Open Doors – Growing Faith!
No matter who you are or where you are on life’s journey, you are welcome here!

We welcome visitors and newcomers!
We are an “Open and Affirming” Church

Dec 22, 2019
Statement of Inclusion
We, the people of The Congregational Church of Westborough, United Church of Christ, believe that all people are created equal, in God’s image. “We are all God’s children.” In our journey of faith, we strive for justice and equality for all.

We invite and welcome into our community and into the full life and Christian ministry of this church, persons of every race, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, family structure, faith background, economic circumstance, mental and physical ability. We say, and mean, “No matter who you are, or where you are on life’s journey, you are welcome here.”

We declare ourselves an Open and Affirming Christian community, actively expressing our belief in diversity and inclusion. We seek to be a faith community centered in Christ, ready to proclaim the Gospel and seek to grow through the transformative power of the Holy Spirit. We offer to each person acceptance and the responsibilities and blessings of participation in this congregation.

WELCOME!
Are you visiting with us today? We are glad you are here!
We celebrate “OPEN DOORS and GROWING FAITH”
“No matter who you are or where you are on your journey, you are welcome here.”

If you are here for a brief visit or are searching, let us be of help. Speak to an usher or the pastor and we will gladly be of service.

Our restrooms are located beyond the vestry on the first floor. There is a handicapped elevator located in the back of the sanctuary and a deacon will be glad to assist you. We have a handicapped bathroom next to the main office near the parking lot on the first floor.

Should there be a need to leave the service, there are exits to either side of the pulpit in front, or the stairs on either side in the back.

We celebrate open communion on the first Sunday of the month, where everyone is welcome to partake. Children are invited as well.

We welcome children to remain in worship today however we also offer a children’s program each Sunday in the nursery for children in grades 3 or younger and faith formation for older children most Sundays. We offer crayons and coloring pages for those who wish to keep their fingers moving during the service and we are comfortable with children being children! If your children need to move about, please feel free to stand in the back or go downstairs where the service can be heard over our speaker system.

WE HOPE YOU WILL BE INSPIRED AND PRAYERFULLY FILLED IN OUR SERVICE OF WORSHIP and that YOU WILL FEEL WELCOMED, AS ONE WHO BELONGS!
*The Congregation is invited to stand.

**INVITING THE WORD**

**PRELUDE**

**WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS**

*Rev. Sue O. Remick*

**LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH** - The candle of **LOVE**

**Readers:** Men’s Fellowship

*People’s Prayer: (In unison)*

God, our Life and Light, thank You for the great love You will show to us. Thank You for touching all heaven and earth with Your splendor. With the Angels and shepherds we sing of this great love. Amen.

*People (sing): (Tune # 144 O Little Town of Bethlehem v. 4)*

O holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray, cast out our sin, and enter in; Be born in us today. We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell; O come to us, abide with us, our God, Emmanuel.

**GREETING** (During flu season, remember to limit handshaking. Bows, Elbow bumps, or a wave are great)

**SONG # 153** “It Came Upon a Midnight Clear”

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

*Leader:* In every heart there lies a Bethlehem,

*People:* A place where light shines with tender memories,

*Leader:* A place where angelic voices are clearer,

*People:* A place of wonder and awe, delight and calm,

*Leader:* A place where the humility of shepherds and the wisdom of Magi embrace.

*People:* In my heart, we prize our Bethlehem moments.

*Leader:* Come to Bethlehem, kneel in wonder,

*People:* Worship with songs of praise.
PRAYER OF INVOCATION (Please be seated.)

Almighty God, the time of waiting is almost over. Like new parents eagerly awaiting the birth of a child, we impatiently wait with You for the birth of Your Son. We stand in awe, knowing what the birth of this particular baby means for our lives yet unable to fully comprehend the depth of Your love for us. We come before You in worship this morning, hoping that our thoughts, prayers and songs of praise are pleasing to You. We pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.

THE LORD’S PRAYER (Debts)

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever, Amen.

CHANCEL CHOIR AND BELL CHOIR ANTHEM

“Lo, How a Rose e'er Blooming” Michael Praetorius

Lo, how a rose e'er blooming from tender stem hath sprung!
Of Jesse's lineage coming, as men of old have sung.
It came, a flow'ret bright, amid the cold of winter,
When half spent was the night.

Das Blümelein so kleine, das duftet uns so süß;
Mit seinem hellen Scheine ver treibts die Finsternis:
Wahr' Mensch und wahrer Gott, hilft uns aus allen leiden
Rettet von Sünd und Tod.

SCRIPTURE #152 (In Unison, 1st paragraph) Luke 2:4-7

YOUTH’S MESSAGE

(The children and youth will bring forward the animals for the creche)
All children and youth will leave for Faith Formation at this time.

RECEIVING THE WORD

SCRIPTURE #152 (In Unison, 2nd paragraph) Luke 2:8-14

SERMON

“I Wonder” Rev. Remick
JOYSPRING ANTHEM  “Believe” from “The Polar Express”  Glenn Ballard & Alan Silvestri

Children sleeping, snow is softly falling.
Dreams are calling like bells in the distance.
We were dreamers, not so long ago.
But one by one, we all had to grow up.
When it seems the magic slipped away,
We find it all again on Christmas Day.

Believe in what your heart is saying,
Hear the melody that's playing,
There's no time to waste there's so much to celebrate.
Believe in what you feel inside
And give your dreams the wings to fly.
You have everything you need if you just believe.
Trains move quickly to their journey's end.
Destinations are where we begin again.
Ships go sailing far across the sea,
Trusting starlight to get where they need to be.

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE  Pete Graham

MUSIC RESPONSE  # 306  “Hear Thy Prayer O Lord”

Hear our prayer O Lord. Hear our prayer O Lord.
Incline thine ear to us and grant us thy peace. Amen

OFFERING OF OUR GIFTS  Men’s Fellowship

Invitation: Gracious God, we thank You for this season of carols and gifts, and for Your most precious gift of Jesus. We offer You our lives and these gifts: our hopes and our hearts as the morning offering is given and received.

BELL CHOIR ANTHEM  A Yuletide Celebration  arr. Kevin McChesney

“Joy to the World”
“Hark! the Herald Angels Sing”
“The First Noel”
O Come All Ye Faithful”

*DOXOLOGY (Unison)

Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise God, all creatures here below;
*PRAYER OF DEDICATION (Unison)  
God of great gifts and great love, as we await the birth of Your son in hope and peace and joy and love, may our gratitude be reflected in the gifts we give. Because of our generosity, might others know of the babe, born in a manger and in our hearts. Amen.

*CLOSING SONG #149  “Angels, from the Realms of Glory”  
REGENT SQUARE

*BENEDICTION  
Rev. Remick

*POSTLUDE  (You are invited to sit for the Postlude if you wish. Let the worship service settle in your heart. If you wish to exit, please do so quietly.)

Join us for fellowship and refreshments downstairs after worship!

Members of Men’s Fellowship are Advent readers and liturgists this morning. **Steve Achorn** and **Marketa Rosecka** are Deacons of the day.

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**PRAYERS & CELEBRATIONS FOR DEC 22, 2019**

Continued Prayers: continued prayers for Mike and Stephanie Jaworsky; Kristy Kocou; Robert Aldrich; Megan Huber’s mother Fran Kelly; Marie Murphy’s son Craig Jernberg and her daughter Lisa Jernberg; Cathie Achorn’s friend Julie Noble and her preemie baby Kosmas Andrew Melitas; CJ Harris (Marge Butcher’s grandnephew); Nancy Reimann; Cathie Achorn’s mother Dee Mumby; Lauren Algelro undergoing cancer treatments; Bob Brown; Gini & Tom Erwin; Anna Gavel, granddaughter/cousin of Karen Gavel and the Oevermanns; Linda Polatka (Cathie Achorn’s sister); Ron and Nancy Clark’s daughter, Melissa Dickinson.

Prayer requests: You can place prayer concerns on the church’s email distribution list at eprayers@uccwestboro.org. If you would like a prayer request included in today’s service, please let a Deacon know prior to the start of worship. Prayers will remain listed for 8 weeks. If you would like a prayer renewed, please call the church office.

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**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**CHRISTMAS PAGEANT & CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE**

**Christmas Pageant:** The family service will be the Pageant which will be on Sunday, Dec. 22nd at 5 pm. Please join us this year and invite your friends.

**Cookie Walk:** Join us downstairs immediately following the pageant for our annual cookie walk. This is a fundraiser for the music program. If you need last minute cookies for your guests, the cookie walk is a great time to stock up.

**Christmas Eve Service:** Please be advised that on Christmas Eve, we will have only one service of Lessons and Carols at 7:00 pm
THE CHRISTMAS FUND
The Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund is a Special Mission Offering that congregations have been supporting for over 100 years. The offering is administered through the United Church Board for Ministerial Assistance, the charitable arm of the Pension Boards. Funds provide direct financial support to those who serve the church and are facing financial difficulties. Active and retired clergy, lay employees, and their surviving spouses may be eligible for the Supplementation of Small Annuities, Supplementation of Health Premiums, Emergency Grants, and/or Christmas “Thank You” Gift Checks.

DECEMBER 29th WORSHIP SERVICE
The service on the 29th will be for carols and bell ringing. PLEASE BRING A BELL to ring in the new year. This will be a family friendly service so come along!

BOOK CLUB
January 6th is swap day for book club. You may leave and pick up your books outside of Rev. Sue’s office.

NEW DATE FOR DISMAS HOUSE DINNERS!
Our church goes once a month to cook and serve a meal with the people of Dismas House, a home for ex-prisoners. Beginning in January we will now be going on the 4th TUESDAY of each month. If you would like to help, be in touch with Karen Hutchinson at millarhutch@aol.com. The next dinner will be Tuesday, Jan 28th. Donations of Stop & Shop cards are greatly appreciated to help with the shopping for the meals! Thank you.

GROCERY CARD PROJECT
2019 Goal: $ 8,000
2019 YTD: $ 6,138.05
We’re ready! We’ve stocked up on Grocery Cards so that you can do all of your Christmas grocery shopping at Stop and Shop, Roche Bros. or Price Chopper. Every dollar we earn supports the Operation Budget of our Church. Please help us help the Church by having a grocery card in your wallet. Bring your checkbook to church and we’ll be waiting for you in the vestry. We are thankful for your support. If you need cards delivered contact Karen Hutchinson at 508.870.1782 or millarhutch@aol.com or Nancy Quimby at 774.249.4431 or nquimby11@gmail.com or Sally Petersen at sbpetersen4@gmail.com and 366.5169.

CONTACTS AND INFORMATION
Rev. Sue Remick, Interim Minister – revsuerem@gmail.com
Peter Graham, Student Minister – petegrahamiam@icloud.com
Wendy Reardon, Director of Children’s and Youth Ministries - wendysreardon@yahoo.com
Joseph Stillitano, Interim Minister of Music – josephmstillitano@gmail.com
Sue Menzel, Director of Bells – westcongmusic@gmail.com
Office hours: closed Mon; Tues & Wed 9am-2pm, Thurs 10am-2pm, Fri 9am-1pm
Church office phone 508/366-2000
General Church email – westboroucc@verizon.net, Church website www.uccwestboro.org
www.facebook.com/TheCongregationalChurchofWestborough
CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS ARE GIVEN
IN LOVING MEMORY OF, OR IN HONOR OF

Cathie & Steve Achorn and family in memory of:
   Edwin Mumby
   Phil & Ellen Achorn
   Mavina & Earl Mumby
   Jim & Evelyn Smith
   Daniel Quick
   Homer Sr. & Ruth Achorn
   Matt & Emily Hunter

The Arnold families in memory of Kenneth A. Arnold, Jr and Doris & Charles Wojnar
Suzanne Arpante in memory of family and friends
Charlotte Bramley in memory of Christopher W. Bramley
Charlotte Bramley in memory of Bramley Family
Charlotte Bramley in memory of Price Family
Dorothy Collins in memory of my daughter, Linda Lewis
Theresa DiMeo in memory of Michael Colangelo

Stephen & Gretchen Finch Doret and family in loving memory of:
   Norma Finch deBettencourt
   Bernard and Dorothy Finch
   Dr. Stanley A. Doret
   John & Jacob Nunley

Cora Fitzgibbons in memory of Coralyn Borglund & Jeanne Fitzgibbons
Charles & Nancy Gage in memory of our parents Herbert & Hazel Berry and Walter & Evelyn Gage
Marcia Hoffman in memory of my husband, Carroll
Kathy & Gabe Leblanc in memory Mary Gilson
The Leblanc and the Benton families in memory of Loleada and William Scheffley
The Leblanc and the Benton families in memory of Agnes and Alberic Leblanc
In memory of John Matson, with love, Ann & Family
Elaine Moore in memory of Wilfred & Florence Cook
Tom & Donna Morgan and family in honor and memory of Parents & Loved Ones
Nick & Susan Perron in honor of our Grandchildren
Bob and Sally Petersen in memory of our beloved John
The Reynolds Family in memory of loved ones

Adam, Tyler and Ben Ridley in loving memory of John Petersen
Adam, Tyler and Ben Ridley in loving memory of Hazel & Edgar Ridley
Adam, Tyler and Ben Ridley in loving memory of Helen & Robert Gay
Polly and Jay Thayer in honor of loved ones
The Stillitano Family in memory of Gary T. Tryon
Nancy Walker in memory of Thomas Walker
Kathy & Ed Wong in memory of passed loved ones