



**THE TOWER TIMES**  
THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
28 Green Street, Gardner, MA 01440  
**December 2019**



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## **News from the Diaconate**

The Diaconate is delighted to announce that Karen Hodges MDiv. has accepted the offer to become Pastor for this church body, to provide leadership and insight as we move forward to set new goals, and seek new growth in faith. She will begin her new pastorate December 1, 2019 Please join us this Sunday to welcome her to our family and for a potluck dinner following the worship service to meet and greet.

The Deacon Board has offered to Karen Hodges MDiv. the half-time position of Designated Minister for a period of two years. The Designated Minister role gives the church flexibility that was not available before with the Interim Minister role. The change is that the position is renewable and also if mutually agreed convertible to a Settled Minister position.

Karen was raised in Acton, Massachusetts. She earned a BFA with honors from the University of Lowell in 1982, and a BS in Medical Laboratory Science from Northeastern University in 1991. She graduated from Andover Newton Seminary at Yale Divinity School in 2010 with a MDiv. and in 2012 with MA in psychology and religion. Following graduation Karen served as Minister of Visitation at Second Church in Newton and as a Chaplain at Chaplains on the

Way in Waltham as a minister to the homeless.

Karen also enjoys knitting. She also leads workshops in the Spirituality of Visible Mending.

She is married to Michael and has two married daughters, Taylor and Laurel. Laurel is expecting her first child (the first grandchild) in January.

Yours in Christ,  
Bill and Jane Clabaugh, Diane Erickson, Judie O'Donnell, Christy Scott, Carol Smith, Dave Smith, Michelle Smith, Cynthia Henshaw



May our hearts prepare him room,  
Our lives reflect his presence,  
and Our homes radiate his peace.



Come celebrate the birth of Christ!

Prepare our hearts-parents if you are looking for a fun alternative to the Elf on the Shelf in your home. Have Mary and Joseph travel around each day until Christmas Eve where they will stay in the Nativity Stable. Then Jesus arrives on Christmas Day in the manger. Then have the Wise Men travel around for a while before they make it to Jesus house.

The Youth are preparing to share the story of Christs birth on December 15. Come share the joy of the season...They will be practicing during Sunday School time.

Preparations are being made for our 3<sup>rd</sup> graders to receive their bibles on January 5<sup>th</sup>, during worship.

Many Thanks to everyone that made the Spaghetti Dinner such a success. All the donations, workers ,and people that bought tickets. We were able to raise \$1,000.00 for Alyssa's place!  
Blessings, Sue

## **Youth Group News**

### **Youth Group Christmas Party**

Sunday-12/8 4:00-6:00 pm

\$5.00 Yankee Swap please bring favorite dish to share.

RSVP by 12/6 to Amy LeBlanc 978-320-9387, [wolftalk@gmail.com](mailto:wolftalk@gmail.com)

### **Youth group volunteering opportunity**

For a number years we have helped prepare the toys for children with the CAC. They needed to change the location and the time for sorting when Bank of America closed. This year the youth group will be helping on Sunday, December 15th at 2pm location TBA.

Please let Mrs. Rader know ASAP if you can help.

**"If there is love in your heart,  
Christmas can last forever."  
~Marion Schoeberlein**

## **MISSIONS COUNCIL NEWS**

### **ANGEL PROJECT**

Each year we request and receive 30 names from the Department of Children and Families. Thank you to all who have taken names of children to brighten their Christmas. Items are due back by Dec. 15th. Please staple or tape the information given to you on your bag. Do not wrap gifts - using gift bags would be perfect.

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There are still 6 children left: Boys ages, 8, 9, 9, 11, 11. Girl - age 13.

There are gift ideas given. Some have requested such basic items as sweatshirts.

Please ask at work if others would like to join our Angel Project. I had 4 interested who took names at my school.



### CD - BY OUR OWN ORGANIST - ROY IMPERIO

Please see Pat Darby if you would like to buy a Holiday CD by Roy. There are selections by a trio of Flute, Guitar and Piano and some selections alone by Roy. The cost of the CD is \$10.00 and Roy will give \$5.00 of each sale to the Church. What a wonderful gift this would make!! Buy one for yourself and give one as a gift!! Available after church or a pick up at Pat's home.

### CAC DINNER - DEC. 5

Our Church is again providing those to prepare, serve and clean up for the Community Dinner. Please try to be there from 3:30 p.m.

until around 5:45 p.m. We need 6 workers. Please let Pat Darby know if you can be there. Phone: 978-632-8270 email:

[patdarby6@yahoo.com](mailto:patdarby6@yahoo.com)

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### SHOEBOXES

Pat delivered 21 Shoeboxes to the Bread of Life Church which was the Collection Site. Thank you to all who participated.

When I finished recording all of our information, someone asked if they could pray over our Shoeboxes. I said that "this would be very nice." She prayed that each shoebox would reach just the perfect child that needed those contents. There is a true story of a child that came to receive a shoebox with no shoes or socks. Inside his box were a pair of "socks." He was extremely overjoyed and so grateful for his new socks. Our love and giving is being sent around the world to 190 countries.

### BAGS OF FOOD TO THE CAC

Pat took in 10 bags of food and a large bag of potatoes to the CAC. They were so grateful for all of the items given. You have helped others in need of the most basic necessity of LIFE - FOOD.



**Feeding the Community**

### UNICEF

Thank you to all who participated. Since money is still coming in, a total has not been reached as yet. Will let you know soon.

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**Sunday Fellowship  
Coffee Hour Host/Hostess**

December 1<sup>st</sup> Potluck lunch  
December 8<sup>th</sup> Tom and Diane Erickson  
December 15<sup>th</sup> CE Committee  
December 22<sup>nd</sup> Please sign up in Fellowship Hall  
December 29<sup>th</sup> Please sign up in Fellowship Hall



Coffee, juice and paper goods are provided by the Fellowship Committee. Hostess/Host is to supply creamer and optionally any snacks. *If you are unavailable to provide on your individual Sunday, it is your responsibility to switch with someone else.*

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**TRUSTEES NEWS**

We all know how chilly this big, old church building can be. This past year we looked into insulating the building through Mass save programs and UNITIL. Engineers informed us that we need to keep water out of the basement, first before we can insulate. A plan to install perimeter drainage is in place. The church needs an additional \$4,000.00 to complete the drainage project. The special collection at Christmas has been designated to this fund. Please consider helping us accomplish this building improvement.

Thank you to everyone that generously donated and supported the organ repair project. Repairs will be under way soon!

Happy Thanksgiving,  
The Trustees

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**Organ Update**

Thank you- thank you - thank you!

Thanks to all who donated to the organ fund. We have reached our goal of \$16,000.00 for the repair of both the Great and the Swell. Unfortunately our target date for the Fall repair of the Great was pushed to this coming January. Stefan Maier, who will be working on the organ, lost his assistant and has been working on a slower schedule. The pull down will be pulled out the second week of January and returned as soon as possible. Everything should be back in place for Palm Sunday. Thank you for your stewardship of this truly magnificent instrument. Your gifts both large and small, in memoriam and special offerings has ensured that the organ will continue to make beautiful music

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**FLOWER COMMITTEE NEWS**

Would you like to.....

- ◆ Celebrate an event?
- ◆ Honor a person?
- ◆ Remember a loved one

Call or email the church office!

**COMMITTEE MEETINGS AT A GLANCE**

Tuesday, Dec. 3 <sup>rd</sup> / 7pm	CE/Sue's house
Sunday, Dec. 8 <sup>th</sup> / 11:30am	Deacons/Church
Thursday, Dec. 12 <sup>th</sup> / 7pm	Trustee/Church
Thursday, Dec. 19 <sup>th</sup> / 7pm	Council/Church

Please notify the church office at  
[fccgardner@gmail.com](mailto:fccgardner@gmail.com) or 978-632-2142 with  
dates/locations of upcoming meetings!  
Thank you.

## THE TOWER TIMES

### Tower Times Quiz on Yard Sale

Please answer the following questions on our Church Yard sale.

Answers are below

**1. How often does FCC hold yard sales?**

- a) Once a year
- b) Twice a year
- c) Not often enough for me to clean out my treasures
- d) It varies

**2. The purpose of the sale is to: (Choose all that apply)**

- a) Make Money
- b) Help the needy
- c) Help those looking for a bargain
- d) Provide me with an opportunity to volunteer alongside with my Church Family in some way
- e) Invite nonmembers in the building (church tours and pamphlets are available) and Outreach
- f) Clear out our parishioners' attics and basements

**3. Who is one of the "Stars of Artful Display"?**

- a) Sue M
- b) Sue A
- c) Me! I can try and help with set up next time
- d) Marge W
- e) Sandy S
- g) Jean K

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**4. What locations benefitted from our "left overs" from October's Sale? (Choose all that apply)**

- a) Hope House
- b) Veterans Outreach Center
- c) American Legion
- d) Faith Lutheran's Clothing Bin
- e) The \_\_\_\_\_ and I will love to help by dropping off \_\_\_\_\_.
- f) Gardner Library
- g) Drive by Gardner Residents for items on the lawn
- h) Westminster and Orleans "Dump" and free recycle tables
- i) Boy Scouts
- j) CAC
- k) Salvation Army
- l) Epilepsy Foundation

**5. How many years have FCC done a bake sale in conjunction with Yard Sale? (Choose all that apply)**

- a) Never done it
- b) 3 years
- c) From this point forward-If you hold a bake sale, I will bake and buy!
- d) 1 year

Answers on last page of Tower Times



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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Worship 10 am Potluck after worship Decorate Christmas tree	2	3 GGCC Rehearsal 7 pm  CE 7 pm	4 AL ANON 7 pm	5 CAC Meal 4:30 Choir 6 pm	6	7 Vendor Holiday Fair 9 am – 2 pm
8 Worship 10 am Deacons 11:30 am GGCC concert 3pm Youth Group Christmas party 4 -6 pm	9	10	11 AL ANON 7 pm	12 CAC Meal 4:30 Choir 6 pm Trustees 7 pm	13	14
15 Worship 10 am Fellowship Hall rental 1 pm	16	17	18 AL ANON 7 pm	19 CAC Meal 4:30 Choir 6 pm Council 7 pm	20	21
22 Worship 10 am	23	24 Christmas Eve Worship 6 pm	25 Christmas Day	26 CAC Meal 4:30 No Choir	27	28
29 Worship 10 am	30	31				

**Yard Sale Quiz Answers**

- b and maybe c
- all are correct
- all are correct
- all are correct EXCEPT c, i and k
- c & d