It’s that time of year again that is both hectic and inspiring at the same time. Our programs at New England Church are no exception; a lot of work goes into creating meaningful services for Advent and Christmas, hoping that in some way this will assist us in finding joy in a holy day that can be more than just a holiday. To that end, here is the upcoming events:

December 4: The Second Sunday of Advent
Our 31st annual Hanging of the Greens Service will take place in the sanctuary at 10:00 am. This year’s theme is “The Advent of Hope.” Come early to get a seat and to select one of the decorations used to adorn the sanctuary during the service.

Following this service, is our annual Cookie Walk. Homemade cookies will be available for Coffee Fellowship and for you to purchase as well. All proceeds are used to subsidize our education ministries at the church.

December 11: The Third Sunday of Advent
A service of celebration with the Chancel Choir singing. Following the 10:00 am service, our youth will host our Coffee Fellowship at their “home” at Chestnut House. Christmas music will be provided by some of our youth while you munch on cookies in the beautifully-decorated house.

December 18: The Fourth Sunday of Advent
An extravaganza of music as our Chancel Choir sings, the organ music celebrates the season, and guest violinists and bassoonist lead us in joyful worship.

December 24: Christmas Eve
Our 5:00 pm Family Service will feature the New England Carillon and Joy Ringers with Christmas hand bell music, the Plymouth Rock Singers will sing for the first time at this service, and our traditional Every Child Christmas Pageant (with a new script!) will be the highlight of the service. The candle lighting ceremony concludes this 45-minute service. Everyone is welcome, and kids are invited to come in costume or borrow a costume at church to be their favorite person in the nativity story.
At 11:00 pm our Service of Lessons and Carols service will feature the music of the Chancel Choir, congregational carol singing, and the reading of the Christmas story. The service concludes with the midnight chimes and the candle lighting ceremony in which everyone can participate.

Throughout the Advent season and on Christmas Eve, the Chancel Choir will lead us in lighting the candles of the advent wreath at the beginning of each Sunday. It promises to be a meaningful beginning to each of our worship services.
WOMEN’S FELLOWSHIP

Be sure to mark your calendars for Women’s Circle of Friends December meeting on Saturday, December 10 at 9:30 am in Friendship Hall. Bring a breakfast dish or a bag of donuts and enjoy breakfast with other women from NECC. Following breakfast, we will have an opportunity to paint on glass under the direction of Dee Kelly. Bring a smooth clear glass such as a vase, mug, plate, etc., and Dee will provide the paints and the information. Cheaper glass items can be purchased at a dollar store if you don’t have anything at your home. Please sign up in the church office. We welcomed several new women at our meeting in November, and we hope to see more at our December meeting.

CHRISTMAS ANGELS: GOOD NEWS!

All of the angels have been selected. Thank you so much for making this such a successful event for the children. If you were not able to get an angel, and would like to donate cash towards a child’s happiness, we will be at the table in the marketplace to accept any donations you would like to make. We will give them to the Bardwell School, toward the purchase of toys and gifts for many of the children who are less fortunate than most. They have a program that allows the parents to ‘purchase’ gifts that they select for their children at a very reduced price, such as $2 or $3 per gift. Or, the donation might go to a family that the Board of Missions hears about that might need financial assistance to make ‘Christmas’ happen for a child.

To those that selected an angel, we thank you for your participation and your generosity. Just a reminder, we ask that you return your wrapped gifts by Sunday, December 11, so that we can make the deliveries during the week of December 12. Thank for your support!

...and they will know we are Christians, by our love.

Books of Note

A departure from his usual thrillers, David Baldacci’s THE CHRISTMAS TRAIN is filled with memorable characters who have packed their bags with as much wisdom as mischief...and shows how we do get second chances to fulfill our deepest hopes and dreams. Join Books of Note at 7:00 pm in the parlor on December 13 for discussion of the main character’s journey of self-discovery and rude awakenings, screwball escapades and holiday magic.
The 2017 Stewardship Campaign, *A Bridge from the Past*, has been well received. We again want to thank all of you for your past support of the church and your continued support.

The Stewardship Team is actively working to close out this year’s campaign in early December. Stewardship will soon be contacting all that we have not received a pledge from to give you a ‘friendly reminder’ to submit your 2017 pledge. Again, thank you for your support of New England Congregational Church.

Salvation Army Bell Ringing

NECC Men’s Fellowship will ring bells for the Salvation Army this Christmas season on Monday, December 5 from 5:00-7:00 pm.
Please sign up in the church office. This year’s sign up sheet includes one hour time slots. Bells, buckets, and aprons will be at the collection locations. Location assignments will be made in the church parlor on Sunday, December 4 after both church services. If you are unable to be there on Sunday, please call Jerry (630.892.1904) to obtain your location assignment. A delicious dinner will be served at Jim & Jan Mamminga’s home, 1636 W. Downer in Aurora, after the bell ringing. Join the men of the church in the season of giving.

Monte Carlo Night Update

Thanks to all who attended our Monte Carlo Gala in October. It was a fun night, and we raised $4,000 for our church budget. A particular shout-out goes to the organizers of the event. Thanks for all you did to make it a great event, Ingrid & Pat Roney; Jodee & Bart Grometer; Michelle & Scott Voris; Kristin Ziman & Chris Tunney; Chris & Jeff Wiencek; and Jennifer & Jason Buckley.
Parents, need a break from the winter break? Come on out with the kids to church for an “open house” style fun time in Friendship Hall with other NECC families to play card games, BINGO, Yahtzee, etc. on Wednesday, December 28 from 11:00am-2:00pm. We’ll have lemonade and soup AND a SURPRISE GUEST, all you need to bring is a sandwich and a favorite board game or card game. SIGN-UP in the church office. If you have any questions, please call or email Mike Daly at 630.897.8721 or mike@newenglandchurch.org

'Conversations with Gary & Mike'

Join us at Ballydoyle Irish Pub in downtown Aurora for conversations on the subjects you wish to discuss. Everyone buys their own food and drink. LUNCHTIME at 11:30 am: Monday, December 5, Tuesday, December 13, Wednesday, December 21, Thursday, December 29.

Family Game Day

Parents, need a break from the winter break? Come on out with the kids to church for an “open house” style fun time in Friendship Hall with other NECC families to play card games, BINGO, Yahtzee, etc. on Wednesday, December 28 from 11:00am-2:00pm. We’ll have lemonade and soup AND a SURPRISE GUEST, all you need to bring is a sandwich and a favorite board game or card game. SIGN-UP in the church office. If you have any questions, please call or email Mike Daly at 630.897.8721 or mike@newenglandchurch.org

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

5:00 pm—Family Candlelight Service with the Every Child Christmas Pageant
11:00 pm—Candlelight Service of Carols and Readings
Chancel Choir Singing

New England Church was honored with a Community Partner Award from the Salvation Army in recognition of the many years the Men’s Fellowship has been involved in ringing bells for the holiday donations. The plaque is in the narthex. Thanks to all the men who, over the years, have helped out filling the red buckets.

Patty Garrity
1355 Spencer Ln
Batavia, IL 60510

Sally Overstreet
4425 Meandering Way #523
Tallahassee, FL 32308

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iPod Donations Needed

Have you heard recent reports about the benefits of playing music for patients with dementia and others in care facilities? Do you have a gently used iPod that you no longer need? In response to work of the national organization called “Music and Memory”, the Urbana Alumnae Chapter of Sigma Alpha Iota is initiating a project to provide personalized playlists for patients. Help us spread the music to more patients by donating an Apple music player that you no longer use. All Apple music players in working condition will be accepted. Chargers are not required, but are appreciated. If donating an iPod touch, iPhone, or iPad, please unlock the device so that we can use it. Donations may be left in the church office or given to Beth Ann Miller.

Hanging of the Greens

We will celebrate this special service on Sunday, December 4 at the 10:00 am service only. We hope you'll join us for this festive occasion and help us out by participating in this meaningful worship service. Stop by the narthex before going into the sanctuary to choose something to place during the service. The 8:30 am service will be the traditional Advent Liturgy.

The Christmas Fund

The money raised through the Christmas Fund Offering provides the primary revenue stream for the Ministerial Assistance programs of the UCC. These programs of Annuity Supplementation, Health Benefits Supplementation, Emergency Grants and Christmas Gifts for low-income retirees are available to both the active and retired clergy and lay employees. We will collect this special offering on Sunday, December 18.
**Every Child Christmas Pageant**

*The Every Child Christmas Pageant* will again be part of our 5:00 pm Family Christmas Eve Service. Children may come to church dressed as elaborately or simply as they wish to portray one of the characters in the nativity story: shepherd, wise men, angel, Mary, Joseph or an animal at the manger. They will be invited to the front as the story unfolds. Any babies that wish to join us as the Christ Child may bring their parents up to the front. In this Christmas story there can be as many Marys and Josephs and shepherds as we have children, and in this story, baby Jesus can be a boy or a girl. We hope you'll join us.

**Backpacks For Back Bay Mission**

Our UCC mission in Mississippi is once again collecting Christmas funds and new or gently used backpacks. If you would like to donate a backpack or two, please drop it off in the church office. For more than 90 years, Back Bay Mission is in a unique position to help the people of the Mississippi Gulf Coast. Through the United Church of Christ, they draw on a national network of supporters who are invested in serving the people of the Gulf Coast based in a loving, respectful approach to serving the poor and marginalized. This summer our high school youth group mission trip will be at Back Bay Mission. Thank you for your support. [https://thebackbaymission.org/get-involved/give/christmas-baskets-and-backpacks](https://thebackbaymission.org/get-involved/give/christmas-baskets-and-backpacks).

**Donate Meals For Hesed House**

During the winter break between Christmas and New Year’s, the youth will be serving two lunches at Hesed House (Dec. 26 & 30). We generally serve about 100 guests this time of year. Members of the congregation are invited to help us serve Hesed House by donating some of the food items we can bring. Donations can be dropped off at church on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day (or anytime). Items include bread, potato chips, cookies, lunch meat, fruits and vegetables (for salad), powdered fruit punch or lemonade, peanut butter and jelly, hot sauce, mustard and mayo. Contact Mike Daly for more information. Thank you!
**JOYS & CONCERNS**

**Births:**
John Patrick Whaley, born to Kevin & Mallory Whaley on October 31. Proud grandparents are Ray & Marcia Whaley.

**Hospitalized:**
Sue Scheuerman, Olive Poliks, Jan Hem, Lee Thurow, Barbara Carlin.

**Deaths:**
We offer our deepest sympathy to the family and friends of Alex Kierstead.

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**YEAR END PREPARATION**

Annual reports from board chairs are due in the church office by Monday, December 12. Please e-mail your report to shelley@newenglandchurch.org. Thank you!

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**End of Year Giving**

All donations must be either postmarked or received in the church office by December 31 in order to be credited as a 2016 donation. Please make every effort to complete your pledge before the year ends. Thank you.

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**HOLIDAY OFFICE HOURS**

The church office will be closed December 23, 26, 30 and January 2 for the Christmas and New Year’s holidays. There will be limited office hours from 9:00 am-noon on December 27, 28 & 29.
**Film Series**

December 9: Hugo (2011)
A dramatic fantasy nominated for 11 Academy Awards, including Best Picture, the film is about a young boy who discovers a secret left by his father, which unfolds into a great adventure as he discovers the magic of early movie making and the way into the hearts of others.

Presenter: Scott Myers.

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**Winter Dinners Update**

There’s still time to sign up for the Winter Dinners that will start in January. These casual, social gatherings of 8 - 10 people in members’ homes are relaxed, enjoyable occasions that allow NECC folks to get to know each other a little better. For information, or if you would like to participate, contact Barbara King at 630-879-2263 or bhk430@att.net before Christmas, please.

The annual “Mitten Tree” sponsored by our youth is ready to receive donated winter wear items such as mittens, gloves, hats, scarves, and warm socks. We need both children’s and adult sizes. Donations will go directly to local organizations and schools serving those in need. The Mitten Tree will be up during Advent, through December 25 and is located outside the parlor door next to the church office. Thank you!
THANK YOU! Thanks to all who purchased shoes or gave donations to the “Giving Bus”. Over 100 pairs of shoes were collected and equally distributed among Bardwell, Dieterich and Greenman elementary schools. One fourth grade boy was in desperate need of new shoes; the soles were coming off of his only pair. When he received his new shoes he broke into a big smile and paraded around the nurses office saying “Look at my new shoes!” At the request of the school nurses, the money we collected was used to purchase socks, underwear and sweat pants so that the youngest children at these schools who have “accidents” have dry clothes to change into. When these items were delivered, the Greenman nurse declared it felt like Christmas! Speaking on behalf of the parents of the children who will sport new shoes, the Board of Missions is very grateful for your overwhelmingly generous support for this project. ...and they will know we are Christians by our love.

REFUGEE TUTORING & BOOK COLLECTION

Did you know that Greenman School, just down the street from our church, has the largest population of resettled refugee students of any Aurora elementary? Kids from Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Nepal, Congo and more. These kids are brave, resilient and amazing! But they need help learning English so they can reach their full potential. If you are interested in volunteering once a week during the school day to read with them and play simple games that build English skills, please contact Desiree Guzman at desireeguzman@sbcglobal.net. We are also looking for early/ easy reader books both for tutoring and to send home with the kids. Especially books with simple language and humor, and/or recognizable characters like superheroes, Disney, etc. Thank you!
December, 2016
Vol. 11

Tiny Tidings

**Church School Calendar**

**December 4th**  Hanging of the Greens Service
(No Church School-All Children Stay in Church)

**December 11th**  Jesus is Born

**December 18th**  Jesus is Born

**December 25th**  CHRISTMAS DAY (No Church School-All Children Stay in Church)

**Singing Outloud**

On November 20th, the church school children were led upstairs to the chapel to participate in a fun church school sing along with our new Children’s Music Director-Andrea James. Several children have already met Mrs. James, but it was a great opportunity for all the church school children to meet and engage in a musical experience here during church school.

**Thank You, Mrs. James**, for bringing music into our classrooms!

**Hanging of the Greens**

On Sunday, December 4th, all Church School Children will stay in church and participate in our annual Hanging of the Greens service. Any child who created an ornament during our ornament workshop on Nov. 27th, will be invited to hang one or two of their ornaments on the Sanctuary tree during this festive service. If your child was unable to attend the ornament workshop, additional ornaments will be provided so all children can participate in decorating the tree.

**More Singing**

During the 5:00 PM Christmas Eve service this year; all church school children will be asked to participate in a special song lead by our Children’s Music Director. To allow all children the opportunity to learn the song, two practices will be held immediately after church on Sunday, Dec. 11 and Dec. 18th. Please keep an eye out for additional announcements.

**Christmas Eve Service**

On Christmas Eve, December 24th at 5:00 PM, all families are invited to attend our “Every Child Christmas Pageant” family service. During this service, every child from infant through high school is invited to choose a Christmas themed costume (Mary, Joseph, Wise Men, or even an Angel) to help tell the story of Christmas. This service is welcoming for everyone while still carrying the traditional theme of a Christmas Eve service. Invite your friends, family, and neighbors for this special night!

**Special Thanks**

Thank you to all the church school children and families for baking and helping serve during coffee fellowship on Nov. 13th. It was great to see our young children participate in this act of service while making connections on the importance of helping and serving others.
Halloween Fun

Serving Coffee Fellowship

Donating our church school offerings to FMSC
# Youth Tidings

## December, 2016

### 5th & 6th Grade Class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dec. 4th</td>
<td>No Class - Hanging of the Greens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec. 11th</td>
<td>Getting Ready for Open House</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec. 18th</td>
<td>Christmas Project for Life Spring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec. 25th</td>
<td>No class</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Confirmation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dec 3rd</td>
<td><em><strong>CHRISTMAS OUTING</strong></em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Cookie Walk volunteering)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec. 4th</td>
<td>No Class - Hanging of the Greens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec. 11th</td>
<td>Stay in church</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Confirmation Ushering</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fellowship 11:15 to 1:00</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(gift grab bag game)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec. 18th</td>
<td>Class - The Christmas Story</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec. 25th</td>
<td>No class</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Senior High Fellowship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dec 4th</td>
<td>Senior High Fellowship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec. 11th</td>
<td>Chestnut House Open House hosting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec. 17th</td>
<td>Youth Christmas Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5-7 p.m. (offsite)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec. 18th</td>
<td>Youth Ushering</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Senior High Christmas Party & Gift Exchange

Dec. 17th from 5 to 7 p.m. (dinner included). The party will be at the Burkeen’s home. Let us know if you need a ride.

### Christmas House Open House

**Sunday, December 11th. Youth host coffee fellowship & share Christmas cheer with the congregation!**

Please bring some home-made treats and plan to be at the house to greet our guests.

**Anyone interested in playing Christmas tunes on an instrument**
Please see Mike Daly or Marilyn Parolini.

### The Annual Christmas Mitten Tree

The annual Christmas Mitten Tree will be up for Advent again! Newly bought, hand-made or gently used winter-wear; mittens, scarfs, hats, gloves, etc. can be put on the tree outside the church office through December.

**Thank you!**

### Volunteering at Hesed House

We have 2 lunch serves at Hesed House during winter break after Christmas. Watch for details.

### Senior High Missions Trip

June 10 – 18, 2017 to Back Bay Mission in Biloxi, MS! We will need to confirm reservations soon. Approximate cost will be $400 per person.

### Quote of the Month

Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember; involve me and I learn.

Benjamin Franklin
THANK YOU, MARCIA & RAY for the FANTASTIC Halloween Treats for Fellowship on October 30th.

The Youth of NECC have been working hard to help with the clean up at Emmanuel House.

THANK YOU, 5th & 6th graders for making giant cheese lasagnas for HH.

HESED HOUSE
FOC VALLEY FAITH COMMUNITY
CENTER FOR MINISTRY

CONFIRMATION CLASS

<<< Working hard at FMSC