



December 14, 2023

The bi-weekly newsletter of
Barrington Congregational
Church, United Church of
Christ.

If your email platform lets you see only part of this email, then click on the following link to [View as Webpage](#). We don't want you to miss anything! You'll know you've reached the end when you see 'THE END!' in green.

Calendar

*Office Hours: Mon - Fri, 9:30 am - 1:30 pm.
Closed on Federal and State Holidays & where otherwise noted*

Our **Sunday morning services are livestreamed**
for those unable to attend in person. They can be viewed on
[our Facebook page](#) or on [our YouTube channel](#) - either live or watched later.
Only once the service is over, can it be found on [our website](#).
The **Sunday worship bulletin** is also posted to [our website](#).

Sun, Dec 17 Third Sunday of Advent
10 am Worship Service, Church School

Mon, Dec 18
11 am Lay Visitation meeting, Library

Tues, Dec 19
10 am Staff meeting, Dale's office
10:30 am Book Group meeting, Library
Noon - *Office closes early for staff Christmas Lunch*

Wed, Dec 20
4 pm Pack bags for Loaves & Fishes Backpack Program, Fellowship Hall
7:30 pm Choir rehearsal, Vestry

Thurs, Dec 21
8:30 - 9:30 am Coffee Chat, Thrive Tribe Cafe
10 am GMTF meeting, Library

Sun, Dec 24
• **Fourth Sunday of Advent**
The Christmas Fund offering
10 am All Ages Worship Service and Paper Bag Pick-Up Pageant, Sanctuary
• **Christmas Eve**
8 pm Service of Lessons and Carols, Sanctuary

Mon, Dec 25 Christmas Day
Office Closed

Tues, Dec 26
Office Closed

Wed, Dec 27 - Fri, Dec 29
9:30 am - 12:30 pm *Office Open*

Sun, Dec 31 New Year's Eve
10 am Worship Service

For the complete church calendar visit <http://bccucc.view-events.com>
Send calendar information to office@bccucc.org

Opportunities to volunteer in worship

Advent Candle Lighters needed

Volunteers are needed to read the short liturgy and light the Advent candles at the **10 am service on Sunday, December 24**. Volunteers can be individuals, couples or families. To volunteer, contact Rev. Racquel Ray at racquel@bccucc.org or (401) 246-0111 x 104. Thank you.



Christmas Eve Readers needed

Three more volunteers are needed to read scripture at the **8 pm Christmas Eve service of Lessons and Carols**. To learn more or to volunteer contact Rev. Dale Azevedo at (401) 246-0111 x103 or dale@bccucc.org.



Services on Sunday, December 24

4th Sunday of Advent AND Christmas Eve

Sunday, December 24 Services

Christmas Eve falls on a Sunday this year. As a result we will celebrate the Fourth Sunday of Advent in the morning and Christmas Eve in the evening.

10 am Advent 4: All Ages Worship Service including a **Paper Bag Christmas Pageant** (see details below). Come join us for this fun, family-friendly Christmas celebration that includes singing carols.

8 pm Christmas Eve Service of Lessons and Carols. This traditional service will feature music from the choir, and congregational singing of carols, interspersed between a telling of the Christmas Story. It will conclude with a brief message and candlelight singing of Silent Night. We look forward to you joining us.

Both services will be held in the sanctuary and will also be livestreamed for those



unable to attend in person. **ALL ARE WELCOME.**

Please note:

- Nursery care will not be offered at either of the services on December 24.
- There are no services on Christmas Day, December 25.

Paper Bag Pageant

This year we will be having a **Paper Bag Pick-up Pageant** as part of the **Sunday, December 24, 10 am worship service**.

Anyone who would like to be in the pageant may come early to pick a character's costume, dress, and embody the Christmas Story. Multiple costumes for all roles, ages (children and adults), and sizes will be available in the vestry before the service begins. The story will be read by narrators and acted out by anyone who wants to join in! Not everyone needs to participate (as we need an audience too) but everyone is invited to come and join in the fun! The congregation is also welcome to create their own costumes at home to wear to church on Christmas Eve morning.

We hope you are able to join us for this fun, family-friendly Christmas celebration that includes some singing of carols.



Pageant Volunteers needed

Volunteers are needed to help with the Paper Bag Pageant on Christmas Eve morning (see above). The needs are:

- Additional volunteers to help Joanne Ela and Elizabeth Azavedo manage costumes.
- Volunteers for stage helpers to direct characters.
- Extra magi to carry spices to the awaiting cars of Crossroads volunteers (see *'Spice Kits for Crossroads'* notice below).



To volunteer, please contact either Rev. Racquel Ray (racquel@bccucc.org or 246-0111 x 104) or Andrea Bullard (andrea@bccucc.org or 246-0111 x 107). Thanks.

Spice Kits for Crossroads

Throughout Advent we are collecting spice kits for our neighbors at Crossroads. Similar to the Welcome Home baskets but much smaller, the Spice Kits are basically starter spices for folks entering their own homes with the support of Crossroads. Suggested items are salt, pepper, garlic powder, onion powder, vanilla, oregano, sage, parsley, etc.

BCCUCC is providing baskets for congregation members to take, fill and return throughout the Advent Season. All of the baskets should be returned **by the morning service on December 24.**



UCC Christmas Fund offering

The UCC Christmas Fund offering will be taken on **Sunday, December 24**, and this year's theme is "Grace Upon Grace".

The Christmas Fund has been caring for active and retired clergy and lay employees of the United Church of Christ for over

★
THE CHRISTMAS FUND
for the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund

100 years, providing emergency grants, supplementation of small annuities and health premiums, and Christmas "Thank You" gift checks each December to our lower-income retirees. This year, your care and compassion will be especially appreciated by those servants of the church who are facing a time of need. Learn more at <https://www.pbucc.org/index.php/christmas-fund-home>.

Donations may be made during worship on December 24 or at your convenience - by check payable to 'BCCUCC' with 'UCC Christmas Fund' in the memo line; by cash using the special offering envelope in the 12/24 bulletin; online at our website donation page <https://bccucc.org/donation/> using Tithe.ly and designating it for the 'UCC Christmas Fund' in the drop down menu; or directly at [this link](#). Thank you.

'Tis the season of giving

Giving Tree

The Mission and Justice Team, with help from the congregation, is supporting the **Women's Resource Center's 'Adopt-A-Family'** campaign again this holiday season. The center provides many services to victims of domestic violence and their families, and our donations are being used to buy gift cards for these families in need. Donations should be given to the church (in the offering plate or to the office) as cash or check, OR online through Tithe.ly on the church website. Checks should be made out to "BCCUCC" with "Women's Resource Center" written in the memo line.

For online donations from the church website, click on <https://bccucc.org/donation/> to take you to the 'Giving to BCCUCC' page. In the middle is a link to Tithe.ly through which you can donate, either using a credit card or directly from your bank. Use the drop-down menu to have your donation go to 'Women's Resource Center.'

Mission & Justice is running the campaign **through December 24**. Questions? Contact Nancy Arena at nancy.arena@outlook.com or call 401-246-0212. Thank you for your donation!



Mitten Tree

The Mission and Justice Team is sponsoring a Mitten Tree to receive donations of warm hats, gloves, scarves, and mittens etc. - both purchased and handmade - for children, youth, and adults of all sizes. Again this year the mitten tree is upstairs in the sanctuary and will remain there **through the end of December to receive donations**. The congregation is asked to place their donated items on or under the tree before or after the worship service. All donated items will be given to organizations serving individuals and families experiencing financial hardship. If anyone wishes to make a donation, but is not currently attending in-person worship, please contact Nancy Arena at (401) 246-0212 or nancy.arena@outlook.com to arrange for pick-up. Thank you for your donation!



Staff End of Year / Christmas Gift

A message from Dale and Racquel...

"During advent (thru Dec 24) you will find in the pew racks an envelope marked "Staff Christmas Gift." We are blessed to have wonderful people working here who give more hours to our church than expected or are compensated for. We therefore invite you to join with us in giving them a gift during these holidays. Your gifts will be divided up among several different



people; Christine and Pat in the office, Andrea who works with our children, Matthew at the keyboard, and Jay and Frank on the custodial staff. Each staff person will receive this gift according to the number of hours they work. Thank you ahead of time for your generosity."

Please make checks payable to 'BCCUCC' and mark the memo line 'Staff Gift'. They can be put in the offering plate or sent to the office. It's also possible to make an online donation using Tithe.ly from our church website's donation page <https://bccucc.org/donation/> and choosing 'Staff Christmas Gift' in the drop-down menu. Thank you.

Miscellaneous

Our new heating system is up and running!

If you were in church on Sunday, December 10, you will have appreciated worshipping in a warm sanctuary after several weeks of having little or no heat in there. Thanks to our new heating system, worshipping will be much more comfortable going forward. This will be especially noticeable in the summer when the system will provide air conditioning in the sanctuary for the first time ever.

Some adjustments to the programming of the system are still being made to ensure that a comfortable temperature is maintained in the space, but we hope to have that all done very soon.



Stewardship Update

Are you able to make a commitment to financially support our church in 2024?

As of 12/14/23 the church has received 80 Giving Cards from members and friends making a financial commitment for 2024. Many thanks to those that have already made a commitment. We invite you to prayerfully consider making a financial commitment in advance for 2024.

If you intend to return a Giving Card we hope to hear from you soon. Our Finance Team and Church Council are working hard on the 2024 budget and many of their decisions are based on these financial commitments. You may mail your Giving Card, place it in the Offering Plate or email Financial Secretary Pat Stoddard (pat@bccucc.org) with your financial commitment and she will confirm receipt of your email and the amount.

Because of You our church changes lives! Your financial support allows us to continue to change lives in the local community and beyond.



Visit to Federal Hill House postponed

Unfortunately, due to the traffic chaos caused by the shut down of the Washington Bridge, the visit to Federal Hill House scheduled for December 14 had to be postponed to a later date tbd - probably in February. Questions? Contact Nancy Arena (nancy.arena@outlook.com or (401) 246-0212).



Chancel Fund

Thank You to everyone who made a donation to the Chancel Fund this Christmas. The list of donors and dedications will be included in

the bulletin for the 8 pm Christmas Eve service.

The fund has already paid for the Christmas plants on the windowsills and the boxwood wreaths on the front doors of the church. We look forward to seeing the sanctuary fully decorated for Christmas through Epiphany.

Your donations have also paid for Christmas plants that are being delivered by the deacons to our homebound, ill, and recently bereaved.



Church Office holiday hours

The church office will be CLOSED on Mon & Tues, Dec 25 & 26, and Mon, Jan 1, 2024.

The office will be OPEN from Wed through Fri, Dec 27 - 29, from 9:30 am - 12:30 pm only.



eBridge holiday schedule



Due to the holidays, there will not be an eBridge newsletter on December 28. The next eBridge will be published on Thursday, January 4, 2024.

Giving reminder for tax purposes

Please note that if you wish any contribution to be recorded as being received by the church in 2023, it must be in the hands of the office by December 31, or postmarked by that date.

Looking ahead to January...

New Year, New You - Jumpstart Your Health!

Are you interested in learning more about plant based eating? Are you struggling with chronic health issues and looking for nutrition support?

Rev. Racquel Ray is partnering with Plant Docs and Dr. Sandra Musial to host a **New Year, New You plant based nutrition Jump Start program** in January. This program will run on Thursday nights in January with a mix of in-person and zoom classes to learn more about how to incorporate more plant based elements into our daily routines. Zoom nights are cooking classes taught by Dr. Musial from her kitchen as students cook together in their own kitchens too. [More information about the program](#). Please contact Rev. Racquel to sign up or if you have questions at racquel@bccucc.org or (401) 246-0111 x 104.

Dr. Musial will also speak during worship on **Sunday December 31**.



Ongoing groups and events

(listed alphabetically)

Bereavement Group

This support group is open to anyone (not just church members) who has lost a loved one at any time and new

members are always welcome. The group meets once a month from **10 - 11 am** in the church library. Upcoming dates are: **Monday, January 8**. For more information contact one of the facilitators, Betsy Brenner at betsybrenner3@gmail.com or 245-8031, or Aubrey Atwater at aubreyfolk@aol.com or (401) 392-1909, or Rev. Racquel Ray at racquel@bccucc.org (401) 246 0111 x 104.



Book Group

The Book Group next meets on **Tuesday, December 19** at **10:30 am** in the church library. They will discuss *Dust Child* by Nguyen Phan Que Mai. [Book review](#). For more information about the group contact Helen Schall at helenschall@hotmail.com or 401 245-4724. All are welcome.



Choir rehearsals

If you enjoy singing, why not join the church choir - no audition needed! Rehearsals are on **Wednesday evenings** from **7:30 - 9 pm** in the Vestry. To learn more, speak with our music director Matthew Marion after church or at (401) 954-7107 or mmarion1811@gmail.com. Or speak with any choir member - they'd love to have you join them. Come make a joyful noise to the Lord!



Coffee Chats with Racquel and others

On **Thursday mornings** Rev. Racquel and others meet at Thrive Tribe Café, 60 Maple Ave, Barrington from **8:30 – 9:30 am** for coffee and conversation. All are welcome to join them any time they can make it. Note: they still meet even when Racquel is away.



Knitting for Others Group - in person and via zoom

The Knitting for Others Group meets both in person and via zoom on the first Tuesday of each month, and next meets on **Tuesday, January 2** from **6:30 - 9 pm**. Feel free to stop into the library or join the call at any time and stay as long as you like. All knitters and crocheters are invited to participate and new faces are very welcome. For more information on the group, contact Nancy Arena at (401) 246-0212 or nancy.arena@outlook.com.

The zoom information needed is not included here for security reasons. It was in the email sent to the congregation.



Loaves and Fishes Backpack Program

BCCUCC continues the collection of food bags to be given to the families of 25 students at DelSesto Middle School in Providence who are experiencing food insecurity. We continue to partner with *We Share Hope* (<https://wesharehope.org>) to provide food to those in need & also with *Books are Wings* who donate free books for the students. (<https://www.booksarewings.org>).



BCCUCC supplements the food donations to fill the bags. We collect the following items in the box in the narthex as you go up the stairs to church: **peanut butter, bread, jelly, oatmeal, canned tuna, rice and beans, pasta and sauce, fruit cups, granola bars and shelf stable pudding**. Thank you to those who supported November's collection.



Use [December's SignUpGenius link](#) to sign up to donate specific items, being sure to indicate how many of an item you can donate. If you need help signing up please call the church office (401) 246-0111.

The **deadline** for December food donations is **Sunday, December 17** and the **packing of the bags** will take place on **Wednesday, December 20** at **4 pm** in Fellowship Hall for anyone interested in helping put the bags together. Contact Jay Buckley pbuckley6@cox.net or 578-6533 if you can help, or with any questions.

Women of Faith Reading Group

The group welcomes women of all ages from BCCUCC as well as other churches and faith traditions. They meet for discussions on books, faith and life on the 1st and 3rd Thursdays of the month from **1:30 - 3 pm** in the church library. Their next meetings are on **Thursday, January 4 & 18, 2024**. For more information - including what they're currently reading - contact Jane Tonn at 289-2349 or jtonn2@cox.net



Youth Group

The Youth Group (for grades 5 - 8) gathers most weeks throughout the year on **Mondays** from **6 - 7pm** in Fellowship Hall and Room 9. Youth group meetings consist of fun and fellowship, simple dinner (usually pizza) and a closing prayer service. When the weather permits, they'll meet on the terrace, labyrinth, and playground. *Note: There is no youth group when Barrington Public Schools have a day off.*



They've finished meeting for 2023, and next meet on **Mondays, Jan 8, 22 & 29, 2024**. All youth grades 5 - 8 are welcome to attend. For more information, contact Rev. Racquel Ray at racquel@bccucc.org or (401) 246-0111 x 104. *Don't forget that youth participating in any programs at church must be registered. [Registration form](#)*

Conference Happenings

Keep up to date with our Conference - SNEUCC

The Southern New England Conference, UCC (SNEUCC), publishes several newsletters - one of which comes out weekly and is titled '**5 Things to Know and Share**'. Read the latest edition [at this link](#) and sign up to subscribe and get it sent to your inbox.



Southern New England Conference
United Church of Christ
Living the Love & Justice of Jesus

[Click on this link](#) to see the archive of all of the different SNEUCC newsletters - and subscribe to any that are of interest to you.

Worth repeating

The Pastors' Blog

The latest blog was written by Racquel and titled 'A Light Breaking Forth'. If you missed it earlier, you can [read it here](#).



Want to know more about our children and youth programs?

[The 2023-2024 Guide to Faith Formation and Youth Ministry at BCCUCC](#) has a lot of information about the various programs we offer for children and youth at BCCUCC including our Church School, Youth Group, and OWL programs.

Printed copies of the booklet are available for pick up from the narthex table in church, or from outside Andrea's office. If you have questions, please get in touch with our Faith Formation Director, Andrea Bullard at andrea@bccucc.org or (401) 246-0111 x 107m who'll be happy to answer them.

A Guide to
Faith Formation &
Youth Ministry at BCCUCC
2023-2024



Sunday mornings at BCCUCC

Services livestreamed to Facebook and YouTube

All are invited to join us for our **multi-platform worship service** at **10 a.m.** on Sunday mornings - either in person or online.



Masks are optional but we do ask that if you're feeling unwell or have symptoms, that you please stay home and watch online. We continue to run large HEPA air filters in the sanctuary and also have HEPA air filters in most spaces in our Education building.

For those unable to join us in person, the services are livestreamed so they can be watched online - either live or later - at

- the church's Facebook page www.facebook.com/bccucc
- or [our church's YouTube Channel](#)

Please note that the service can no longer be watched LIVE on our website. However a recording of the service can be watched once the service is over and it's been posted to the Livestream page of the church website <https://bccucc.org/live-stream-2/>

A link to the [Sunday bulletin](#) can be found on our livestream page.

Nursery Care

The Nursery is available every Sunday morning to provide loving care for infants and children aged 0 - 3 years old. Parents/guardians are welcome to drop off their child/children in the nursery located in the Education building before going to the worship service.



The **Nursery Nook**, located directly below the sanctuary, is another option for parents with wiggly children of any age to retreat to and still hear the service on the loud speaker down there.

We love the sound of children in worship so parents are welcome to keep their infants and children with them in the sanctuary if they wish. For those who would prefer to worship without distraction, we provide these other options.

Note: Nursery Care will not be offered at either the 10 am or 8 pm services on Sunday, December 24, Christmas Eve.

From the church office

Church office hours

Our regular church office hours are Monday - Friday, 9:30 am - 1:30

pm. Closed on Federal & State holidays.

Note: The church office will be closed on Dec 25 & 26, and Jan 1, 2024. It will be open from 9:30 am - 12:30 pm only on Dec 27 - 29.



Deadlines for Announcements and eBridge

The deadline for receiving information for inclusion in the eBridge and the Sunday Announcements is **Noon on the Wednesday prior to publication.**

Deadline for next eBridge is **Wed, Jan 3, 2024**. Send information to Christine at office@bccucc.org.



Do you need a Name Tag?

If you would like a nametag please contact the church office at office@bccucc.org or call (401) 246-0111 and let us know what name you'd like on the nametag and your preference for a clip, pin or string holder. Nametags are stored on the rack in the vestry hallway, or you can keep it in your car or purse where you can easily find it on a Sunday morning.



Online donations to the church through our website

Our church website (www.bccucc.org) is capable of accepting online donations. [Watch a brief video](#) (30 secs) on how to do this, or read the following instructions: There's a red 'DONATE' button on the right side of the black menu bar near the top of each page of the website. Clicking on it will take you to the 'Giving to BCCUCC' page. In the middle is a link to Tithe.ly through which you can make a donation to the church either using a credit card or directly from your bank. (No need to set up an account). You are also able to designate where you would like your donation to go (pledge, gift, memorial gift, Deacons' Fund, etc).



Questions? Contact Pat Stoddard, Financial Secretary at pat@bccucc.org or (401) 246-0111 x 102.

[Visit the 'Giving to BCCUCC' page.](#) OR you can use this QR code to take you directly to our giving page.



Contact us

Dale dale@bccucc.org (401) 246-0111 x 103 *Senior Minister*

Racquel racquel@bccucc.org (401) 246-0111 x 104 *Associate Minister for Congregational Life*

Christine office@bccucc.org (401) 246-0111 x 101 (or just stay on the line) *Office Administrator*

Pat pat@bccucc.org (401) 246-0111 x 102 *Financial Secretary*

Andrea andrea@bccucc.org (401) 246-0111 x 107 *Faith Formation Director*

Matthew mmarion1811@gmail.com *Music Director*

Church Office Hours: Open Monday – Friday, 9:30 am – 1:30 pm.
Closed on Federal and State holidays.

Building Security: The Education building remains locked at all times, even when the office is open. Please ring the bell for entry and we'll be happy to let you in - or use the code on the keypad if you have it.

Connect with us



[Visit our website](#)

[Join Our Email List](#)

THE END !