
7 10 AM Worship Majestic Theatre	8	9 4:30pm Trustees	10	11 9:30 am Women's Bible Study	12 9 am Men's Bible Study <u>Office Closed</u>	13
14 10 AM Worship Majestic Theatre Annual Reports Due to Admin.	15	16	17 Council 4:30pm Conway Fire Department Conference Room	18 9:30 am Women's Bible Study	19 9 am Men's Bible Study <u>Office Closed</u>	20  Articles Due Today!
21 10 AM Worship Majestic Theatre	22	23	24	2 9:30 am Women's Bible Study	26 9 am Men's Bible Study <u>Office Closed</u>	27
28 10 AM Worship Majestic Theatre  Following Worship Service	29	30	31 4:30pm Diaconate February Mtg.			