

The Congregate Tidings

Volume 38, Issue 11

November 2024

The Pastor's Piece It's Definitely Political By Pastor Walt Hampton, J.D., CFC

As we approach the upcoming presidential election, tensions are high, and the noise from all sides seems impossible to escape. Candidates, parties, and pundits clamor for attention, each claiming to hold the key to our nation's future. Many people feel pressure to choose sides, to align their faith with a particular platform or candidate. And there is so much fear. But as we move into this season, it's important to remember something crucial: while the Gospels speak profoundly to issues of power and justice, they are not partisan. The teachings of Jesus don't point us toward a political party or candidate. But they are, undeniably, political.

By "political," I don't mean that Jesus took sides in the way we often think of politics. In fact, he famously said, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's" (Matthew 22:21). Jesus never endorsed candidates or policies, but he did challenge systems of power, both spiritual and temporal, and called his followers to a radically different way of thinking about authority, justice, and the common good.

The Context of Empire

To understand the political nature of the Gospels, we have to remember the context in which Jesus lived and taught. The entire Jesus movement arose in the shadow of the Roman Empire, an oppressive regime that maintained order through violence, intimidation, and economic exploitation. The people of Judea were subject to Roman rule, paying taxes to a foreign empire that did not have their well-being at heart. The empire was the ultimate symbol of worldly power: it demanded loyalty, and in return, it offered wealth and security—at least to those who were on the right side of the system.

But Jesus offered a counter-narrative to this system of power. He preached about the Kingdom of God, a kingdom that stood in direct contrast to the Roman Empire. In this upside-down kingdom, the last would be first, the poor would be blessed, and the meek would inherit the earth. In the world of Rome, might made right, and the greatest was the one who had the most wealth and influence. But Jesus flipped that entirely on its head: "Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all" (Mark 10:43-44).

This is what made Jesus' message so radical, and in many ways, so political. He wasn't telling people to overthrow the empire by force, but he was subverting the very values that underpinned it. Jesus called his followers to a new kind of power—one grounded not in domination but in service, not in wealth but in generosity, not in coercion but in love. And it's a message that remains just as relevant today as it was then.

The Temptation of Partisanship

Today, it's easy to feel the pull of partisanship, to think that one party or candidate will fix what's wrong with our world. It's tempting to align our faith too closely with a political platform. But the truth is, the Gospel transcends these divisions. Jesus wasn't a Republican or a Democrat. He didn't advocate for policies that would fit neatly into our current political boxes. Instead, he called us to a way of life that transcends those categories—a way rooted in love, humility, and justice.

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That doesn't mean the Gospel is irrelevant to our political choices. Quite the opposite. As Christians, we are called to engage in the world, to care for the marginalized, to seek justice for the oppressed, and to love our neighbors as ourselves. Our faith must inform the way we vote, the way we advocate, and the way we participate in our communities. But that doesn't mean we give our ultimate fealty to any political figure or party.

A Practical Call

So, as we move toward November, I want to offer a few practical ways to think about this election season:

Remember Who You Serve. As followers of Christ, our ultimate allegiance is to the Kingdom of God, not to any earthly power. We are called to be witnesses to God's love and justice in the world, no matter who holds political office.

Stay Grounded in Love. Political discussions can get heated, and it's easy to lose sight of our call to love our neighbors—especially those who think differently from us. As we engage in conversations and debates, let's do so with grace, humility, and love.

Consider the Marginalized. Throughout his ministry, Jesus consistently sided with the poor, the outcast, and the marginalized. As we cast our votes and advocate for policies, we must ask ourselves: How will this decision impact the least among us?

Pray for Wisdom. James 1:5 tells us, "If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you." In this season, let's make prayer a priority—asking for the wisdom to discern how we can best live out our faith in the political sphere.

Trust in God's Plan. At the end of the day, our hope is not in political leaders or systems. Our hope is in God's unfolding plan of redemption and renewal for the world. No matter what happens in November, God is at work, and we are called to be part of that work in whatever ways we can.

It's About Power—But Not the Kind You Think

The Gospels remind us that the Kingdom of God stands in stark contrast to the kingdoms of this world. Jesus showed us a different way to think about power: one that lifts up the lowly, challenges the powerful, and invites us to serve rather than be served. As we head into this election, let's be mindful of where we place our trust, and let's keep our eyes fixed on the One who holds all true power, both now and forever. Amen.

Peace to you,

+Walt



Stewardship: Fuel for Our Journey Together



As we enter November, our stewardship month, I want to take a moment to talk about the importance of stewardship for our church community. I know that conversations about money can feel uncomfortable for many faith communities. Some pastors prefer to avoid the topic altogether. But if we think about it practically, money is like gasoline for the tank in your car—you need the fuel to get to your destination. Without it, you're not going anywhere.

Our church, like any other, relies on the generous sharing of time, talents, and treasure from all its members to sustain our mission and to continue being a vibrant, welcoming, and loving presence in the world. Stewardship isn't just about finances; it's about investing in our community and its impact. It's about understanding that the resources we share—our energy, skills, and money—are the fuel that keeps us moving forward. They enable us to offer meaningful worship experiences, engage in impactful outreach, and provide a sanctuary for spiritual growth and connection.

Just as a car needs fuel to take us to new places, our church needs the support of its members to help us grow and thrive. Our time and talents help lead our ministries, teach our children, care for our building, and reach out to those in need. Our treasure allows us to maintain the programs and services that make a difference, both in our lives and in the broader community.

When we share our resources, we're not just keeping the lights on; we're creating possibilities. We're ensuring that our church remains a place where all are welcomed, where spiritual growth happens, and where we, as a community, can be the hands and feet of Christ in the world. Stewardship is about investing in the future we envision together.

So, I invite you to prayerfully consider how you might contribute during this stewardship season. Whether it's through volunteering, sharing a particular talent, or making a financial commitment, every gift matters. Let's fill the tank, so we can continue this incredible journey together—transforming lives, sharing hope, and spreading love.

+ Walt

To make giving even easier for those who don't carry cash or use checks, we've started using QR Code, in the bulletin. Just scan the code with your phone like you would in a restaurant!



WE PLOW THE FIELDS AND SCATTER

By Muriel Magg

Ah, Thanksgiving, my favorite time of year. And of course, it is a time not only to feast with family and friends, but also to give thanks to God for His bountiful goodness toward us. What better way to do this than by having a worship service containing many beautiful hymns of thanks?

I'd like to share one of my perennial favorite Thanksgiving hymns not found in our New Century Hymnal, but yet a popular song throughout the Christian Church and familiar to many of us. The hymn is titled "We Plow the Fields and Scatter" a hymn of German origin commonly used to give thanks to God for the harvest and in the United States as a hymn for Thanksgiving, thanking God for the fruits of the earth. Though this is still part of our focus, these days we also thank God for less tangible blessings - freedom, health, life and our spiritual blessings in Christ.

Matthias Claudius (1740-1815) the son of a Lutheran pastor was born in Reingeld, Holstein, Germany. He studied briefly for the ministry at the University of Jena, and then decided to change to a study of law and languages. During his twenties and thirties, Matthias seems to have forsaken the faith, influenced by the rationalistic thought of the time. He became seriously ill in 1777, and this crisis was instrumental in returning him to his childhood faith. He worked briefly as Commissioner of Agriculture, then as a bank auditor. Most of his life was spent as a journalist, editor, and writer on general culture. His humble reliance on the Lord is reflected in his many volumes of devotional poetry and prose, of which "We Plow the Fields and Scatter" is the only one in common use as a hymn text.

In 1782, a friend invited Matthais over for dinner and asked him to bring one of the Christian poems he had written. He brought "We Plow the Fields and Scatter" based on Psalm 144 for this occasion. The poem was later set to music and attributed to Johann Schultz in 1800 and translated into English by Jane Montgomery Campbell in 1861.

The text of this deceptively simple harvest hymn affirms that, while we need to plow the land and sow the seed, it is God who provides the increase; He sends the rain and the sunshine to produce a harvest. God also sustains His creation, for "all good gifts around us are sent from heaven above." Without God's grace and mercy, we cannot survive. And what can we give back to the Lord for His abundant mercies? Merely our humble, thankful hearts.

This year, before carving your Thanksgiving Turkey, sitting down for some football, or heading out for the Black Friday sales, take a few moments to focus on what the holiday is all about and express appreciation for the four important "F's" in your life - family, friends, food, and faith.

A joyful and blessed Thanksgiving to all!



The Hubris of the Now

By Pastor Walt Hampton, J.D., CFC

In anxious times like these, it's easy to believe that what we're facing is unprecedented, that the stakes have never been higher, and that democracy is teetering on the edge. There's a sense of urgency, a pull to act out of fear. The "Hubris of the Now," as a colleague calls it, convinces us that our moment is the most exceptional in history—that if we don't react with alarm, we might lose everything.

But the truth is, we've been here before. History shows us that periods of division, crisis, and uncertainty are not new. From civil rights struggles to wars and political upheavals, each generation has faced moments that felt like the tipping point. And yet, we've continued, stumbling and progressing, but moving forward nonetheless. This isn't to minimize the challenges we face; it's simply to offer perspective.

Feeling the weight of the moment is normal. Fear is a natural response. But it's important to recognize that fear, when unchecked, can distort reality. It can make us believe that everything hangs in the balance and that any misstep is irreversible. It can cloud our judgment and close us off from dialogue and connection, pushing us further into isolated corners where anger and mistrust fester.

Trusting our institutions, flawed as they may be, is part of what keeps democracy resilient. The systems in place—elections, courts, laws—have withstood tests before. They are not perfect, and they require our vigilance, but they are not as fragile as fear makes them seem. Engaging thoughtfully, rather than reacting out of panic, allows us to see opportunities for action and collaboration, even when it feels like things are falling apart.

It's okay to feel the discomfort, to acknowledge the fear, but it's equally important not to lose perspective. The Hubris of the Now can lure us into thinking that this is the end, that this time it's different. But history, for all its repetition of crisis, also shows resilience, recovery, and renewal. Holding onto that truth allows us to navigate these turbulent waters with steadiness, rather than being swept away by the storm.

Julian of Norwich, a 14th-century English mystic and theologian said, "All shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well."

Peace to you.

+Walt



“The View from my Window”

By Jennifer Perkins, Vaughan Administrator

November remains a busy month for the Vaughan Food Pantry. As I sit writing this article, we have all just learned about the passing of Mount Washington Radio Group President, Greg Frizzell. At this date in time, the annual radio food/fund drive will proceed as planned, and the **Mount Washington Radio Group** will be presenting its live **Holiday Giving** broadcast event on **Wednesday November 20, 2024**. This year, as in the past, it will be held at the Vaughan Community Service Building located at 2493 White Mountain Highway beginning at 6:00am and ending at 6:00pm. Once again, this event will help support 5 local food pantries in the Mount Washington Valley area. The food pantries include; Bartlett/Jackson Food Pantry, Madison Food Pantry, Freedom Food Pantry, and Vaughan Food Pantry.

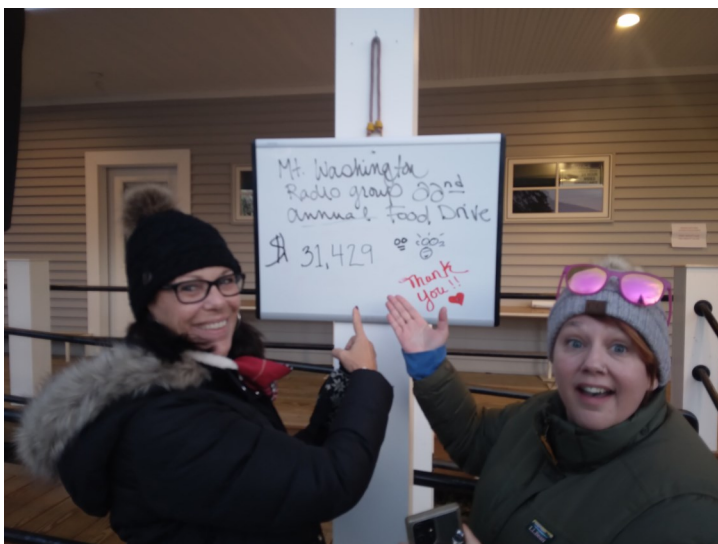
What once began years ago as a simple raffle to win a turkey at a few local businesses, grew into a larger turkey and food drive bringing in hundreds of frozen birds and thousands of pounds of canned and shelf-stable food items.

The Pandemic forever altered this event. In 2019, no one was able to congregate and fear of the illness spreading led to cash only with people driving up and placing their donation in a basket held in the hands of the radio announcers and Vaughan representatives.

Fortunately, times have ushered in change yet the model of cash donations remains. Money allows these local food pantries to purchase items they need to fill their shelves.

In 2024, COVID-19 is here to stay and we have adjusted. We are encouraging people to consider a financial contribution over frozen turkeys and food items. That said, no frozen turkeys or food will be turned away. We are truly blessed to live in such a generous community!

Warmly,
Jennifer



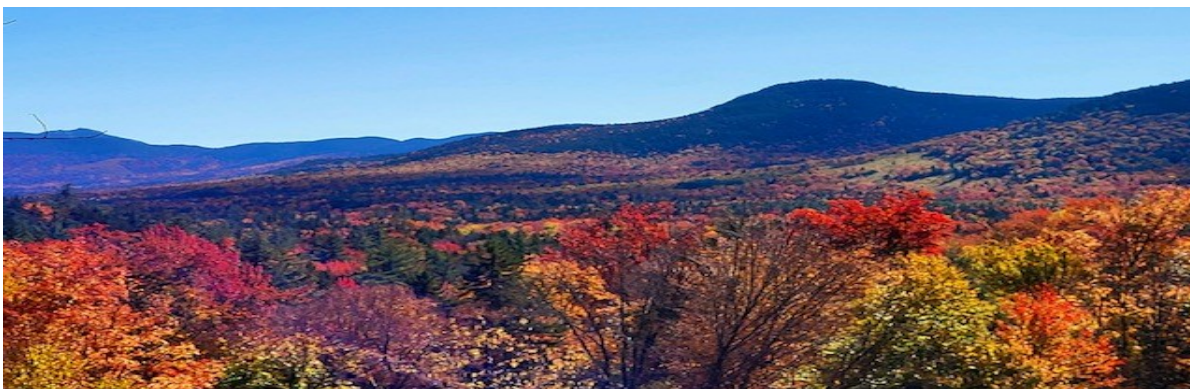
Deacon's Corner

By Helen Goss – Diaconate Chair

You didn't hear from me in the October, as Pastor Walt had so much to share. So this will catch you up on the events that have happened with a few yet to come.

- ♥ September 22 thru October 11 – My focus was pretty much taken up by the work of the Fundraising Team and the **Fryeburg Fair**; getting the booth ready to go, the baking done, and then putting it all to bed. I am most grateful to the church core of volunteers, and especially the help of my sister throughout.
- ♥ With deep sadness we advised of the passing of **Floyd Corson** near the end of September. A true treasure to many whose shoes are going to be hard to fill. Our hearts are full of love for the family that remains.
- ♥ October 6 – A few of us joined Pastor Walt on the church front lawn on a beautiful fall day for the **Blessing of the Animals**. I am grateful my Hazel was blessed and hope for a better turnout next year.
- ♥ October 9 – **Brother James-Francis Twyman** visited us on his musical journey across this country to portray the life of Saint Francis of Assisi, thanks to Pastor Walt's connection. It was an awesome performance enjoyed by 25 of us in attendance and over 500 online.
- ♥ October 18 & 19 – Several of our dedicated church members and friends along with local clergy got to experience **Rev. Michael Piazza** with his roadmap to **Church Revitalization**. We will be introducing some of his ideas in the near future as we continue on our journey to grow this church.
- ♥ **Dinner Church on October 22nd** has not happened yet as I type this review, but we are hoping for some good enthusiasm for this experiment. We are trying to see how worship offered with a bit of a different twist might work when not on a Sunday.
- ♥ We will also have another **Lay Service on October 27** where Jennifer Terry will be the lay leader. I hope that the circle of lay leadership grows to include others who are willing to share a Message when the pastor is away.
- ♥ **All Saints Day** will be observed on Sunday, **November 3**. We are hoping for a youth liturgist on this special Sunday.
- ♥ **November 5** will be Election Day where there cannot be enough prayers written or given for the sake of our nation. God be with us!
- ♥ **November 24** brings **Thanksgiving Sunday**, and we hope you are blessed with family and friends to break bread with and make some lasting memories.
- ♥ **Christmas Family Night** is planned for **December 1st at 4:00pm**, with our usual format of crafting, a potluck meal, and singing holiday favorites while decorating the tree. This Sunday will also mark the beginning of **Advent**.

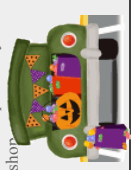






This is what I have to share as we approach the end of October, which also means **Trunk or Treat** with the daycare on **October 28 from 5-6pm**. **COME JOIN US, IF YOU DARE!**



(Courtesy photo by Mark Schiller)



November 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
27 10:00am Worship Celebration 11:00am Coffee Hour After Worship	28 12:00am - 1:00pm AA meeting 5:00pm - 6:00pm Trunk or Treat Workshop 	29 11:30am - 1:45pm Food Pantry Open 5:00pm Diaconate meeting	30	31 12:30pm - 2:45pm Food Pantry Open 3:00pm - 4:00pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal 4:00pm - 5:00pm Bell Choir Rehearsal	1 12:00pm - 1:00pm AA meeting	2
3 10:00am Worship Celebration 11:00am Coffee Hour After Worship 2:00pm - 5:00pm REVOLVING CLOSET-TEENS 	4 12:00am - 1:00pm AA meeting 6:30pm - 8:00pm Crafty Hands Workshop 	5 11:30am - 1:45pm Food Pantry Open	6	7 9:30am - 2:30pm WIC Program 12:30pm - 2:45pm Food Pantry Open 3:00pm - 4:00pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal 4:00pm - 5:00pm Bell Choir Rehearsal	8 12:00pm - 1:00pm AA meeting	9
10 10:00am Worship Celebration 11:00am Coffee Hour After Worship	11 12:00am - 1:00pm AA meeting 	12 ALL BOARDS AND COMMITTEE BUDGETS FOR 2025 ARE DUE 11:30am - 1:45pm Food Pantry Open 3:00pm Music Team meeting	13 9:00am - 11:00am Essential Non-Food Pantry	14 12:30pm - 2:45pm Food Pantry Open 3:00pm - 4:00pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal 4:00pm - 5:00pm Bell Choir Rehearsal	15 12:00pm - 1:00pm AA meeting	16
17 10:00am Worship Celebration 11:00am Coffee Hour After Worship 2:00pm - 5:00pm REVOLVING CLOSET-TEENS	18 12:00am - 1:00pm AA meeting 6:30pm - 8:00pm Crafty Hands Workshop	19 11:30am - 1:45pm Food Pantry Open 4:00pm Trustees meeting	20 9:30am - 10:30am Faith Fellowship 	21 12:30pm - 2:45pm Food Pantry Open 3:00pm - 4:00pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal 4:00pm - 5:00pm Bell Choir Rehearsal	22 12:00pm - 1:00pm AA meeting	23
24 10:00am Thanksgiving Worship Celebration 11:00am Coffee Hour After Worship 5:00pm Interfaith Thanksgiving Service 	25 12:00am - 1:00pm AA meeting 6:30pm - 8:00pm Crafty Hands Workshop	26 11:30am - 1:45pm Food Pantry Open 12:30pm - 2:00pm Clergy of the Eastern Slope Luncheon 5:00pm Diaconate meeting	27	28 OFFICES CLOSED 	29 OFFICES CLOSED 12:00pm - 1:00pm AA meeting	30

FRYEBURG FAIR 2024 IN THE REAR VIEW MIRROR

By Dick & Helen Goss

Although we do not have final numbers to report as we are still moving product to close out the fair, we can advise that it was another successful year! There are fewer of us each year to pull this off and we are most grateful to all those that volunteer their time in various capacities to make this happen.

Here are the numbers that you have all been anxiously awaiting!

390 pans of blueberry crisp baked
349 pans of blueberry crisp sold
\$41,000 grossed
\$32,000 anticipated net income

We have moved most of the 41 pans that came back from the fair to various local entities and plan to sell some frozen pans of crisp at church along with frozen bags of blueberries starting October 27th.

As we look ahead to 2025, we know that an additional day (9 total) is being added for the fair's 175th Anniversary. We are already considering what this means to our operating procedures and volunteerism.



Pictured above l-r: Awnan Syphus, Joshua Wynn and Penny Robinson, the Food Pantry trio at the Fair Booth.



Pictured above l-r: Kali Rodger and Heather Ouellette at the Fair Booth.

Lectionaries

NOVEMBER 3, 2024

Twenty-Fourth Sunday after Pentecost
Communion Sunday

Hebrew Bible: Deuteronomy 6:1-9
New Testament: Hebrews 9:11-14
Gospel: Mark 12:28-34

NOVEMBER 10, 2024

Twenty-Fifth Sunday after Pentecost

Hebrew Bible: 1 Kings 17:8-16
New Testament: Hebrews 9:24-28
Gospel: Mark 12:38-44

NOVEMBER 17, 2024

Twenty-Sixth Sunday after Pentecost

Hebrew Bible: Daniel 12:1-3
New Testament: Hebrews 10:11-14,
(15-18), 19-25
Gospel: Mark 13:1-8

NOVEMBER 24, 2024

Reign of Christ

Hebrew Bible: Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14
New Testament: Revelation 1:4b-8
Gospel: John 18:33-37



Mission's Crafty Hands Workshop

Co-Leads: Deb Smith & Mary Lou Waite

Helper Elves Needed to Assemble Christmas Ornaments:

Pre-cut, pre-sewn, ready to turn, stuff, hand-sew tiny opening, attach ribbon hanger + snowflake.

November Mondays 6:30 to 8 p.m.

Howard Room - Reverence for Life Bldg
(Skip Monday Holidays)

Crafty Hands Workshop Crafts Display

Sundays Thanksgiving to Christmas
Mary Lancaster Room off Fellowship Hall



Set your clocks back one hour on Saturday, November 2nd before retiring for the night, so you will not be late for Church!



Our Vaughan Learning Center Director,

Heather Ouellette,

became a first time

Grandma on

October 22, 2024 at

11:05pm. Her daughter,

Skyla, had a little girl,

Mazikeen Mae Piper,

7lbs. 15oz., 19 inches long.



11-08 Ken and Hope Nusbaum
11-15 Jay and Lisa Donabedian



11-02 Denise Woodcock
11-02 Charles Mallar
11-04 James Jones
11-14 Garrick Porter
11-14 Taylor Nusbaum
11-15 Eliza Juliano
11-25 June Waltz
11-26 Bill Aughton
11-29 Amanda Nusbaum



PRAYER LIST

Please pray for those dealing with illness, surgery or recovery, especially: **Tony; Evelyn Porter; Linda Hyde; Jesse and Linda Red Horse; and Angie Terry, Jennifer Terry's sister-in-law, and Jeff and Lois Ward.**

Remember those who mourn, especially the families of **Keneth Johnson, Gueneth Johnson's son, Floyd Corson, Anne Polak's father, and Lynn Terry, Jennifer Terry's father.**

Remember those in our extended care facilities:

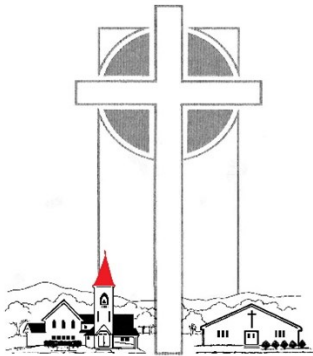
At Merriman House: **Liz George-Hussey; Cynthia and Conrad Briggs and Marilyn Elliott.**

Please call the church office with prayer concerns if you wish names to be listed in the next *Congregate Tidings*.

Reminder to all Boards and Committees, your 2025 proposed Budgets need to be sent to Denise at the Church office no later than Tuesday, November 12, 2024.

The Congregate Tidings
First Church of Christ, Congregational
United Church of Christ
PO Box 401
N Conway, NH 03860-0401

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



TO:

CHRISTMAS FAMILY NIGHT!!!

It's here!
The fun begins at 4:00PM
on Sunday, December 1st.

We will start in the Fellowship Hall making festive decorations for the tree, move on to a potluck supper and share a cookie or two, and then into the sanctuary to sing carols and holiday songs while decorating the tree!

This gathering is for young and seasoned seniors, so if you need a ride, let us know.

Hope to see you on December 1st at 4:00PM in the Fellowship Hall!

This will get you in the Christmas spirit!



CHURCH & VAUGHAN STAFF

Pastor: Rev. Walt Hampton, J.D., CFC

Church Administrator/Editor: Denise Leighton

Associate Organist: Muriel Magg

Chancel Choir and Handbell Choir Director:

Anne W. Polak

Vaughan Administrator: Jennifer Perkins

Vaughan Learning Center Director:

Heather Ouellette

Church Sexton: Mark Schiller

Worship Service at 10am

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Pastor Ext. #2, Denise Ext. #1

Fax Number (603)356-2106

Vaughan Food Pantry (603)602-1801

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