

JANUARY 2026 HILLTOP HERALD

Rev. Andrew Harris
 Pastor

Mark Omobono
 Moderator

CONTENTS

Pastor Message	1
Bible Study	1
Annual Meeting	2
Deacons	2
Music Notes	2
Missions	3
-Red Wagon	
-C4C	
-Missions Report	
-Wish Project	
Green Team Info	3
Christian Ed	4-5
Joys-Concerns	6
Worship Participation	7
Calendar	8

*I am about to do a new thing;
 now it springs forth; do you not perceive it?
 I will make a way in the wilderness
 and rivers in the desert.
Isaiah 43:19*

Dear church,

At the end of December, I always run into the same problem. When I need to schedule a meeting or check a date, I try to flip the page and find – well, nothing. The end of my calendar, or the front cover of my planner staring back at me. Life goes on, appointments need to be scheduled, and yet, according to the ways we customarily keep track of time, there's a major barrier between the days of December 2025 and January 2026.

Despite the fact that the earth continues on its course around the sun. According to our calendars, there's a big difference between last Sunday and next Sunday. Sometimes we internalize this difference as well. We celebrate the new year. We make resolutions. We buy new calendars. It's a good time for us to perceive a new thing.

Through the prophet Isaiah, God says, "I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth." The truth is that God is always doing new things. The question God has for us is, "Do you not perceive it?" The new year is the time when my calendar and planner conspire to force me to perceive the new things that God is doing.

But God isn't just doing new things for the sake of novelty. God's new thing is real renewal, real transformation; a way in the wilderness, rivers in the desert. God is making a way where there was no way. God is creating nourishing sustenance in a place of danger and death. God is building a world that fosters life, beauty, and community from what was desolate and deserted.

God is about to do a new thing: a way in the wilderness, rivers in the desert. Do you not perceive it? The fact that this question needs to be asked makes me think that I am not alone in needing to be reminded periodically of the new things God is doing in the world and in my life. So let's be grateful that, as our calendars expire, we must lift our heads out of our schedules and perceive the new things that God is doing.

Peace,

Rev. Andrew Harris



Bible Study Every Wednesday, 2-3pm

Starting Wednesday January 7, we'll begin a new Bible Study session on Revelation. No, not the Book of Revelation (although we will touch on that), but the concept of revelation. Scripture tells many stories of the ways in which God reveals truth to mortals. In the United Church of Christ, our motto is "God is still speaking." As we explore revelation, we'll explore questions like, "How does God speak to us?" and "What does God say?" All are welcome!

Follow this link if you'd like to join on Zoom:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89076641525>



**ANNUAL MEETING/LUNCHEON
TO BE HELD ON FEBRUARY 8TH AFTER WORSHIP
REPORTS NEED TO BE IN TO THE CHURCH OFFICE
BY JANUARY 26TH!**



There was much to go over to finalize plans for Christmas Eve services. The group also reviewed how decorating the sanctuary for Christmas went; it was more complicated than usual as it was the same day as the Mistletoe Market, in which some deacons were involved. Several ideas were generated to make the decorating easier and more organized next year.

The arrival of the poinsettias and their preparation for the sanctuary and delivery to members and friends of the congregation who have had challenges or joys since Easter was discussed.

Several ideas for fellowship events were considered.

To follow up on previous meetings' discussions on the need for replacement chairs in Sewall Hall, Deana had researched both chairs and storage racks. The Deacons approved \$3000 from General Memorial Funds for chairs and a chair rack. Parish Council approved the request at their subsequent meeting and the order was placed for 48 folding chairs and a rack that holds 84 chairs. Total cost was \$2027.26; the chairs are scheduled to arrive on January 6th and the rack between the 7th and the 12th.

Major changes are coming to the deacons, as Bobbie, the longtime secretary, left the board recently and Dave McNeil, longtime treasurer and Marcia Rich, longtime active member, are leaving the deacons as of the annual meeting. Anyone interested in becoming a deacon should speak to Andrew.



THE UCC BURLINGTON MUSIC CORNER

As we approach the new year, Aline and I wish you blessings and the gift of music each Sunday moving forward. Aline and I are so grateful we had the chance to lead the music for all the services in December. Between the Carol Sing, the soloists, our guest musicians, and the choir, music filled every corner of the sanctuary with joy and reverence. The Christmas Eve services were celebratory, reflective and beautiful and music played a large part in enhancing Andrew's message and the readings shared on that holy night. Thank you all for your musical contributions. We have so many gifted and talented people in our church and although you were all extremely busy, you stepped up and worked hard to make the December services musically magical. Thank you.

As we are still in the process of interviewing candidates for the Director of Music Ministries' position, know Aline and I are committed to keeping the music alive until such time as we have a new director. Aline will continue to act as the organist and pianist, and I will be behind the scenes choosing the hymns with Andrew, inviting soloists to sing and inviting the choir to lead the hymns during the services. Thank you for being such an appreciative congregation and as we withstand the cold blast of winter outside, we will warm your hearts with music that sustains and unites us within. Thank you.

Warmly Yours,
Debbie Claar



MISSIONS UPDATE!

RED WAGON

The following items are needed at our local pantry. Please bring to worship on January 25th.

cooking oil baby Food baby formula
Sugar flour
ground coffee or K cups

CRAFTING FOR A CAUSE

C4C will continue to meet in the conference room from 1 to 3 on Thursdays. Come knit, crochet, or come for the company. All welcome!



MISSIONS REPORT

Parish Council accepted our recommendation that 100% of the Christmas offering go to our church to help with past and present deficits. In the meanwhile Missions made two special offerings of \$2000 each from its own budget. The International Institute of New England helps immigrants with education, language, employment and housing. The United Church of Christ Disaster Ministries provides relief services in Jamaica and Cuba where areas were devastated by Hurricane Melissa.

The committee is grateful for support from members who helped gather underwear, pj's., etc for 31 families in need. Coats Boston received 12 children's coats from the congregation. We also appreciate the folks who manned the Wish Tree at for People Helping People at the Burlington Mall.

As we look forward to the year ahead the Missions Committee will be reviewing decisions made last year and discerning which ways to invest our donations in 2026.

WISH PROJECT, CHELMSFORD

We plan to start collecting and taking clothing to the Wish Project in North Chelmsford but date for this is to be decided. It will be posted in the weekly Blast. Clothing needs to be clean without tears, holes, stains and having all its buttons. It also needs to be seasonally appropriate.

We are looking for someone to transport the donations to Wish Project. Wish Project is located near the Route 4 rotary in North Lowell. If you can help, please let Bobbie or Susan Eby know.

GREEN TEAM

The Green Team invites you to check out the Free Library on the front lawn of the church near the parking lot. This little library was a result of our reading, "The Serviceberry" by Robin Wall Kimmerer this past year. In her book she talks about gift economies and mentions free libraries, and so we thought this is something we could do. Thanks to Nancy Todd, Anna Karwan and Donna DeSimone for putting it together, painting it and installing it.

This spring we will be installing a picnic table under the big tree in front of the church so that those people walking their pets can have a spot to sit for a few minutes and check out the library. A huge thank you to the Deacons for allocating money from the Memorial Fund to purchase the library and picnic table!

NEWS FROM CHRISTIAN ED!



December 7th our Sunday School preparing a craft to share with the congregation during Advent.

December 14 the Sunday School led the congregation in making a craft as in celebration of the Advent week of Joy and as a service project. Everyone made little caps that carried candy inside to distribute to those we caroled to on December 21. In support of the service, the Sunday School kids also lit the Advent candles, acted as ushers and distributed the Friendship Pads..

NURSERY SCHOOL

Nursery School is held every Sunday from Welcome Sunday in September until Children's Sunday on June 8, 2026.

INTERGENERATIONAL EVENTS



On December 21 we went caroling. What a beautiful day it was. Just wonderful to be with friends caroling and to see our old friends.

Thank you to all that took the time to spread the good news. Thank you to our friends at the Presbyterian Church for joining in the fun.

UPCOMING EVENTS



On January 25th 1:30 Sledding at Simonds Park

Bring your sledding equipment, dress warm, and down the hill you go! Meet at Simonds Park at the top of the hill. CE will provide hot chocolate at the top of the hill. We will be joined by our Presbyterian friends. If it is raining or snowing hard, this event will be cancelled.



November UCC brought back youth group in conjunction with Hancock church in Lexington. The group is for people 7th – 12th grade.

Friday January 9 - Saturday January 10 City Reach overnight to Boston

Two of our youth and 2 adults will be attending this program

Letter from Lindsay for the group attending

The youth group is going on trip with the CityReach Program run by Common Cathedral. CityReach is a program that allows young people and adults to learn more about homelessness and the people who experience it. During this program we will help give out clothes and other supplies to the homeless. We are running a donation drive in our church to help collect the stuff we will be given out. Any donation you can make is helpful!

We are collecting ...

- Season appropriate used clothes in good condition like ...
 - Warm coats, Sweatshirts and sweatpants (especially hooded sweatshirts), Sweaters
 - T-shirts, Long-sleeve shirts, Jeans, khakis and other casual pants
 - Waterproof boots, comfortable shoes, and sneakers, Hats, waterproof gloves, scarves, Belts
- New
 - White socks
 - Underwear and bras of all sizes from Small to XL
- Other supplies like
 - Carrying cases, backpacks, tote bags, fanny packs, small suitcases with wheels, travel-size toiletries
 - Soap, shampoo, deodorant, lotion, ChapStick, toothpaste, shaving cream in small sizes, toothbrushes, disposable razors, and tampons, Sleeping bags and blankets.

****Women's clothes/supplies are welcome but 80% of those they help are men so men's items are preferred***

Items can be left in the bins outside Bobbie's office.

Items must be in office by January 7th.

Please contact Lindsay: 781-240-9747 or Deb: 857-373-9156 with questions.

JOYS AND CONCERNS

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

CONDOLENCES

Our deepest sympathy to Laura Nowell on the passing of her cousin Nigel. He had been on our prayer list for a very long time. He is at peace now.

6	Nelson Eby
7	Ali & Peter Wisniewski
8	Kathy Olney
18	Beverly Maher
19	Erin Killilea
21	Lucas Clark
21	Dante Rameriz (Killilea)
22	John Heald
26	Sara Goodrich-Byers
28	Tom Killilea
28	Jan McSheffrey
31	Kristin Duran



WORSHIP PARTICIPATION

January 4, 2026 10:30a

Worship-Communion

Com. Prep: Chris Stahlinski
Pastor: Rev. Andrew Harris
Organist: Aline Beck
Lay Leader: Debbie Claar
Head Usher: David McNeil
Usher: Lucy Damiani
Greeter: Lucy Damiani
Collector: Joan Zink
Flowers:
Coffee Host: Jan Costa
Baker/Snack: Jan Costa

January 18, 2026 10:30am

Worship

Pastor: Rev. Andrew Harris
Organist: Aline Beck
Lay Leader: Sally Willard
Head Usher: Chris Stahlinski
Usher:
Greeter:
Collector: Dick Butler
Flowers:
Coffee Host:
Baker/Snack:

January 11, 2026 10:30a

Worship-Love Offering

Pastor: Rev. Andrew Harris
Organist: Aline Beck
Lay Leader: Chris Stahlinski
Head Usher:
Usher:
Greeter:
Collector: Lucy Damiani
Flowers:
Coffee Host: Deb Raymond
Baker/Snack: Deb Raymond

January 25, 2026 10:30am

Worship-Red Wagon

Pastor: Rev. Andrew Harris
Organist: Aline Beck
Lay Leader:
Head Usher:
Usher:
Greeter:
Collector: Marge Zamanian
Flowers:
Coffee Host: Chris Stahlinski
Baker/Snack: Chris Stahlinski

WORSHIP VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

If you can volunteer to be *Lay Leader, Head Usher, Usher, Greeter, Coffee Host or Nursery, Bakers.*

Here is the link:

<https://signup.com/client/invitation2/secure/567269842043/false?popup=true#/invitation>

January 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 Happy New Year 	2	3
4 10:30a Communion	5 6:30p AA	6	7  2p Bible Study	8 1p C4C 6p Scouts 7p Deacons	9	10 10-3pm Party Rental
11 10:30a Worship Love Offering	12 6:30p AA 7p CE Meeting	13 5p HR Meeting	14 2p Bible Study 3p Green Team	15 1p C4C 6p Scouts 8p Pub Theology	16	17 2-6:30p Party Rental
18 10:30a Worship 2-4p Rental Mike Fay	19 MLK Holiday Church Office Closed 6:30p AA	20 6-7:30p Rental Mike Fay 7p PC Meeting	21 2p Bible Study	22 1p C4C 6p Scouts	23	24 TBD Party Rental
25 10:30a Worship Red Wagon 2-4p Rental Mike Fay	26 6:30p AA	27 6-7:30p Rental Mike Fay	28 2p Bible Study	29 1p C4C 6p Scouts	30	31 Possible Rental

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

TO:



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