

The Covenant Contact

November 2018

Good News in Action



I don't know who the guy is seated on the bench, but he must be at peace and very grateful! One of my favorite places is Pilgrim Pines on Swanzey Lake in New Hampshire. I spent four weeks on retreat there over the summer, during my Sabbatical. Pictured is a wonderful bench to sit, look out on the water, breath, pray, and just be in God's presence – especially at the break of day.

I need those times to reflect, to be honest with myself and God, to meditate on God's Word, his goodness and generosity! And then be changed, from the inside out. If I

just wander without any attentiveness to my spiritual state I become grumpy, scattered, ungrateful and self-absorbed. Maybe I am the only one though.

Henri Nouwen says (from *Making All Things New*),

Indeed, living a spiritual life requires a change of heart, a conversion. Such a conversion may be marked by a sudden inner change, or it can take place through a long, quiet process of transformation.

To be converted means to experience a deep shift in how we see and think and act. It is a shift of attention in which we set our mind on divine things. The converted person sees, hears, and understands with a divine eye, a divine ear, a divine heart.

This November and December we are invited to give generously to various ministries, missions, and projects. Generosity is Good News in action – all year round! Let us give to the Banquet of Blessing, Covenant World Relief, Covenant Kids Congo, the Gideons (for Bibles), the church, benevolences, our neighbors and missions, etc. . .

Philemon 1:6 says,

I am praying that you will put into action the generosity that

comes from your faith as you understand and experience all the good things we have in Christ.

John Wesley said,

Do all the good you can, by all the means you can; in all the places you can, at all the times you can; to all the people you can; as long as ever you can.

With thankfulness to God for you all, Pastor Tim

Mark Your Calendar

Fellowship Luncheon on November 18 after worship. (This is not a potluck.)

Church Cookie Walk on November 24, 3:00-8:00 p.m. Bake your cookies and bring them to sell (contact Lori Vigeant – lori_a_vigeant@sbcglobal.net or 860 484-4941). This is a big fund raiser for the church.



Service of Thanksgiving on November 25. Bring your Covenant World Relief offerings, items for the Banquet of Blessing, and a testimony!

Alpha



Alpha meets on Thursdays, 6:30 pm. Cards are available to use as invitations. Dinner is free, followed by a teaching and small groups, all ending by 8:15 pm. God is using Alpha to change lives!

Dinner is free, but we provide it. Please check the sign-up sheets in the Fellowship Room to see what you could provide, even if you are not attending.

Missions and Evangelism

Operation Christmas Child boxes are due back on Sunday, November 11, with \$9 to Samaritan's Purse for shipping. (Please, no candy; toothpaste; gum; used or damaged items; war-related items; chocolate or food; drink mixes (powdered or liquid); liquids or lotions; medications or vitamins; breakable items or aerosol cans.)

Please use a Covenant World Relief Can for Change for your loose change in November. CWR uses almost all we give for emergency aid around the world. We will collect them at our Thanksgiving worship on November 25.

Christian Education News

At the last quarterly business meeting a special task force was formed to begin work on a safe church program. This will be a program that will include but not be limited to child safety, volunteer screening, and safety measures to keep our facility safe. This is an important step that we are taking as a church and demonstrates our deep love and commitment to the youth and families of our church.



Opening exercises for the Pre-K through 2nd grade classes will be held in the Gathering Room until the ceiling work in the Potter's House is completed. Check our Facebook page for updates!

The Sunday School Christmas Program is Sunday, December 16 at 4 p.m. A cold potluck will follow and parents are asked to bring sandwiches and salads. Dessert will be provided.

Thank you all for faithfully bringing your children to Sunday School! And thank you too, to the adults who attend Sunday School! It's a great place to be on a Sunday morning!

Wishing you all a Happy Thanksgiving, Love, Mary Butkevich!

Trustees Updates

Basement wall: Osowiecki and Sons dug out on the north side of the sanctuary and repaired part of the foundation that was deteriorating. It was sealed and insulated and drains were installed to solve the mold problems in the Potter's House and the front stairwell. The lawn is being re-graded.

Potter's House ceiling: In progress and should be completed by November 1 or soon after. (Windows and trim are being painted, too.)

Potter's House floor: Laminate flooring to be installed after the ceiling and painting are finished.



Old wooden chairs: Ten antique wooden chairs have been delivered to an antique dealer to see if they will sell on consignment. Proceeds the church receives on sales of chairs will go to pay down the new loan.

Prayer Focuses for November

• **For each person in our congregation to connect in some way beyond Sunday morning worship.** God grows us when we are serving him or studying him with our brothers and sisters. There are plenty of existing opportunities: Sunday school, youth groups, Confirmation, Bible studies, Alpha, retreats, committees, boards, choir, worship team. (If none of those work, agree with a friend to meet with periodically and regularly to check in spiritually and to pray for each other.)

• **That our hearts would be open in gratitude for all God has done for us through Jesus:** The Bible does not hold back about urging us to demonstrate our faith with physical acts of service, kindness, and generosity. Pray for us to become aware of where God wants us to act and to be willing to follow through.

• **For the needs of the congregation:** Persons battling cancer, addictions, other illnesses; families of those with addictions; our elderly and shut-ins; those who have recently lost loved ones; those recently divorced and working things out; parents with families; our children and youth, work situations and employment conditions, marriages in trouble.



• **For individuals in prison and for their families.** We are connected to a few such families. What happens when the time served is over? Pray for a clear vision of how God wants us to minister.

• **For the Potter's House ministry:** Pray about committing a certain time to staff so we can be open more hours per week (must always be two persons together). Pray about training for staff and discovering and collecting referral resources that can be passed along to visitors.

• **For the Potter's House Visitors:** Pray for them to long to know God better and to keep seeking.

Thoughts on Church Positions

The main agenda item for the December quarterly business meeting on December 7 will be voting on the slate of appointments for 2019. Since the Nominating Committee will be assembling this slate in November, below are some positions that will be addressed.

What Does Diaconate Do? The most visible part of the Diaconate's service to us and to God shows up in preparing and serving Communion to the congregation. However, that is only one part; there is so much more that we don't see.

The Diaconate Board has up to twelve members; ideally membership is balanced, with six men and six women serving. They are to be mature and steady Christians** whose talents and abilities include relating to and loving people, being compassionate and caring in the midst of our problems, and applying God's teaching to our situations. Their main concern is with our spiritual life. That is, they are about nurturing and developing our spiritual growth as a congregation and as individuals. They advise on worship times and the forms of those services. They plan functions and small groups which will help us grow. They help us to grow into and to do the work that Jesus gave us: to go and make disciples (Matthew 28:19-20).

However, they recognize that our spiritual lives are heavily affected by our earthly problems, so they care about our own needs as well: poverty, unemployment, marriage problems, parenting issues, and so on, and try to address those issues as they are able. They try to connect with us to be aware of our needs and conditions. They are alert for situations needing spiritual support: comforting in bereavement or illness or visiting shut-ins. When we open up and share our hearts' pains with them, they keep our needs confidential. Above all, they pray for each of us, and hold us up to God for his blessing and care.

If you have a heart to serve God, if he has given you the gifts and abilities of relating to people where they are in loving and helpful ways, if you are willing to spend time in prayer and service to others, please prayerfully consider whether or not he is calling you to serve on the Diaconate.

*** Deacons likewise must be serious, not double-tongued, not indulging in much wine, not greedy for money; they must hold fast to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. And let them first be tested; then, if they prove themselves blameless, let them serve as deacons. Women likewise must be serious, not slanderers, but temperate in all things. Let them be married only once, and let them manage their children and their households well; for those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and great boldness in the faith that is in Christ Jesus. (1 Timothy 3:8-13)*

What Does the Christian Education Board Do? Sunday School is the most visible part of the Christian Education Board's responsibilities. As you might expect, however, there is much more.

The Christian Education Board has up to eight members. CE Board members are advocates for Christian education for the entire church family. Their goal is to help the church learn about our Christian faith and the Bible and how they apply to our lives, to help us grow as faithful disciples, and to develop a sense of belonging to the family of God.

The CE Board implements and oversees the following educational programs: Sunday school, youth groups, summer camp, family events, vacation Bible school, and nursery care for little ones during worship. The Sunday School Superintendent is a member of the Board. Additionally, the Board appoints a vacation Bible school director and hires and supervises youth staff (CHYG, Junior High, Trailblazers, and Pathfinders). They raise funds to help families with summer camp expenses. From time to time, they sponsor events for the whole family.

If you have a heart for helping to educate God's people, especially the children, so that they can grow and mature in their faith and find their place in God's family, please prayerfully consider whether or not God is calling you to serve on the Christian Education Board.

What Does the Missions and Evangelism Board Do? You can hardly miss a lot of what the Missions and Evangelism Board does. They regularly call us to help with different projects.

The M & E Board has up to eight members. Their goal is to invite us into serving Christ's mission by giving us opportunities to be involved in missions, evangelism, and other forms of outreach.

This is an energetic group. Throughout the year, they invite us to come along-side several ongoing projects which serve people in Christ's name. Some of these are the Banquet of Blessing (food pantry), the Potter's House (friends, fellowship and spiritual support for folks who drop in on Friday nights), Operation Christmas Child (gifts for poor children in other lands), Project Angel Tree (Christmas gifts for local children with a parent in prison), New Beginnings (new school clothing for area children at the beginning of the school year), and Covenant World Relief (financial help throughout the world). From time to time, they provide financial support for an individual undertaking a mission trip, provide financial support for specific missionaries, and help equip some of us for specific projects locally (HomeFront) or far away (previous missions to Alaska and Guatemala).

If you have the energy and heart for presenting us with opportunities to invest in God's work and to use our time, talents and treasures effectively to bring his kingdom "on earth as in heaven," please prayerfully consider whether or not he is calling you to serve on the Christian Education Board.

What Do the Trustees Do? Quite a lot, recently! You can hardly miss the ongoing projects.

The Trustees Board has up to six members. Their responsibility is our physical plant located at the corner of Grove and Clay Streets and the church van. Their goal is to maintain a sound and inviting place for us to worship, to grow in faith, and to reach out as Christ has commanded us.

In some sense, we all are Trustees, picking up after ourselves, making sure lights are off and doors locked, etc., and the Board's periodic work days invite us all to come together to tackle seasonal projects.

The Trustees oversee our insurance needs for both the building and the church van. They undertake regular maintenance as well as necessary repairs and upgrades. They arrange for bigger jobs or tackle them themselves. This involves overseeing people to clean, mow the grass and shovel snow, as well as locating and hiring reliable providers for projects needing special skills and knowledge.

If you have the energy, heart and skills for the physical labor needed to help maintain this facility, please prayerfully consider whether or not God is calling you to serve on the Trustees Board.

What about the Ushers? When we come into the church on Sunday mornings for worship, it's usual to be greeted by one of two ushers and be given a worship bulletin. If we have physical limitations, they help us in, or get us what we need to hear better, etc. It's nice to have them, but

Actually, ushers are a pretty big deal. They are concerned for order in the sanctuary during services and check also for disorder elsewhere in the church building and outside. They give people a warm greeting when they arrive for services and make them feel welcome. Visitors get their first impression of the church from the ushers. They oversee the general well-being of the worshippers and make sure that their comfort and any other needs are attended to. Ushers monitor the lights, heat, and air conditioning, light the candles, direct newcomers, receive the offering during worship, and count our attendance. They are courteous, kind, helpful, and, more or less, quiet. They treat all people equally and show love to all without distinction, so far as it is humanly possible. Ushers have an important job, but do not strive to "be important." They generally serve for a month at a time, four or five services in a row.

If you have a heart for helping God's people to worship in a safe and comfortable place so that they can grow and mature in their faith and find their place in God's family, please prayerfully consider whether or not God is calling you to serve as an usher. We need you.

Missions and Evangelism

Banquet of Blessing: Please remember to keep us stocked (with good expire dates, please – we cannot give away out of date food).

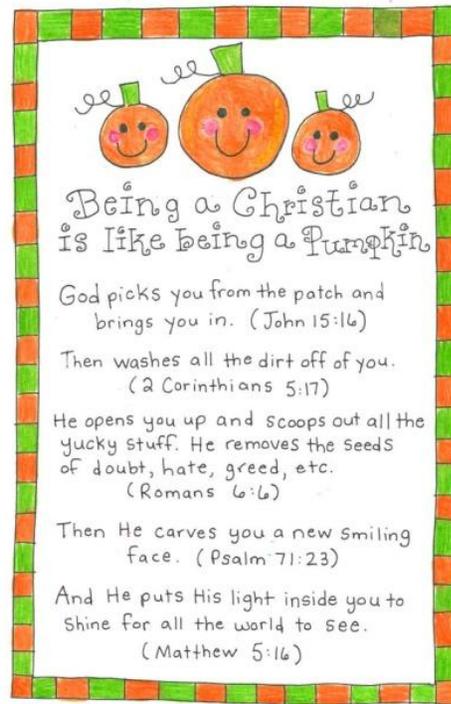
Benevolence Needs: Some in our church community are struggling financially. If you are able to, please consider supporting others in need by making an extra donation to the Pastor's Benevolence Fund. Use the special envelopes in the pews or write Pastor's Benevolence Fund on your envelope or check.

Potter's House



The Potter's House is open for coffee, conversation and prayer on **Friday**

nights, 7:00-10:00, staffed by Peggy Steinis and Pastor Ann. A signup sheet is in the Potter's house for any who would like to share in staffing this (must be two people present always). Please share a Potter's House flyer or business card (in the Potter's House) with anyone who might want to come in.



Happy Home Fairy

Meal Coordinator

Providing a meal to someone during a difficult time is one way to show how much we care. If you know someone who might benefit, contact Sandy Dunn (860 483-2015 or daytondunn@mac.com).

Keeping Up



- Ginny Guisti, who has relocated to South Carolina to be near her daughter Allison, would like to hear from us: 864-434-1271.
- Beth Campbell and Meghan have moved to 143 Pine Hill Road, Unit 15E, Thomaston 06787. Phone is 203 592-0871.
- Christie Grabherr and Samantha, Katie, and Andrew have moved to 191 South Main Street. Phone is 203 233-5611.
- Dear Church Family: Thank you so much for the beautiful picture! It was such a fun surprise to get a piece of mail from home. ☺ I'm doing very well here in Michigan and praise God for his continued faithfulness. I miss and love you all, and I look forward to seeing you in December. Love, Emily Butkevich (We sent a picture of the church.)
- Thank you to all of my family at the Covenant Church of Thomaston. I love knowing you support all we do.
Blessings in the midst of life, Pastor Ann.
- Dear Church Family, Thank you for the gift; know that you are loved and appreciated.
Pastor Tim
- Thanks for showing your appreciation. It is good to be able to serve with you.
Pastor Gary



Women Ministries



Women Ministries events are for all women of the church and their friends.

WM Bible Study: Thursday, November 8 at 6:30 p.m. at Lisa Olsen's (576 Walnut Hill Road, Thomaston).

Tomte Felting Workshop: Saturday, November 10 from 3:00 to 5:30 in the Fellowship Room. This is limited to 30 people; sign up in the Fellowship Room. \$25 per person.

WM Crafts: We meet every Tuesday morning at 9:30 a.m. to make items for Light Up the Town in November. All are welcome regardless of any crafting skill level. It is lots of fun to get together and be creative.

WM Craft Sale and Christmas Tag Sale: November 24, 3:00-8:00 p.m. This is a big fund raiser for us and we use the funds to support

Continuing Activities

1. **Stitching with Spirit:** Monday evenings at 7:00 at Karen O'Connell's (250 Reynolds Bridge, Apt. B2, Thomaston)
2. **Women's PM Study: (for women who work during the day)** Meets in the church Library every other Tuesday at 6:30 p.m. (10/2, 10/16, 10/30, 11/13, 11/27, 12/11).
3. **Women's Study:** Meets on Thursday mornings at 9:30 a.m. in the Potter's House. The book is an Old Testament survey, *Step by Step Through the Old Testament*.
4. **Women's Book Club:** We next meet on December 3 at Salem Covenant Church to discuss *White Picket Fences* by Amy Julia Becker. The author will be there! All women of the church who enjoy reading are invited to attend. We can take the church van: contact Lisa Sundell Olsen (860 283-7434 or sundell4@optonline.net) if you want to ride in the van.

Youth Groups

Pathfinders is for students in Grades 2-3. The group meets once a month. The leaders are Linda Hansen and Brenda Tousignant.

Watch Sunday bulletin for announcements



Trailblazers is for students in Grades 4-6.

Trailblazers leaders are Rachel Ewers and Christie Grabherr. If you have questions, need to register your student or want to help out, contact Rachel Ewers (203 907-7052 or kyliejax@optonline.net). Sessions are 5-7 p.m.

- 11/4 Trailblazers
- 11/11 Trailblazers
- 11/18 Trailblazers
- 11/25 No Trailblazers; Happy Thanksgiving



D/C (Discipleship/Confirmation) is our Junior High ministry. The 7th and 8th grade students have two years of Bible and teaching, with close friendships, service projects, fun activities, and a retreat. The leaders are Pastor Tim and Vic Whaley. Meetings are 5-7 p.m.



- 11/4 Session 7 **Jesus Ushers in the New Kingdom**
- 11/11 Session 8 **Jesus Shows Us How to Love**
- 11/18 Session 9 **The Miracles of Jesus**
- 11/24 10:00 a.m. Service Project: Soup Kitchen
- 11/25 No D/C; Happy Thanksgiving

CHYG (Covenant High Youth Group) is for all students in grades 9-12. Leaders are Lisa Olsen and Nick Samela. Sessions are 5-7 p.m.

- 11/4 CHYG
- 11/11 CHYG
- 11/17 Feed My Starving Children
- 11/18 CHYG
- 11/25 No CHYG; Happy Thanksgiving!



On November 17, CHYG will go to help Feed My Starving Children in Berlin, CT. The van leaves the church at 1:15 p.m. and we will be back around 5:30-6:00 p.m.

November 2018 (Rev

10/30/2018)

Let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching.
Hebrews 10:24, 25

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>*Sunday Schedule – 9:00 Prayer in South Wing Prayer Room; 9:00 Sunday School (Adult study, Library); 10:00 Worship; 11:00 Fellowship</p> <p>Meetings are at the church unless otherwise indicated. Stitching with Spirit is at Karen O'Connell's (250 Reynolds Bridge Road, Apt.B2, Thomaston).</p>				<p>1 6:30 Men's Study (Potter's) 9:30 Women's Bible Study (Potter's)</p> <p>6:30 Alpha (Fellowship, Gathering)</p>	<p>2</p> <p>6:30 CCTD Men's Team 7-10 Potter's House Open</p>	<p>3</p>
<p>4* 11:15 Cantata Rehearsal</p> <p>5:00 CHYG, D/C, Trailblazers 7:00 Church Board</p>	<p>5 9:30 39ers Study (Gathering)</p> <p>6:30 Stitching with Spirit</p>	<p>6</p> <p>6:30 Prayer (Potter's)</p>	<p>7 9:30 WM Crafts</p> <p>6:30 NA(Fellowship) 7:30 Choir</p>	<p>8 6:30 Men's Study (Potter's) 9:30 Women's Bible Study (Potter's)</p> <p>6:30 WM Bible Study, Lisa Olsen's 6:30 Alpha (Fellowship, Gathering)</p>	<p>9</p> <p>6:30 CCTD Men's Team 7-10 Potter's House Open</p>	<p>10</p> <p>3:00-5:30 WM Felting Workshop</p>
<p>11* 11:15 Cantata Rehearsal</p> <p>Pastors' Ashram, Pilgrim Pines</p> <p>5:00 CHYG, D/C, Trailblazers</p>	<p>12 VETERANS DAY OBSERVED</p> <p>Pastors' Ashram</p> <p>6:30 Stitching with Spirit</p>	<p>13</p> <p>Pastors' Ashram</p> <p>6:30 Women's PM Study (Library) 6:30 Prayer (Potter's)</p>	<p>14 9:30 WM Crafts</p> <p>Pastors' Ashram</p> <p>6:30 NA (Fellowship) 7:30 Choir</p>	<p>15 6:30 Men's Study (Potter's) 9:30 Women's Bible Study (Potter's)</p> <p>1:15 Grief Support (Gathering)</p> <p>6:30 Alpha (Fellowship, Gathering)</p>	<p>16</p> <p>7-10 Potter's House Open</p>	<p>17</p>
<p>18* 11:15 Cantata Rehearsal 11:30 Luncheon</p> <p>Wm Setup for Light Up the Town</p> <p>5:00 CHYG, D/C, Trailblazers</p>	<p>19 9:30 39ers Study (Gathering) 10:00 La Leche League (Nursery)</p> <p>WM Setup</p> <p>6:30 Stitching with Spirit</p>	<p>20</p> <p>WM Setup</p> <p>6:30 Prayer (Potter's)</p>	<p>21 9:30 WM Crafts</p> <p>WM Setup</p> <p>6:30 NA(Fellowship) 7:30 Choir</p>	<p>22 THANKSGIVING</p>	<p>23</p> <p>10:00 D/C to Soup Kitchen</p> <p>WM Setup</p> <p>5:00 NEWS-LETTER DEADLINE</p>	<p>24</p> <p>10:00 Soup Kitchen</p> <p>WM Setup</p> <p>Light Up the Town and Cookie Walk</p>
<p>25* Thanksgiving Service –bring Banquet of Blessing items 11:15 Cantata Rehearsal</p> <p>5:00 CHYG, D/C, Trailblazers</p>	<p>26 9:30 39ers Study (Gathering)</p> <p>Pastor Tim to Chicago</p> <p>6:30 Stitching with Spirit</p>	<p>27</p> <p>Pastor Tim away</p> <p>6:30 Women's PM Study (Library) 6:30 Prayer (Potter's)</p>	<p>28</p> <p>Pastor Tim away</p> <p>6:30 NA(Fellowship) 7:30 Choir</p>	<p>29 6:30 Men's Study (Potter's) 9:30 Women's Bible Study (Potter's)</p> <p>Pastor Tim returns</p> <p>6:30 Alpha (Fellowship, Gathering)</p>	<p>30</p> <p>7-10 Potter's House Open</p>	

Volunteers: . . . through love serve one another. Galatians 5:13b

Coffee Fellowship sponsored by: Diaconate

NURSERY (Ages 0-2)	12/2	Sue Sundell Kiersten Sundell	ALTAR FLOWERS	LAY READERS:
11/4 Sarah Jackson Emily Jackson	12/9	Gina Whaley Lauren Whaley	11/4 Communion – none 11/11 Nancy Stancavage 11/18 Nancy Stancavage 11/25 Nancy Stancavage	11/4 Peggy Steinis 11/11 Gina Whaley 11/18 Jessica Bedosky 11/25 Antoinette Krasnowski
11/11 Denise Merrill Asher Ewers	12/16	Jamie Weisman Sarah Roaix	12/2 Communion – none 12/9	12/2 Peggy Steinis 12/9 Jane Stoddard
11/18 Lori Vigeant Cecelia Ewers	12/23	Rachel Ewers Asher Ewers	12/16 12/23 Memorial Poinsettias 12/30 Remaining Memorial Poinsettias	12/16 Ken Semeraro 12/23 Susan Abbott 12/30 Ted Ryan
11/25 Patricia Vigeant Aubrey Jackson				

Sunday School Staff

Pre-K – K Cindy Olbrys, Faith Hull	3 – 4 Brenda Tousignant, Linda Hansen	7 – 12 Lisa Sundell Olsen	:
1 – 2 Jane Stoddard, Peggy Steinis	5 – 6 Sandra Miller	Adults – Mary Butkevich	

Youth Staff

CHYG: Lisa Sundell Olsen, Nick Samela	D/C: Pastor Tim, Vic Whaley	Trailblazers: Rachel Ewers, Christie Grabherr	Pathfinders: Brenda Tousignant, Linda Hansen
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November Birthdays & Anniversaries

Birthdays 2 Julie Phillips 4 Jennifer Foell 5 Jason Davis 7 Eric Carr 7 Samantha Grabherr 8 Eric McCoy	8 Christian Prindle 11 Chiara DeBisschop 14 Peter Johnson 17 Jeffrey Nageotte 18 John Bedosky 18 Sandy Berkeley	19 Sandra Dayton Dunn 20 Dan Stancavage 21 Hannah Abbott 21 Jeff Dunn 22 Megan Foell 23 Cole Hafele	23 Adrianna Rodriguez 27 Tom Duffany (dad)	Anniversaries 12 Hilary and Kyle Pusake 17 Julie & Mike Phillips 20 Nancy & Matt Stancavage 24 Becky & Joe Carr
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Connections:

- Pastor Tim Olsen: pastor@covchurchthomaston.org
(Study: 860 283-9146; Home 860 283-7434)
- Pastor of Congregational Care: Gary Freimuth
(860 283-4540 or ggfreimuth@optonline.net)
- Pastor of Visitation: Ann Carr
(860 567-9178 or aecann@optimum.net)
- Church Chair: Antoinette Krasnowski: ann121959@optonline.net or 860 283-5925
- Treasurer: Barbara Hanley: barbhanley@snet.net or 860 459-0561
- Office "Churchmouse" Ruth Johnson: cmouse@covchurchthomaston.org
(Office: 860 283-5071; Home: 860 605-8040)
- Prayer Chain Coordinator: Ann Carr; 860 567-9178 or aecann@optimum.net
- Meal Coordinator: Sandra Dunn; 860 483-2015 or daytondunn@mac.com