



***“Oh, that you would tear open the heavens and come down...”***

These are some of the words that usher us into the season of Advent. They come from the lips of the prophet Isaiah who speaks impatiently to God, imploring God to fix the world...and now! God’s people are hurting – and Isaiah wants to be sure God knows it.

Isaiah pleads with God to intervene, to come to the people, to remake them, to save them. Times are bleak, but still there is confidence that God can change their lot. God can chase away the shadows of their lives. Isaiah trusts that God will do that...but there is an urgency in his petition to God. Tear open the heavens and come down. NOW!

We resonate with Isaiah’s urgency. Our world, too, is hurting. We, too, long for Christ to break into a world so much in need of our Savior’s coming. Advent is a time for our prayerful longing and for active waiting.

Following Isaiah’s lead, on Sundays during Advent I will be sharing stories of waiting and longing from people in a variety of places on the planet, people who also live in a posture of prayerful longing and active waiting – and some holy impatience, too. Stories will come from Zimbabwe, from Palestine, from Haiti and perhaps other places, too. I hope you will join me as together we explore our advent theme, **Waiting: Stories from Different Contexts.**

Blessings to you in this holy waiting time.

Kim

### **Christmas Bazaar**

Bethany’s Annual Christmas Bazaar is on **Saturday, December 2nd** from 9am -2pm. Please join us on this festive day of crafts, cookies and great company! Local artisans will display their wares, mountains of cookies await you, the Bethany table will feature homemade crafts and food items and the Fair Trade table will be laden with goods from around the world. You will also have the opportunity to donate to a number of local organizations through Giving Good Gifts.

### **Advent Wreath Workshop**

**Sunday, Dec. 3** from 11:30 - 1:00, is our **Advent Wreath Workshop!** Please join your Church Family as we make wreaths for home use. We will begin with some homemade soups and bread. Then people will make a wreath to use at home. We will light candle # 1 in a brief devotional time as we end our Workshop. Candles and wreath frames have been purchased for your convenience - donations toward the costs are appreciated, but not necessary. You may also bring your own frame and/or candles. Bringing a few greens is helpful also if you have a tree that could benefit from a haircut. Clippers for cutting thin wire and greens are helpful in making the Wreaths. An Advent Candle Lighting Booklet will be provided for your home use. If you are able, please call the Church Office (728-5849) to let us know to expect you.



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will be held during worship on **Sunday, Dec. 17**. The pageant, entitled **Carriers of the Light**, will include children and youth with assistance from our choir. Thanks to Wendy Ross and Marta Borgstrom for organizing the pageant.

## Advent Reflection Opportunities

We will be offering an opportunity for Bethany folks to be walk through Advent with a partner in prayer. We are providing a weekly devotional that people will read and then discuss by phone or in person or some of each – whatever is most convenient. We hope this will enable more people to mark the Advent season in community, especially those who are less eager to venture out on those cold snowy days/evenings! The Devotional guides will be handed out during the Fellowship Hour on Sunday, Dec. 3. We will take the names of those who want to participate, and will match you up with another Bethany person so that your prayer partnering can begin.

**An option will be** to explore a resource entitled **Mary Had a Baby: An Advent Bible Study Based on African American Spirituals**. We will begin each session by listening to a spiritual, then we will read the corresponding scripture story and explore a devotional as we consider how the songs spoke to an enslaved people on their journey of faith. We will offer day and evening gathering times. We will meet on Tuesdays, Dec. 5, 12 and 19 from 5:30-6:30 PM and Wednesdays, Dec. 6, 13 and 20 from 10:00 – 11:00 AM. Please join us!

**Tuesday afternoon Bible study** will use a devotional produced by the UCC Stillspeaking Writers' Group. All are invited to join us each Tuesday at 1:00 PM.

**Advent Vespers – Sunday, Dec. 17** at 4:00 PM. You are invited to attend a quiet late afternoon worship opportunity with soothing music and seasonal readings. Take a brief time away from the busy pace of the season, and seek comfort in God's promises of hope, peace, joy and love.

**Sunday, December 24 - Three Worship Services!**  
10:00 AM, 5:00 PM and 9:00 PM. **Please note the earlier time for the first evening service.**

At the 10:00 AM service we will share an informal time of stories and song. The 5:00 service is designed especially with children in mind. It is a bit shorter than the later service, but includes the Christmas story from scripture, with carols and the lighting of candles, as well as a special opportunity to help make ready for the arrival of the infant Jesus. Child care will be provided during the 5:00 service. The 9:00 service will include more carols and scripture readings. The choir will sing, Kim will offer a brief meditation and all will participate in the lighting of candles. Come to celebrate Christmas: to hear the story, to sing the carols, to worship God.

## Offering Opportunities in December

The Outreach Committee invites you to consider donating to the Christmas Fund, one of four special offerings of the UCC. The Christmas Fund provides financial aid to retired ministers (or their surviving spouses) who face financial difficulties. It is an opportunity to say thank you to those who served the church faithfully and well, often with less-than adequate compensation. We will place envelopes in the bulletins on Dec. 10; envelopes will be available in the sanctuary later in the month.

A portion of our offering on Christmas Eve will be shared equally between the Randolph Ecumenical Emergency Committee on Housing (REECH) and the local chapter of Habitat for Humanity.

**Coming in January!**

## Monthly Breakfasts at Bethany

Several of our Bethany cooks are offering up their best breakfast skills to provide a bountiful breakfast for Bethany folks and community members. We will schedule one breakfast each month from 8:30-9:30 AM. You may come anytime in that one hour timeframe. The first breakfast will be served up on **January 21**. And you are invited!!

## Candlelight Vigil

On **December 14**, the 5th anniversary of the Newtown tragedy, we will gather in front of Bethany Church from 6 to 6:30 PM, to keep vigil for all victims of gun violence, and to stand as witnesses for peace. Please join us! (Peace and Justice Committee)

## Messiah Sing on New Year's Day

Please mark your calendar for a Messiah Sing in our sanctuary on **Monday, January 1**, 2018 at 2:00 pm. Watch for more information and specific time for this wonderful holiday tradition organized by Dick and Marjie Drysdale.

## New Member Profiles

Last June we received four new members into membership at Bethany Church. In the months since they joined us, they have been busy sharing their gifts with our church community. Here are brief bios on those who joined us in June.

### Dave Haberl

What a joy for us all to welcome Dave "officially" into Bethany Church, as a member! Although Dave grew up in Van Buren, Missouri, his mom, one of Beth and Joe Kittel's daughters, grew up in our church and she and her husband were married here. As a result, Dave was here often, as his family visited, year-in- and year-out. What he likes about Bethany is the sense of community, and his feeling, whenever he comes, that he's being welcomed home by extended family!



After working as a forester in 14 different states (!), Dave took a job in his field, here in Vermont last fall, and is now living in Rochester, with a forester housemate. (I understand there is a "woman-of-interest" in Dave's life, and that she manages a ranch!)

One of the manifestations of his career in forestry is that he is a "hotshot". In case you, like me, don't know what a hotshot is, here's what google has to say! "In the United States, an interagency hotshot crew (IHC), or simply hotshot crew, is a Type 1 handcrew of 20 firefighters specially trained in wildfire

suppression tactics... As an interagency resource, hotshot crews can be requested to respond to wildland fire incidents in any jurisdiction." Dave was serving in this capacity in a terrible fire several years ago, in the same region in which several hotshots lost their lives. I find it hard to imagine the impact that would have on one. Another facet of his work is as a chainsaw instructor. Dave certifies people who work with the Forest Service as an employee, cooperator or volunteer before they can use cross-cut saws and chainsaws. In his present job, he is a pre-sale forester, which means that he lays out timber plots and makes sure all regulations are met, when someone has a contract to buy and log land. He also builds some of the timber sale contracts and puts them out for the bidding process.

Dave's list of hobbies is mind-boggling! His interests include fishing, hunting, sailing (including designing and building a sail-boat rigging for a canoe!), making remote control aircraft, scuba diving, timber sports, and just plain tinkering! Not to mention music; Dave is, as you know, a choir member here at Bethany, and he plays the French Horn, as well. What's more, he is always ready to share the above-mentioned interests with others who share those interests or are interested in trying them. His own self-defining phrase is fun-loving, and you probably knew that without my telling you!

We are especially grateful that Dave is now serving as a Mentor for the Middle School Youth Group. The youth enjoy hearing about Dave's great adventures!

It's great to have you among us, as an official member of your Bethany extended family, Dave! Welcome!

Submitted by Betty Edson

### Peter Harvey

Peter Harvey grew up at North Hollow Farm in Rochester, VT, the Harvey homestead begun more than 230 years ago. He has two sisters, Kathy and Carol, living in Rochester and Fairfax. A third sister, Donna, is deceased. He has a son, Benjamin, who graduated from high school last year and is pursuing an apprenticeship in plumbing.

When Peter was young, he helped by leading backpackers who were staying at Harveys Mountain



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View Inn, and he enjoyed basketball and soccer during high school.

Peter attended Johnson State College, where he graduated with a degree in economics and business. He began a construction company with his father doing Section 8 housing projects, but he mostly enjoyed renovations jobs, as they were like archeological explorations digging into the past to see what might be found within the walls. The builder may have left his signature or other data and calculations written on the boards.



A scaffolding collapse in 1992 broke Peter's foot and back and ended his construction career--and downhill skiing to places such as Colorado. He really enjoys the rural and simple life of the people of Jamaica

because he has visited there more than 10 times. After his life-changing experience, he bought and managed the Hubbard Store in Hancock for 23 years, enduring the effects of 3 floods in 5 years. He has since sold the store and has retired to Randolph, where he volunteers 2 days/week at the gift shop in Gifford Hospital.

Peter attended the Rochester Federated Church as a child and young adult, but drifted away from regular attendance. A challenging time in his life led Peter to reach out for spiritual guidance and support again. He is grateful for the changes he has been able to make in his life with the non-judgmental compassionate support of others. When he moved to Randolph, Peter chose Bethany because of its affirmation of many forms of religious belief, and he is enjoying the people and comradery available here. He feels at home. Shortly after joining the church, Peter accepted the invitation to serve on the Bethany Board of Trustees.

When you talk to him, make sure you say something funny, so that you can see his ear-to-ear grin and his eyes light up. Also, Peter has just bought the first computer of his entire life, so please offer your stories of experience, strength, and hope in the digital age of information technology.

Submitted by Tom Schersten

## **Murray and Joanna Beidler**

Newly wed Murray and Joanna Beidler came to New Hampshire in 1960 to start working at Mary Hitchcock Memorial Hospital in Hanover, NH. Murray was a conscious objector who had been accepted by the hospital to serve his 2-year service obligation as an alternative to a military service.

When that service obligation was completed, they decided to remain in the area. One year later Murray was hired by the hospital to work in the Purchasing Department, eventually becoming the manager of that department. Several years later they moved to a new house in Quechee, VT and lived there for 30+ years. Then they moved out-of-state to Malone, NY where they lived for 17 years.

They returned to Vermont last summer and settled in Randolph. They joined three adult children and two sisters of Joanna, and a brother to Murray, who already lived in Vermont. One adult daughter and her family remains in the Malone, NY area.

Murray and Joanna were very involved with Habitat for Humanity in the Upper Valley, and continued this involvement in Malone. They assisted with the recent Habitat for Humanity sale here at Bethany.



They are great assets to Bethany with Murray now serving as a trustee and Joanna as a deacon. They assisted with Lenten breakfasts and the recently completed summer reading program.

They have felt a warm welcome since they have Joined the Bethany Family and look forward to being very involved with Bethany and its ministry in this next chapter of their life.

**Note:** Sadly, Murray died on November 23 from a diagnosis of pancreatic and liver cancer. His memorial service will be at Bethany on December 16.

Submitted by John Lutz

