



UNITED CHURCH OF HINESBURG

December 2020, Newsletter

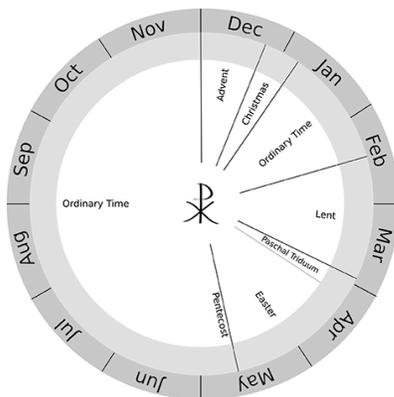
Pastor's Message

The Pandemic is only a Season

"For everything there is a season..."
- Ecclesiastes 3.1

"This too shall pass."
- and ancient Persian adage

The Christian Liturgical Calendar is divided into many different seasons. We are currently in Advent, which is the beginning of the Christian year. As time marches on, we move through seasons like Christmastide, Epiphany, Lent and Eastertide. The grayscale Liturgical wheel below shows the natural progression of these seasons, while the more wonderfully done artistic version shows the liturgical colors of each season.



"Christian liturgical calendar" by Adam S. Keck is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0



"Christian Liturgical Calendar" by Robinsan is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0



CONTACT US!

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The Christian Calendar has been an important resource for the faithful over the centuries. It helped mark the passage of time before everyone had a calendar on their walls or on their phones. Today it helps Christians live seasonally, observing specific practices and reflections in due time. These seasons, sometimes called “tides” (like Christmastide and Eastertide) help us to not get stuck in one aspect of our faith’s story. Further, when we experience the more difficult aspects of the Lenten season, we might remember with hope and expectation that Easter is right around the corner. Seasonal living reminds us that the status quo does not last forever.

We began the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic in the middle of Lent. We shared Maundy Thursday online. Our first online podcast worship service was Easter Sunday, April 12th. Since then, we’ve marched through Eastertide, and the season of Pentecost, before beginning the new year in Advent at the end of November. Even when the doldrums of the pandemic set in, and the days and weeks seemed to blend together, the changing of the seasons of faith continued.

I’ve had a difficult time tracking down the first use of “COVIDtide” online, but the idea has stuck with me. This pandemic is like a season in our Christian calendar: it carries its own form of penance and confession of shortcomings; it has its share of hard work; it also has a time of celebration and giving thanks. Finally, we must remember that it is only a season, so we live through it, knowing that change is coming.

Many of us are experiencing the exhaustion of COVID-19 fatigue this holiday season. Personally, I’m constantly fighting off a “Bah humbug” attitude fitting the curmudgeonly Ebenezer Scrooge. We’ve all been socially isolated, worried, and out of sorts for a long time, and for some, the cracks are showing. We know that Christmas will be different this year. It can certainly feel like this calamity will never end.

But COVIDtide is a season, a time that cannot last forever. Like some seasons, it’s carrying on longer than it should. Soon, however, we will experience a change, first gradually, and then the world will move forward into its next season.

As we wait with expectation and hope for the coming Christ on Christmas day yet again, I pray that we wait with expectation and hope for the end of the pandemic. This too shall pass.

Christmas Blessings,

Pastor Jared



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www.facebook.com/ucofh/

<https://www.instagram.com/unitedchurchofhinesburg/>

Advent and Christmas Week at UCH - Schedule and ZOOM Info

Below are the ZOOM Invite Credentials for all Services through December 27, 2020

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/3085092306?pwd=TENNSkFIRGRyd1gzcGlkaktqWm1WZz09>

Meeting ID: 308 509 2306

Passcode: cz5D8W

Join by phone

877 853 5257 US Toll-free

Meeting ID: 308 509 2306

Passcode: 348991

- **December 16th Vesper Service 7pm – Wednesday Evening Vespers**
- **December 20th Sunday Worship 10am - The Fourth Sunday in Advent Worship Service**
- **December 23rd Vesper Service 7pm – Wednesday Evening Vespers**
- **December 24th Christmas Eve Service 5pm – Christmas Eve Online Service at 5pm by Zoom**

Join us for Christmas Eve worship as we celebrate the story of Jesus' birth. Children's message and candle light service will take place, so bring your children and candles!

- **December 25th Reading of the Christmas Story 3pm - Christmas Day Reading**

Join us for a brief gathering by Zoom to read the Christmas Story and offer prayers for Christmas Day. All are welcome.

- **December 27th Sunday Worship 10am - The First Sunday in Christmastide Sunday Worship**

Membership Care Committee

The year 2020 has presented multifaceted challenges beyond what we ever could have imagined. The Coronavirus, COVID 19, and the political climate have kept so many of us on edge for so long. I thought I understood the word pandemic, but living in one has shown us it is much more than any dictionary or Google definition. As a church, many have worked very hard to keep us united and maintain awareness that the United Church of Hinesburg is still here to serve its members and the community. We are very grateful to Pastor Jared and all of you who have creatively kept our church functioning.

As a committee we have reached out to the greater church community with phone calls, emails and we have continued to send birthday and anniversary cards. For the most part things have gone well but, we are not perfect - merely human, and some of our efforts have not met our expectations. We hope that in conjunction with our outreach and the work of individuals and other groups, everyone has been included and made to feel that we are still here for each other.

This committee has met through zoom meetings and lots of phone calls. Some of our communication has failed us at times and we want to sincerely apologize for any error that may have been upsetting. We had planned to update our Church Directory this year, however with COVID 19, other things took priority and that did not happen. Our lists of congregants and attendees, and their contact information, is in dire need of updating. At the beginning of each month we have gone over the list to be sure that the information was accurate. However, we somehow got our "wires crossed" in September and October. Some people received two birthday or anniversary cards. Sadly, cards were sent out to folks who are no longer with us; we are so sorry that this happened. A new computer program is being put into place that will include all membership information. When completed it will allow us to have access to accurate data at

any time. We will also be able to publish a new Church Directory in early 2021.

While COVID has been front and center for many months now, the rest of life continues on too with its joys, sadness, work, school, child care, isolation, it goes on and on. The Membership Care Committee is here to look out for members at times of loss, illness or special needs. The restrictions of the pandemic have kept us from what we normally do. We can't visit you or meet for coffee but we can talk. And sometimes just talking to someone and venting your concerns can help to ease the burdens, the loneliness or whatever you are feeling during this very difficult time. Last spring at the beginning of the pandemic we reached out by phone to hopefully everyone in the congregation. Follow up calls and emails were sent also until Pastor Jared's podcast, the Vesper service and other communications were being sent out routinely.

Over the summer some things were dropped and new things added. We now have the live stream service that is quite well attended. In person church was started but, had to be put on hold due to an increase in COVID cases. We want all of you to know that the Membership Care Committee is here for you. If you need a friendly ear to listen to your concerns, just want to know what's going on, or have a question about the current status of the United Church of Hinesburg please don't hesitate to call any one of us on the committee. We don't have all the answers but we can channel you to someone who most likely will.

Let's look forward to 2021 with faith that we will beat the pandemic and we will be able to return to some sense of normalcy, and that while we are apart and socially distanced, we are still together as a Christian community.

God Bless Us Everyone!
Your Membership Care Committee

The Chittenden Asylum Seekers Assistance Network (CASAN)

It has been a difficult year for all of us, but the darkness we've faced has highlighted all that we have to be thankful for too. The Chittenden Asylum Seekers Assistance Network planning team would like to express our sincere thanks to each of you. Your interest and support mean a lot, and the donations of all kinds – food, time, transportation, friendship, clothing, household items, money, and more – have truly made a difference in people's lives. We are truly grateful for your being part of this network.

And, the people seeking asylum whom you have helped want you to know how deeply thankful they are. Earlier this month we met mom #3, and have been supporting her through a very challenging situation. Yesterday she expressed thanks, that is meant for you, too: "God bless you, for all the support you are giving me. You have no idea. You are giving me hope. Without you I would be devastated now."

Here are a few updates and more reasons to give thanks:

Mom #1 is receiving regular paychecks and is now able to pay for her own food, utilities, and part of her rent! She continues to gradually become more and more financially self-sufficient. Her preschool daughter is making good progress at her preschool.

Mom #2 (who loves to cook) just graduated from a food services training program – she is so proud! While still unable to work until she receives federal authorization, she will volunteer at a food pantry, helping others as well as building her resume. Her preschool daughter loves books and is thriving at her new child care program.

More good news: CASAN is now part of a network with five similar groups in Vermont and just across the NH border, and we have named ourselves the Vermont/New Hampshire Asylum Support Network. Until this fall, we weren't all aware of each other (in part because some groups are quite new), and it's been great to make new connections, exchange ideas, and work together to advocate for people seeking asylum. To help inform communities and increase support for our mutual work, we are partnering in a Giving Tuesday appeal next week.

THANK YOU again for being part of the CASAN circle of support for the families currently being served, and for helping build capacity to assist more people in the future.

With gratitude,

Jan Steinbauer (Coordinator)
Delia Clark
Devena Fifield
Mark Klinedinst

Hannah Martin
Carolyn Smiles
Richard Smiles
Kim Watkin (Treasurer)

Please Consider Donating Electronically!

Donate online and eliminate the need to write personal checks.

Why

- It's safe, easy and convenient.
- You can make a one-time donation or set up recurring donations from a bank account or charged to a debit or credit card. You set the amount and the schedule.
- Your generosity continues even when you are unable to be in church.
- You can view your online donation history at any time and easily modify any future donations.
- Online donations are recorded automatically in the church's financial system. Eliminating check processing reduces the time commitment required of our financial secretaries.

How

- Go to the church website <https://www.ucofh.org/donate.html>.
- Click the Donate Now button.
- Provide the required information.
- Optional but recommended: create a profile that will allow you to view your online donation history and modify or cancel future recurring donations.

Questions or need help?

- Contact Yvonne Whitaker by phone at 482-4279 or by email at whitaker@gmavt.net.

News from Cots (used with permission)

Our youngest supporters Desi Hong started second grade this fall at Hinesburg Community School, but earlier this summer, over Father's Day weekend, he was busy being a budding philanthropist.

Desi held a yard sale at his Nana's house in Colchester to help people who are facing homelessness. He raised \$453.51 to donate to COTS.

Desi had seen a man on a corner with a sign that said: "Homeless, Anything Helps." He first thought of sharing part of his snack with him, but the light turned green too quickly, and his mom suggested there might be another way to help.

Desi then decided to have a yard sale to sell some of his unused toys. When he and his parents met with COTS Development Director Becky Holt via Zoom to talk about his donation to COTS, Desi shared how he wanted to grow up to be a builder, and that one day each year, he was going to build houses for people who were experiencing homelessness.

Desi is among of the many young supporters of COTS this year, who shared hats and other essential items from the COTS Wish List.



Finance and Stewardship

Giving to the United Church



Giving is an investment in the gospel of Jesus Christ. For some, 'investing an investment' by donating a gift of stock to the church may be a giving option. For others, making an IRA Charitable Distribution may be an option.

Donations of Stock

If you hold individual stock you can avoid capital gains by gifting the stock directly to the church and claiming the market value as a donation. If you hold your stock in a brokerage account, provide the following information to your advisor:

Charitable Organization: United Church of Hinesburg

Telephone Number: 802-482-3352 (church office)

Receiving Institution: Morgan Stanley

DTC Number: 0015

Receiving Institution Account Number: 383-109209

IRA Charitable Distribution

If you have reached the age where you need to take Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs) from your traditional IRAs, you can avoid paying taxes on them by donating the money directly from your plan administrator to a charitable organization such as the church.

Questions

Please contact your tax advisor or financial consultant with specific questions related to your situation. If you have questions for the church regarding these options, contact Yvonne Whitaker by phone at 482-4279 or by email at whitaker@gmavt.net.

Merry Christmas



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