



FIRST CHURCH CHATTER

January, 2024

This is another edition of our church newsletter. We thank those members and friends who have contributed stories, biographies, reflections, letters, poems and encourage any who wish to contribute to our church newsletter. As you can read in this edition, we have many talented friends and church members. We would like to get to know all of you better and encourage you to send your thoughts, poems, stories to us to publish. Thanks so much.

The newsletter will be printed at the beginning of each month and be sent via email to church members and friends, be sent by mail to those who would prefer a written copy and be available in the foyer for all to pick up when the church is reopened. In the meantime, we will deliver the Chatter to those who would prefer paper copy or don't receive email.

We are always looking for stories, poems, thoughts to contribute. If you have notices about upcoming events which you would like published, please let [Carrie](#) or [Jody](#) know and we will try to include. We try to publish by the beginning but realistically often it is sent out by the 10th or so.

In Today's Chatter:

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2023 Annual Report for the Giving Tree (formerly the Angel Tree)

When Church Council reminded us that Marilyn Faulkner had “retired” after many, many years of stewarding this church tradition of holiday giving, Elizabeth Smith and Carrie Waara volunteered, as Outreach Ministry Team members, to take it on this year.

We tried to re-envision it to respond effectively and efficiently to the changing needs that our many community partner organizations had expressed. This resulted in our streamlining the process to encourage congregants to give gift cards or donations to three organizations: the Williamstown Food Pantry, Louison House, and the Elizabeth Freeman Center.

We decorated the tree in the foyer with “reminder cards” created by Elayne Murphey that could be taken from the tree to serve as prompts to buy gift cards from Walmart, Target or Stop and Shop so that the clients of the organizations could use them to brighten their holidays and the new year. We offered to deliver the cards if people did not want to mail or drop off the cards or checks themselves.

That resulted in us receiving over 40 cards, checks and envelopes! And what a joy it was to deliver them to the organizations and see and hear how very much they were appreciated! The three community organizations described how helpful these donations are, and how they would be used to excellent effect for and by their clients.

Many, Many Thanks to Everyone who donated so generously this year to these three organizations:

THE ELIZABETH FREEMAN CENTER

\$300+

LOUISON HOUSE

\$850+

WILLIAMSTOWN FOOD PANTRY

\$850+

(We did not open sealed envelopes and did not always know the amounts of gift cards, nor whether or not additional cards and checks were directly mailed to the organizations, so the amounts above are only the totals we were able to count—hence the “+”.)

In addition, we made little “scroll” decorations that listed the titles on DEIB-PCAN’s recommended inclusive books so that folks could get some diversity guidance on holiday book-buying. This seemed to be a popular addition as well.

Winter Farmers' Market

Announcing...



WINTER FARMERS
MARKETS!

EVERY 3rd SATURDAY

JANUARY - APRIL

9 AM - NOON

First Congregational Church Route 2

Williamstown, MA

*Jan 20 * Feb 17 * March 16 * Apr 20*

Winter veggies * Meats * Cheese * Eggs
Baked goods * Maple products * Artisan wares

Stand Up for Democracy, "No" to Christian Nationalism

On January 6th our church's Christian Nationalism Study Group sponsored a stand-out against Christian Nationalism in front of the church. About 40 people, church and community members, attended, holding signs many made at a sign-making party earlier in the week. Speakers included Jim Mahon, chair of the town's Democratic party, professor of political science at Williams College, and member of St. John's Episcopal Church and our own David Langston and Sherwood Guernsey. FCC-W was joined in this effort by many Massachusetts congregations, including North Adams, Lee, and Norwell.



Deanna and Margy



Bill and Lynn



Adrian and Betsy



Sam, Sherwood, Bruce and Paula



Kathy, Jody and Elizabeth

Chronicle of a Summer, Screening Invitation

Good morning,
I'm forwarding the following invitation on behalf of Professor David Edwards.
Best wishes to all,
Kerry

Greetings,

I'm writing to invite you to a screening of Chronicle of a Summer (2022). This is a film I co-directed using footage produced by Williams students, Afghan students from the American University of Afghanistan, and Ukrainian students from Central European University in Vienna. The film germinated from a summer research program I organized in the summer of 2022. This was a year after the Taliban took power in Afghanistan and six months after the Russians invaded Ukraine. After an initial period of training in video production, the students were divided into teams and sent to 7 cities in Europe for three weeks of filming. The Afghan and Ukrainian students who participated in this practicum were refugees, and the stories they captured with the help of the Williams students were those of other refugees like themselves who'd been forced to flee their homes.

The screening begins at 7pm in Bronfman Auditorium in the Wachenheim Science Center on Hoxsey Street. If you're coming by car, there is parking both across from the Science Center and behind Weston Hall on Stetson Court (see attached map).

*I hope you can make it.
All the best,
David*

