

DECEMBER 2025 HILLTOP HERALD

Rev. Andrew Harris
 Pastor

Mark Omobono
 Moderator

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Matthew 2:13-15

When the magi had departed, an angel from the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up. Take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod will soon search for the child in order to kill him." Joseph got up and, during the night, took the child and his mother to Egypt. He stayed there until Herod died.

Beloved,

God was a refugee.

As we enter into the season of advent, we remember the Gospel of Matthew. It is the story of a young couple, blessed with deep faith and awesome courage, who lovingly welcome the child of God into the world. It is also the story of a cruel and violent ruler, who brings death and suffering upon the most vulnerable of his people out of fear that his power and supremacy might be challenged by the promised Messiah.

We remember that Joseph, Mary, and the infant baby Jesus fled to Egypt by night, walking many miles under the cover of darkness to escape the clutches of King Herod. Herod, having failed to convince the Magi to betray the Son of God into his hands, has all the children under the age of two in Bethlehem killed. To escape the violence and save their child, Joseph and Mary make their way as exiles in a foreign land.

In the season of advent, we prepare our hearts for the coming of Christ. Where will we encounter Christ this season? We meet Emmanuel, God-with-us, in expected times and unexpected places. We are invited to see Jesus in the lives of the hungry and the poor; the sick and the persecuted. We are called, faithfully, to see Jesus Christ in the face of the immigrant.

Right now, right here in Burlington, our immigrant neighbors are detained, denied the dignity of a bed, a decent meal, a shower, a private commode; denied access to medications and appropriate healthcare; denied contact with their families and loved ones who wonder where they've been taken and where they are going. Right here in Burlington, at our own infamous ICE Facility at 1000 District Ave, a pregnant woman was forced to sleep on a concrete floor for days.

We remember the words Jesus speaks in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew: "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did it to me."

Where will we encounter Christ this season of advent? I fear his mother is sleeping on a concrete floor in a detention cell.

When Jesus comes again, will he have mercy on us?

In hope,
 Rev. Andrew Harris



CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES



4PM FAMILY WORSHIP WITH CAROLS AND CANDLELIGHT

10PM CANDLELIGHT SERVICE

LONGEST NIGHT SERVICE



In lieu of our yearly Blue Christmas Service this year we will share a 'Longest Night' service on

Tuesday, December 16

at The Presbyterian Church

335 Cambridge Street, Burlington

Time to be determined!



**PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
335 CAMBRIDGE STREET, BURLINGTON
DECEMBER 3 5:30pm**

Due to the holidays, the Presbyterian Church decided to combine November and December into one dinner on December 3rd at 5:30pm.

This is FREE for all!

POINSETTIAS FOR OUR CHRISTMAS WORSHIP SERVICES



If you would like to purchase a plant for our Christmas Services, please see the form attached to the Hilltop or at coffee hour. Plants are \$12. If you would like to take your plant (after Christmas) or donate one to be delivered by our Deacons to those who have been on our prayer list, please indicate that on the form. You can make payment out to UCC and add Poinsettia on the memo line. Return to the church office please.

Deadline for ordering is Sunday, December 14th.

BIBLE STUDY

Please join us in the conference room on Wednesday afternoons 2-3pm for Advent Bible Study December 3, 10, and 17. If you can't join us in person, you can always join us on Zoom:

Zoom link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84363847241>

PUB THEOLOGY

Join Pastor Andrew on December 18th 8pm at Common Craft at the Burlington Mall for friendly conversation on scripture or any topic of your interest.

CHRISTMAS TREE FUNDRAISER



Christmas Tree Sale: Our tree sale returns on Friday, November 28, the day after Thanksgiving! This year, the lot will be open on weekday evenings from 4–7 PM and weekends from 12–6 PM. We could use a few more volunteers to help staff the lot - thank you in advance for lending your time and spirit! In addition to beautiful trees, we'll be offering fresh wreaths and handmade ornaments throughout the sale.

Here is the link to volunteer at the Tree sales and Mistletoe Market:

<https://evite.me/mHBhq5ndUA>



MISTLETOE MARKET

**Saturday, November 29
10-3pm**

**Craft Vendors Welcome
Raffles - Music - Hot Cocoa
Santa Visits - Church Craft Table**

**INVITE FAMILY AND FRIENDS
SPREAD THE WORD!**



THE UCC MUSIC CORNER

One of the most beautiful ways to celebrate Advent and Christmas is to immerse ourselves in the music that heralds the coming and the birth of Jesus. This year, join us each Sunday as Aline, the Band, the Choir and some wonderful UCC soloists fill the sanctuary with carols and songs that illuminate the light shining around and within us. In addition, on Christmas Eve, guest musicians Lisa Brooke and her friend Andrea will enhance our services with the ethereal sound of the flute and rich velvet tones of the violin. And although it is always enchanting to listen to others share their talents, it is equally magical to offer the congregation the opportunity to sing their favorite carols. So, we are bringing back the:

CAROL SING IN DECEMBER

Join us each Sunday during Advent at 10:20 for a Carol Sing before each service. Choose carols from the Advent Songs booklet and check off or circle 2-3 of your favorites from the list provided in your pews and drop them in the basket near the communion table before you go to coffee hour by December 7.

Journey with us as we follow the signs of wonder, the light that shines through the darkness, the stories and the songs that lead us from Advent, through Christmas to Epiphany. May they serve to enchant, move and inspire you with hope, joy, love and peace.

Festively Yours,

Debbie Claar



Discussion of the 2026 budget was an important part of the meeting. While the Deacons are asking for the same amounts as previous years for many categories within the Board's budget, there are substantial increases in two categories. These are guest organist, as we don't know when a new Director of Music Ministries will begin or how much vacation the person will receive, and Guest Ministers, since Andrew will be eligible for parental leave during 2026.

Beginning December 7, the congregation will sing Christmas carols from 10:20 until the service starts at 10:30. Various church boards are being asked to be candle lighters.

Instead of having a 'Blue Christmas' service at our church, there will be a 'Longest Night' service on Tuesday, December 16 at the Presbyterian church, time TBD.

The plans for December 24 services were reviewed. At 10 am there will be a service outside the ICE building organized by the Mass. Council of Churches. At 4 pm there will be a service at the church with candles, the choir singing, and a violinist and flutist playing. The violinist and flutist will play again at the 10 pm service; church youth will participate and there will be candles.

The poinsettia list was reviewed. Each year the Deacons, sometimes with help from others, bring a poinsettia to those in the congregation who have been ill, lost a loved one, or had a particularly hard time since spring.

Called to Care continues to do an excellent job under Jan McSheffrey's leadership, visiting 15 people in October. The group met last month to review and update their card list; they take turns sending cards to 21 people each month.



MISSIONS UPDATE!

RED WAGON

After the large food drive and Thanksgiving collection the pantry did let us know they are in need of these items:

Baby formula
Baby food
Sanitary pads/tampons
Toothpaste and toothbrushes

Bring to worship on December 28th. Thank you!

CRAFTING FOR A CAUSE

Our crafters meet every Thursday at 1pm in the conference room. Over the past months the group has made seventeen hats and a scarf that was donated to COAT BOSTON, CAMBRIDGE STREET CLOSET and some to WINN STREET CLOSET. If you can't join us in person you can always join us on Zoom:

<https://zoom.us/j/93567188274?pwd=TVJ3L2xDODFxeUVSM0dWRnFhelli3dz09>

Meeting ID: 935 6718 8274 Passcode: 01803

MISSIONS FINANCIAL REPORT

Parish Council accepted Missions' recommendation that 100% of the Christmas offering go to our church to help with any past and present deficits. Missions would like to make two special Christmas offerings, from its own budget, for a total of \$4000, equal to approximately 50% of the total anticipated Christmas offering: \$2000 to the International Institute of New England, which helps immigrants with education, language, employment and housing, and \$2000 to UCC Disaster Relief in Jamaica. Missions will also support the Fistula Foundation as our 10th benevolence; please go to fistulafoundation.org to learn about the work they do in 37 countries in Africa and Asia to help women who have suffered during childbirth.

Thank You for your generous support of **COAT BOSTON**



*One thing likely to float your boat
Is a warm and comfortable winter coat.
From plaids and bright colors to soft gentle hues
From pink and purple and greens and blues.*

*Children in Boston will weather the cold
Thanks to people with hearts of gold.
Their faces will smile as they play in the snow
Carefree and warm, as home they will go.*

MISTLETOE MARKET GIFT CARDS

We are grateful to the following restaurants for generously donating gift cards to the Mistletoe Market. Please come buy on Saturday, November 29th, from 10-3 to bid or purchase. Thank you Eddie V's, Seasons 52, True North, Tavern in the Square, Feng Shui, Fiorella's, Schoolhouse Ice Cream, Pizza Works, Burlington Jade, Bickford's, Yard House, Bancroft, Frank Pepe Pizzeria and Cafe Escadrille.

As we step forward into December and onto the road to Jerusalem, the Missions Committee pauses to thank the congregation for your support of many projects during this busy fall. Three full bins of toiletries were delivered to Burlington High school. Pumpkins that were sold in October raised \$6,444 to benefit People Helping people. We also welcomed Alynne MacLean to the pulpit to tell us about her project *Science with a Mission*. This is one of the ten projects which have each received \$1000 this year. The Missions committee carefully researched many worthy projects before narrowing the list this year. Two additional charities (UCC Disaster Relief in Jamaica and the International Institute of New England) will each receive \$2000 as a special Christmas offering. We are nearing the end of our annual Coat Boston, pooling our effort with Hancock Church in Lexington to help clothe Boston's needy school children. Seventeen hats and a scarf have been added to the three bins collected so far. The deadline for putting NEW coats in the bin is November 30. Our members will be staffing the Wish Tree at the Burlington Mall this month. Requests from the Wish Tree for underwear, socks, p.j's have been distributed and must be returned by December 5. The Missions committee is charged with distributing 10% of the pledged income of this church to worthy causes. We end the year ready to again attempt to "serve the least of these" in Christ's name.

NEWS FROM CHRISTIAN EDUCATION!



A successful bake sale was held on November 16. Thank you to all for purchasing cookies to help support our CE programs.

The ingredients were donated by Kathy Hill, thank you, Kathy. The net results were \$236. Good job, Sunday School.

Missing from picture are Trey, Toby and Claire.



IN-GATHERING 2025

Again the kids and youth competed to win canned and boxed items to donate to PHP.

They also participated as leaders of the collection of our Pledges, Time and Talent survey forms, morning offering and much more.



Nursery Care

Nursery care is held every Sunday from early September through the beginning of June. If you have young children they are welcome to join the others downstairs in Skelton Hall where we also have Sunday School.

NEW! YOUTH GROUP

As of November UCC brought back Youth Group in conjunction with the Hancock Church in Lexington. The group will be for people in 7th – 12th grade.

Schedule:

Sunday December 14th we will meet from 5-6:30 at the Hancock Church

This will be a challenge between UCC and Hancock to make the most amazing gingerbread house. Come to this celebration and show your creative talents. Please let Deb know if you will attend C:857-373-9157



Friday January 9 – Saturday January 10 we will have an overnight at City Reach Boston.

Three of our UCC youth will be attending this amazing program.

UPCOMING EVENTS

12/14/25 Advent Sunday of Joy—Sunday School will stay in worship

The Sunday School will lead the entire congregation in making a craft during the service. They will give directions and demonstrate how to make the craft.



12/21/25 12:15pm Annual Christmas Caroling

Come all! This is a beloved event where we feel warmth and love we pass along to people in Burlington.

There will be a lunch of pizza provided by the CE Committee right after worship. We then head out at 12:15pm to carol around town. We will be joined by our friends from The Presbyterian Church. We are out caroling 1 – 1 ½ hours. All are welcome to join us.

JOYS AND CONCERNS

Woody Knowles	Andrew's friend Lorenzo
Lucy Damiani	Bill Hitchcock
Carol Downing and Jan McSheffrey's brother Charlie, cousin Mary/Husband	Anna Karwan's mom Irene and gratitude for her sister as caretaker
Donna DeSome's sister Brenda and brother-in-law Rick	Skip Glancy and sister Dorothy
Deana Tredeau's great niece Katie Wise	Karen Butler's brother-in-law Lenny
Ryan Clark's co-workers	Barbara Naddaff's friend Mary
Rob Sears	Shirley Fong's Mom Mary
Conrad Fong	Julie Lewis' cousin Alicia
Tom Killilea	Shirley Garside's daughter Lynn
Tonia Egan's Mom and Dad	Jessy McNeil's sisters Grace and Joyce
Bill Livezey	Kelly Sievert
Kay Shute	Ginger Mungillo, daughter Cindy, son Jim
Roberta Low	Barbara Garland
Laura Nowell's cousin Nigel, and friend Mary	Families in need of food and assistance
Debbie Claar's dear friends Victor and Bob	Mother Earth
Jan Blandino, her grandson Toby	Gun Violence
David Knowles	Our Country and beyond
Elaine Glancy	
Ted Brierley	

CONDOLENCES:

Our heartfelt sympathy to Bill Hitchcock on the passing of his dear girlfriend Denise. She had a long battle with cancer and is now at peace. Keep Bill and Denise's family and friends in your prayers.



CONGRATULATIONS:

Ally Mazzarella and Pastor Andrew Harris are expecting a new baby boy come April. Here's to new life and wonderful adventures to come.

- 4 Janet Knudsen
- 15 Kristina Duran
- 17 Michael Tredeau
- 17 David McNeil
- 18 Lance Olney
- 18 Riley Tredeau
- 19 Lauren Costa
- 21 Madelyn Lewis
- 26 Robert Stahlinski
- 29 Maddy Bonnell



WORSHIP PARTICIPATION

December 7 Worship 10:15a

2nd Sunday of Advent-Carols

Communion Prep:
 Pastor: Rev. Andrew Harris
 Organist: Aline Beck
 Lay Leader: Marcia Rich
 Head Usher:
 Usher:
 Greeter:
 Flowers:
 Collector: Dick Butler
 Nursery: Kritika Agarwala
 Sunday School: Deb Raymond-Donna Ferro
 Coffee Host: Deana Tredeau
 Deb Glancy
 Baker/Snacks: Donna Flecchia
 Lucy Damiani

December 14 Worship 10:15a

3rd Sunday of Advent-Carols

Pastor: Rev. Andrew Harris
 Organist: Aline Beck
 Lay Leader:
 Head Usher:
 Usher:
 Greeter: Marcia Rich
 Flowers:
 Collector: Deb Raymond
 Nursery: Kritika Agarwala
 Sunday School: Deb Raymond-Donna Ferro
 Coffee Host: Chris Stahlinski
 Baker/Snacks: Chris Stahlinski
 Marcia Rich

December 21 Worship 10:15a

4th Sunday of Advent-Carols

Pastor: Rev. Andrew Harris
 Organist: Aline Beck
 Lay Leader:
 Head Usher:
 Usher:
 Greeter:
 Poinsettias: Congregation
 Collector: Marge Zamanian
 Nursery: Kritika Agarwala
 Sunday School: Deb Raymond-Donna Ferro
 Coffee Host:
 Baker/Snacks:

December 24 Christmas Eve 4p

Pastor: Rev. Andrew Harris
 Organist: Aline Beck
 Violinist: Lisa Brooke
 Lay Leader:
 Head Usher:
4 Ushers:
 Readers:
 Greeter:
 Poinsettias: Congregation
 Collector: Marcia Rich

December 24 Christmas Eve 10p

Pastor: Rev. Andrew Harris
 Organist: Aline Beck
 Violinist: Lisa Brooke
 Lay Leader:
 Head Usher:
4 Ushers:
 Readers:
 Greeter:
 Poinsettias: Congregation
 Collector: Marcia Rich

December 31 Hymn Sing 10:30a

Pastor: Rev. Andrew Harris
 Organist: Aline Beck
 Lay Leader:
 Head Usher:
 Usher:
 Greeter:
 Flowers:
 Collector: Marcia Rich
 Nursery: Kritika Agarwala
 Sunday School: Deb Raymond-Donna Ferro
 Coffee Host:
 Baker/Snacks:

December 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
PLEASE SUPPORT OUR CHRISTMAS TREE FUNDRAISER 	1 6:30p AA 7p Trustees 4-7 Tree Sales	2 4-7 Tree Sales	3 2p Bible Study 5:30p Community Dinner @ Presbyterian 4-7 Tree Sales	4 1p C4C 6:30p Scouts 7p Deacons 4-7 Tree Sales	5 4-7 Tree Sales	6 Noon-6p Tree Sales
7 2ND ADVENT 10:20a Communion Noon-6p Tree Sales 5-10p Party Rental	8 6:30p AA 4-7 Tree Sales	9 6-7:30-Mike Fay-Tenors Mtg 4-7 Tree Sales	10 2p Bible Study 4-7 Tree Sales	11 1p C4C 6:30p Scouts 4-7 Tree Sales	12 5-9 Rehearse For Rental 4-7 Tree Sales	13 Noon-6p Tree Sales 1-10p Concert RENTAL
14 3RD ADVENT 10:20a Worship Love Offering  Noon Caroling Noon-6p Tree Sales Party Rental	15 6:30p AA	16 Time-TBD  LONGEST NIGHT at Presbyterian Church 7p PC Mtg	17 2p Bible Study	18 1p C4C 6:30p Scouts	19	20
21 4TH ADVENT 10:20a Worship	22 HILLTOP ARTICLES DUE FOR JANUARY 6:30p AA	23	24 CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES 4p Family Service 10p Candlelight	25 Merry Christmas 	26	27 11-3p Anniversary Party Rental
28 10:30a Hymn Sing Worship Red Wagon	29 6:30p AA	30	31 New Year's Eve	January 1  Happy 2026 To ALL!		

UCC Congregational
6 Lexington Street
Burlington, MA 01803
Address Service Requested

TO:



DECEMBER HILLTOP NEWSLETTER 2025



POINSETTIA PLANT ORDER FORM

Given by: _____

In Memory/Celebration/Honor of: _____

No. of plants: (\$12.00 each) _____

I wish to keep my plant: _____

I wish to donate my plant: _____

I will deliver a plant: _____

I would like a plant delivered to: _____

(Please return your payment to the church office with the enclosed slip by Dec 14th)



POINSETTIA PLANT ORDER FORM

Given by: _____

In Memory/Celebration/Honor of: _____

No. of plants: (\$12.00 each) _____

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