



# The Spire

January 2026

The Newsletter of the First Congregational Church of Hanover, United Church of Christ

**Rev. Peter Johnston**  
Senior Pastor

**Chad Weirick**  
Minister of Music

**Janet Cook**  
Director of Education

**Susan Vetterlein**  
Office Administrator

**Peter Jansky**  
Sexton

**Valerie Fink**  
Bookkeeper

## OUR VISION STATEMENT

We strive to be a church that welcomes all and empowers all in Christ to share their God-given talents.

## OUR MISSION STATEMENT

We are a community of inclusive love that has no walls or barriers, where all who enter are loved, respected, and accepted for who they are, reaching beyond social class, gender, race and sexual orientation, welcoming all into our circle of love. We are a community of growth and transformation that is not content with the status quo but a community filled with the love and compassion of Christ, and an overwhelming desire to share that love. We are a community committed to not only praying together, on Sunday mornings, but putting our faith into action daily.



## Call to Annual Meeting

January 18, 2026

TO THE QUALIFIED VOTERS OF THE FIRST  
CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF HANOVER, U.C.C.:

You are hereby warned and notified that the Annual Meeting will take place on Sunday February 1, 2026, after the 9:30 am Service of Worship for the following purpose:

To hear and approve the Minutes of the Annual meeting of February 2, 2025

To receive the reports of the Officers, Boards and Committees

To receive the reports of the Affiliated Organizations of the Church

To act on the proposed Church Budget for 2026

To hear and act on the report of the Nominating Committee

To transact any other business that may legally come before the meeting.

Signed

Virginia Hunt-Burbine  
Moderator

Cynthia Price-Taylor  
Church Clerk

## Flowers Are a Sacrifice of Praise



Thank you to all the members who helped beautify our church sanctuary with poinsettia orders in memory of or in honor of loved ones this past December. We ordered 25 plants of which 12 were delivered by several volunteers to our homebound members.

Our 2026 calendar is up on the bulletin board in the Vestry and ready for this year's altar flower arrangement orders. The cost remains at \$25 and can be taken home by the donor or donated to the coffee hour small bouquets sale of which \$450 was raised this past year for the church's fundraising needs. Order forms are available on the bulletin board and can be mailed to the Church office (please mark envelope "Attn: Flower Committee") or place envelope in the collection plate also marked Attn: Flower Committee.

## Steeple Lights & Carillon

Thank you to Bob and Jessie Berry for underwriting the lighting of the steeple and the playing of the Carillon in January. This is done in appreciation of the cards and prayers of the congregation.

Thank you to Mary Lou Gifford for underwriting the lighting of the steeple and the playing of the Carillon in February. This is in memory of Mark Gifford.



## A New Year's Note from the Trustees

The Trustees have closed out the year with a budget surplus thanks to several generous donations, special donations from the congregation to the Building Fund and overall improvement in year-end pledges.

The Trustees wish to thank everyone for their contribution and will work again this year to be good stewards of the Church assets.

Work to complete all of the final tasks associated with the Lift Project have taken a few weeks off during the holidays but work will continue on finishing up on the tasks left in the Church Office and some painting touch up. The Sexton closet has been pulled together by Pete Jansky, our Sexton, and materials and tools that have been temporarily stored in the boiler room will soon be moved into the newly finished room.

Tools previously donated by the Melchin Family, tools purchased at Steve Pratt's tool table at the Church Fair and other donations will be organized in a new tool chest and available to make needed building repairs! Thanks to all that donated and helped this important goal of the Trustees and Pete Jansky!

### Yes! I Would Like to Light the Steeple and Ring the Carillon!

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

In honor of  In memory of \_\_\_\_\_

For the month of: \_\_\_\_\_, 2026

*Please return this form to the church office with a payment of \$50.00.*



## Blessings and Godspeed, Patti!

In December, we officially said goodbye to **Patti MacLennan**, our Field Education Student.

While she came to us as a student, she quickly became a vital part of our community. Her work and learning among us were a gift; we watched her grow in her calling while she, in turn, helped us grow in our faith.

Patti's presence—whether in worship, meetings, or quiet conversations—brought a unique energy to First Congregational. We are deeply grateful for the time she spent with us and for the many ways she shared her heart and talents.

As she moves forward into the next chapter of her ministry, we send her out with our prayers and deepest gratitude.

*Thank you*

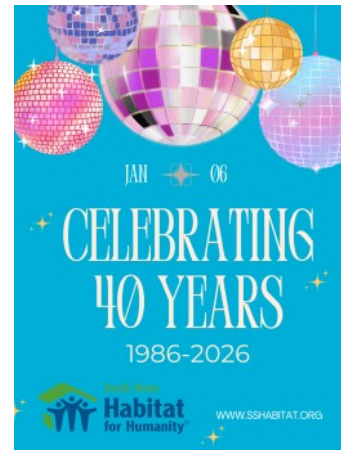
Dear Church Family,

Thank you to all of you for praying for God's will to be done in my liver and lymph nodes. It has been three years this month, and only four rounds of chemo since a mass was seen on a CT scan.

I just had a CT scan this week, and there has been no change at all!! So, the Lord isn't ready for me yet. My doctor gave me 6-9 months.

I'm trying to fully recover from a badly broken hip - kind of in the Quasimodo stage right now. Happy Christmas and New Year's to all.

Love, Cynthia Ness



## Celebrating 40 Years

Today marks a special milestone for South Shore Habitat for Humanity — our 40th anniversary! Today we pause to celebrate four decades of building strength, stability, and self-reliance through homeownership.

Your past support helped make these 40 years possible. Families across the South Shore have safe, affordable places to call home because supporters like you believed in this mission.

While today is about gratitude and reflection, it's also a moment to look ahead. The need for affordable housing in our community has never been greater, and the work continues — new builds, critical home repairs, and families still waiting for their chance at a safe home.

Together, we help shape our next 40 years of impact.



Join us for Women Build throughout the entire month of March. Women Build is an annual program that celebrates and empowers women to learn new skills in a supportive environment during Women's History Month, while helping us address the affordable housing crisis in Southeastern Massachusetts. Join the over 144,000 people and 17,000 corporate volunteers who have participated in Women Build events across the U.S since the program began in 1998.



### Christian Education News

Many thanks to the people who helped to teach Sunday School in December and prepare for our Christmas presentation. The children and I welcomed the help of Louise Jackson, Ginny Hunt, Dayna Scribi, and Alan Cook. It's wonderful for the children to get to know and interact with adult members of our church. In addition, I am grateful to Cindy and Charles Taylor, Kerstin Adami-Barrett, and Ruth Hall for volunteering to serve as on-call babysitters in the Nursery/Toddler Room.

A new year brings a call for new people to lend a hand in supporting our children. Please add your name to the sign-up sheets in the vestry to help with Sunday School and/or on-call child care. Just 2 weeks of service in this way is a tremendous help to our program and is guaranteed to bring smiles to your heart! Please speak to me, Janet, with questions or email [jcookie4@hotmail.com](mailto:jcookie4@hotmail.com).



### Printing Big Possibilities

Thanks to a very generous donation in December, we are now the proud owners of a Hewlett-Packard Designjet Z6 wide-format printer. This "enormous" new tool gives us the ability to print eye-

catching banners and posters for all our upcoming events. It's a wonderful new way for us to share what's happening at church with the entire Hanover area.



### Do You Know Where Our AED's\* Are and How to Use Them?



If you answered no to either of these questions, join a Church group of up to 20 people in the church vestry at 11:30 after the January 18<sup>th</sup> service. The Hanover Fire Department will be providing non-certificate training on the latest CPR (cardio pulmonary resuscitation) steps and how to use an AED (automatic electronic defibrillator). Donations will be collected to defray the cost of the session.

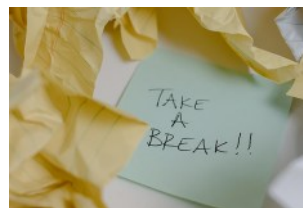
Sign up on the sheet in the Vestry.

If the event fills up, and there is a demand for an additional session in the near future, we can schedule another session.

### Minister's Tea February 11 at 3:00 pm

You are invited to tea with Rev. Peter Johnston

on Wednesday, February 11. The event takes place in the vestry (under the sanctuary) from 3:00-4:30 p.m. This is a time when members of the church family can sit and enjoy delicious treats with good company. Please plan on joining us, and feel free to bring a neighbor!



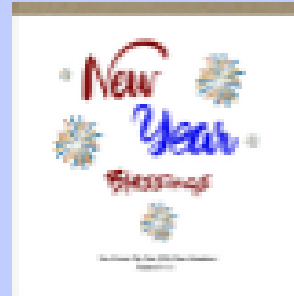
### Time Away

Rev. Peter will be away the weekend of January 17. Our guest preacher on January 18 will be Rev. Deb Spratley.

If an emergency comes up, you may contact Rev. Dr. Mary Lou Gifford at (857) 499-2300 or by email at [mary.gifford23@comcast.net](mailto:mary.gifford23@comcast.net)

FCC HANOVER  
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

# NEWSLETTER



## JANUARY NEWS

We had a great month of December in Sunday School! Children loved following the story of the birth of Christ and also had lots of fun preparing for our *O Christmas Tree* presentation. We made glittering angels for our tree and added bells, bows, colored balls, ornaments, and candy canes. We learned how each of these decorations have a connection to the story of Jesus' birth. We also loved joining the congregation to joyfully sing many Christmas carols,

January is sure to be just as much fun! We will continue our lessons and conversations around our themes of God Is Our Protector and God is Our Provider. We'll read about how God kept Jesus, Mary, and Joseph safe by sending them to Egypt to protect them from King Herod's wrath. We'll welcome in 2026 by sharing the many blessings God has provided to us. We'll begin hearing and learning about the life of the boy Jesus and his teachings about His Father to the people around him. There's lots to hear, learn, and share in Sunday School! Come join us!



## ACTIVITIES

- Jan. 4 - Escape to Egypt Class Booklet
- Jan. 11 - New Year Community Blessings Jar
- Jan. 17 & 25. Young Jesus at the Temple Board Game

## REMINDERS

The start of a new year gives us a chance to refresh our faith in God. Join us at Sunday worship service! Bring your children to Sunday School! Encourage your older kids to join Youth Group! Remember... It doesn't matter if you join us a little or a lot, we are happy to see you and you are always warmly welcomed at FCC Hanover!

## YOUTH GROUP

Youth Group's pet food collection to benefit Scituate Animal Shelter was a huge success! Bags and cans of dog and cat food, treats, blankets, treats and toys were collected. Warm thanks for your support of Youth Group's service to community.

Youth Group welcomes anyone grade 5 and older. Details about January's meeting will be given in the weekly bulletin. Join us!



## January 21 with the Moonlighters Women's Group

Moonlighters ended our 2025 meetings with a Christmas gathering at the cozy home of Deb Jackman. We enjoyed delicious appetizers and desserts, friendly conversation, and a spirited Yankee Swap! Members also volunteered to buy and donate many gifts to Friends of the Homeless of the South Shore.

Our community service to this organization helped three of their client families to have a happy holiday season.

We begin the 2026 year with our next meeting scheduled for Wednesday, January 21 at 6:30 in Riley Hall. This is our annual *Happy Birthday and Game* meeting. We'll also be planning our February Mainspring House meal preparation.

**COME AND ENJOY A FUN-FILLED EVENING WITH SOME GREAT WOMEN**



## Free Winter Coats Available at the Thrift Shop

The Silver Street Thrift Shop has winter outerwear for those in need. There is a limit of two items per person. Let your friends and neighbors know of this opportunity.

Donations are appreciated.



## Prayer Shawl Ministry Wrapped in Love

Prayer Shawl meets weekly on the **First Wednesday** of each month from 6:30-8pm.

We continue to meet in the Church Office. You are welcome to come weekly or on a drop-in basis. Yarn and lessons will be provided to those who wish to test the waters. We have extended this ministry to include shawls, booties, hats and scarves.

We have prayer shawls that have been blessed and are available to anyone who needs to know that they are remembered and prayed for.

Please contact Linda Gilardi with any questions about this ministry: [garygila@aol.com](mailto:garygila@aol.com)

*"That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ." - Colossians 2:2*

## Celebrate Barbara



Pictured are Michael and Evan, who created these cards for Barbara.

Barbara Itz' 98<sup>th</sup> birthday is January 26. We would like to flood her mailbox with cards from her church family! Her address is:

Barbara Itz  
BrightView  
175 Turnpike St, Apt 419  
N. Andover MA 01845

# JANUARY

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3 10:00am Set up Labyrinth 10:00am - 2:00pm Thrift Shop
4 8:30am Choir Rehearsal 9:30am Worship	5	6 6:00pm Tai Chi	7 10:00am - 2:00pm Thrift Shop 6:30pm - 7:30pm Prayer Shawl 7:30pm Big Book AA	8 6:30pm - 8:00pm CE	9	10 10:00am - 2:00pm Thrift Shop
11 8:30am Choir Rehearsal 9:30am Worship	12	13 6:00pm Tai Chi 6:30pm Trustees	14 10:00am - 2:00pm Thrift Shop 3:00pm Minister's Tea 7:30pm Big Book AA	15	16 6:30pm - 7:30pm Pictionary Potluck in Vestry	17 10:00am - 2:00pm Thrift Shop
18 8:30am Choir Rehearsal 9:30am Worship	19	20 6:00pm Tai Chi 7:00pm - 8:00pm Diaconate	21 10:00am - 2:00pm Thrift Shop 6:30pm Moonlighters 7:30pm Big Book AA	22	23	24 10:00am - 2:00pm Thrift Shop
25 8:30am Choir Rehearsal 9:30am Worship	26	27 6:00pm Tai Chi	28 10:00am - 2:00pm Thrift Shop 7:30pm Big Book AA	29	30 7:00am - 9:00am All Pro Dad	31 10:00am - 2:00pm Thrift Shop



To submit items for the church calendar, bulletin or the Spire, please email fully composed articles (and pictures!) to [Office@FCHanover.org](mailto:Office@FCHanover.org)



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17 Silver St., Suite 201  
Hanover, MA 02339



Photo by Michael Maggard