

# CONNECTIONS

NEWS FELLOWSHIP OUTREACH EVENTS



A “God Is Still Speaking” Congregation

*North Congregational Church*

*11 Main Street North*

*Woodbury, Connecticut 06798*

*[www.northchurchwoodbury.org](http://www.northchurchwoodbury.org)*

DECEMBER 2015 NEWSLETTER



*No matter who you are,  
or where you are on life's journey,  
you are welcome here!*



Find us on  
Facebook

# CONNECTIONS

DECEMBER 2015 NEWSLETTER

## K O E N I G ' S

## O R N E R



I enjoy opening presents on Christmas. I think everyone does. But I've gotten to the point in my life where the enjoyment comes not from the presents themselves, but from sharing the moment with family and loved ones, even if only at a distance as we read the names of the givers before the packages are opened. Susan has learned that it is almost useless to ask me what I want for Christmas, because I can never really think of anything. *Things* are not really high on my list, though they are nice to receive and to have. For me, the greatest gift of Christmas is the way it allows us to take time...time to be with each other, time to prepare, time to worship, time to remember, time to consider God's gift to us, time to

breathe in the renewing Spirit of hope, peace, love and joy!

One grandmother, whose grandson always looked forward to her presents – she was a generous and creative gift giver – decided one year to give her grandson twelve small envelopes, each with just a slip of paper in it. When her grandson saw the small package, he was dismayed. Such a little, insignificant gift. But wait! Could each hold a check? Or cash? Or gift certificates? And there were twelve of them!

The youngster opened an envelope, and out came...a "*promise*" note. "in January, I promise to spend time with you at..." Each of the twelve promise notes proposed a different way in which the two of them would be able to spend special time together, a promise note for each month of the year!

I don't even know if in that first moment, as he opened those twelve envelopes, the boy understood the value of that gift. But I do know that years later, the time spent with his grandmother would prove to be beyond value.

I know that at Christmas time families can often seem to demand a great deal of us. And not all relationships are easy. But that first Christmas was not perfect, either! Jesus, the Light of the World, Love Divine, was born that night into a broken and heartsick world to bring hope, peace, love, and joy. And that's just what Jesus' birth still brings!

May your Christmas celebrations, your time amidst the candle light and carols, your time amidst the wrapping paper and egg nog, your time of promise with loved ones, be rich and full of grace and surprising love!

Merry Christmas to All!  
Pastor Koenig

# CONNECTIONS

DECEMBER 2015 NEWSLETTER



## The Diaconate

By Pat Gage & Bob Travers

When our church members were asked why they joined North Church, the most frequent response made reference to the atmosphere of warmth, friendship, and community that characterizes our congregation. Comfort Cooking is one of the most concrete forms of that support. Deacon Diana Neal, the head organizer of Comfort Cooking, has recruited a cadre of cooks who are ready at a moments notice to step in and deliver a meal when needed. This is a vital form of outreach at North Church.

Many different circumstances prompt members to put in a request for help from Comfort Cooking. Sometimes a recent accident has put the cook in a cast. Other times church members are dealing with a death in the family or a sudden hospitalization, and we step up to prepare food which nourishes both physically and emotionally.

It is so important that those who need help know that help is just a phone call away. It is also important to increase the number of people Diana can call upon. Please keep Comfort Cooking in your thoughts and daily prayers, knowing that we are ready to help when help I needed.

May mercy, peace and love be yours in abundance.



Your Time & Talent can make a difference.  
Can you help or do you know someone who can?



Please think about signing up for at least one Sunday to help. The Nursery is equipped with infant needs and plenty of toys for toddlers. There are speakers located in the nursery so you won't miss out on the service.

Please contact Lorna Eckman or the Church Office



Soup Kitchen

Volunteers are needed on Tuesday, December 29<sup>th</sup>, from 3-6 p.m. to help serve. Please contact Cathy McMullin, at [cathymc6@gmail.com](mailto:cathymc6@gmail.com), or at 203-740-7519



The crew works from 8-12 on property improvement projects. Coffee & Donuts are provided. If you can't participate on a Saturday, weekdays are open and we have several folks that work on projects during the week and would welcome the extra help. Contact George Kleros or the Church Office.

# CONNECTIONS

DECEMBER 2015 NEWSLETTER

## Board of Trustees

Wayne Anderson &  
Pete D'Amato (Co-Chairs)

So many great events, projects and programs have happened at North Church this past year! Attendance continues to grow, and participation in all of our events remains strong.

Many are enjoying the new, widened hallway, and the Work Crew is continuing to rebuild the closets in the upper hallway. We hope to complete the carpeting of the conference room and study before the end of the year.

During the past few months a small team from the property committee has been evaluating the condition of our *belfry structure*. There has been damage to supports from rain and weather and now it appears that some shoring up is in order. Before the end of the year we expect to have some initial work completed to get us through the winter. Some generous donors have already stepped up to provide approximately 33% of the initial \$9,000.00 cost. More information will be coming in the Spring of 2016 as we continue to assess the extent of repair needed.

As in the past, the Board has been closely watching all expenditures and income for the year. It currently appears that we will have a shortfall that will contribute to our previous year deficit. As of November, it looked as though we might only reach about \$154,000, 3% ahead of 2014, but *about \$6,000 short of our 2015 goal*. If you haven't made a *13<sup>th</sup> month contribution* yet, please consider doing so – our financial health depends on the end-of-year generosity from those who are able.

Please, your help is needed now so we can end 2015 on solid ground and set the stage for an even stronger 2016! Thank you.



# CONNECTIONS

DECEMBER 2015 NEWSLETTER



## Music Notes



- Friday, December 4<sup>th</sup>, 7:30 p.m. A Cappella concert with Valley Chordsmen and Femina Melodia in the Sanctuary
- Sunday, December 6<sup>th</sup>, directly after Church: Christmas Caroling to our homebound members
- Sunday, December 6<sup>th</sup>, 3:00 p.m. "A Gift of Music," with Russian pianist and Russian Classical soprano in the sanctuary
- Sunday, December 13<sup>th</sup>, 4:00 p.m. Town-Wide Carol Sing in front the North Church
- Sunday, December 20<sup>th</sup>, Christmas Cantata at morning service – Followed by the Annual Christmas Tea
- Sunday, December 20<sup>th</sup>, 3:00 p.m. "Carols and Candlelight", Connecticut Choral Society in our sanctuary

We thank Mark Focarile for his excellence, both in leading the Chancel Choir and in playing the organ and piano at all our services. We do not take it for granted that we have such a talented musician in our midst. We also thank the parishioners of North Church for the support of the Choirs, and the support of the programs that the church sponsors in music.



### Second Annual Town-Wide Christmas Caroling Sunday, December 13<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 p.m.

Carolers will gather on the front lawn of the church and sing familiar Christmas songs. Complimentary Hot Chocolate will be provided to keep the crowd warm and comfortable. This event is part of the monthly Hymn Sing Program that is open to the community! Invite your family and friends! We hope to see you there!