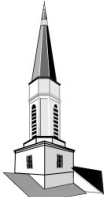


DECEMBER 2025



The Spire

First Congregational Church

United Church of Christ

77 Main Street

Springfield VT 05156-2999

(802) - 885-5728 fccucc@vermontel.net

firstchurchspringfield.org

www.facebook.com/fccuccspringfield

"We are a community in Christ, called to act with love toward our neighbors."

Pastor's Message December 2025

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" John 1:1



December, and we enter Advent – the beginning of a new Church Year, filled with the anticipation of re-experiencing Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem, the loneliness of a cold night in the manger, and the birth of Jesus. As we've done before, we'll begin the season taking part in Springfield's holiday program on the 5th of December, with cocoa, cookies and carols (once again, I'll dress for the season in my top hat). The church will be busy through the season with activity: the Garden Club will be making wreaths in the vestry the first week of December, Community Chorus performs on Sunday the 7th, Jon Clinch with friends Gypsy Reel present music and readings for the season on the 10th, and the church will host a food festival Saturday the 20th. There's a full list of events later in this edition.

Realizing that many people face feelings of loneliness and unease during Advent, as activity and celebrations take place around them, I'll be offering once again a Longest Night/Blue Christmas service on Thursday, December 18th, at 2:00. Through reflection,

gentle music, candlelight and silence, I hope that we may bring some of God's Holy Light into the lives of those who feel a bit left out of the happiness of the season. All are welcome to take a break from the hubbub and have time to reflect.

Our Christmas Eve candlelight service will be 5 PM on Wednesday the 24th, as we relive the story of the Christ-child's birth through scripture and song. Hoping to see you then!

Best Wishes to all for a safe and happy Advent and Christmas.

Michael Mario, Pastor

THE SANTA CLAUS CLUB thanks you for giving a gift to a neighbor with love.

We sent 20 gifts into our community to make their day brighter with a reminder that they are important to us all.
Outreach Ministry



SANTA COMES TO TOWN ON FRIDAY, DECEMBER 5TH

We are inviting the families strolling the streets for the Springfield on the Move Event, to come into our Vestry to warm up with hot chocolate and cookies. Families are visiting businesses on Main Street collecting stickers on their map of downtown Springfield and receiving small gifts. This is a fun time to celebrate the coming holiday along with the arrival of Santa to the plaza at 6 PM.

Join us from 4 – 6 PM in the Vestry to welcome our neighbors and help add stickers to their map, serve cookies and hot chocolate. Sing along with Pastor Michael as he leads us in carols.

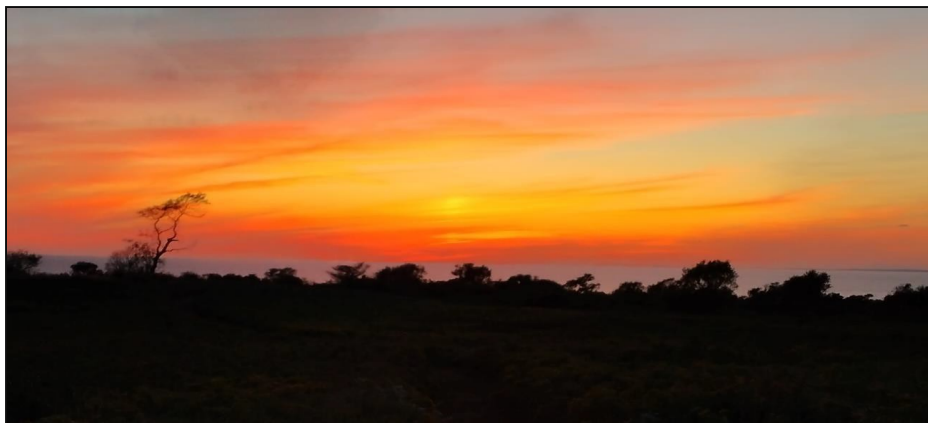
Our hospitality is a welcome break for many who look forward each year to joining us. Be a host for this fun event!

PS – The Springfield Garden Club is having their annual POP UP Market from 9AM-4PM in the Vestry. Come early to see their beautifully arranged Christmas centerpieces and decorations!

The Longest Night an hour of quiet in a busy season

For those in need of a break from the rush of the season, please join us for a
time of music, prayer, and reflection.

2 PM Thursday, December 18th





GYPSY REEL CONCERT FOR THE HOLIDAYS!

Wednesday, December 10th, Gypsy Reel and guest are coming to Springfield! Camille Parker on mandolin, Claudine Langille on banjo, Graham Parker on fiddle, and special guest Jon Clinch on guitar are back for a holiday concert to brighten up your season with “A Christmas Festival of Song and Story”, their centuries-spanning range of festive music. You’ll enjoy modern Christmas favorites, beloved carols, traditional Celtic instrumentals, and a few unexpected surprises, too. In between, Jon will share a favorite passage or two from Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* and his own award-winning companion novel, *Marley*

Please join us Wednesday, December 10th at 7 PM at the First Congregational Church at 77 Main Street in Springfield for a mid week concert; a night out with family and friends. The concert is supported by a good will offering.

Local favorites Gypsy Reel—Camille Parker on mandolin, Claudine Langille on banjo, Graham Parker on fiddle, and special guest Jon Clinch on guitar—will treat you to A Christmas Festival of Song and Story, their centuries-spanning range of festive music. You’ll enjoy modern Christmas favorites, beloved carols, traditional Celtic instrumentals, and a few unexpected surprises, too. In between, Jon will share a favorite passage or two from Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* and his own award-winning companion novel, *Marley*



THE CHRISTMAS FUND, SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21st- For more than a century, The Christmas Fund has been a beacon of love and care-providing direct financial assistance to the healers in our lives: retired and active UCC ministers, faithful church workers, and their families. In 2024 alone, The Christmas Fund offered more than \$1.7 million in support, touching the lives of 766 individuals across the UCC. Thank you for your continued generosity in supporting this important mission.



CHRISTMAS EVE OFFERING – We will divide the plate offering between **Springfield Area Habitat for Humanity** and the **Hope Fund of the Vermont UCC Conference**. Habitat for Humanity is a nonprofit housing organization working in local communities across all 50 states and in more than 70 countries around the world. Habitat's vision is of a world where everyone has a decent place to live. Habitat works toward this vision by building and improving homes in partnership with individuals and families in need of a decent and affordable place to live.

The HOPE fund encourages innovation, societal impact and new ministry in our midst. As we look to the future of a post-pandemic world, our churches need help to imagine new ways to be the church in this new landscape. We live in the most unchurched state in the country, and we look to connect with people who don't go to church with the Good News of our faith. The Hope Fund supported the beginning of our Green Space Project.

Food Festival

The Congregational Church of Springfield is sponsoring a Food Festival on Saturday, December 20, 2025 from 10-3 . If anyone would like to sign up to have their own table to sell homemade goodies the cost is \$25. The church will have a bake sale table and we need everyone to help bake food. This is the time to buy gifts for people for Christmas or for yourself. If you are interested in having a provided table reserved you may contact Polly Blais at blaisp1@yahoo.com or 802-299-6399 and she will be glad to reserve you a table. This is a fundraiser for the church. It should be fun.

Church Decorating for the Christmas season.

We will be decorating the sanctuary on Friday, November 28 at 10 AM as Sunday, Nov. 30 is the first Sunday of Advent. Any one that would like to help is invited. Thank you in Advance.

Carol Richardson, Worship



CHRISTMAS FLOWERS

Each year donations provide poinsettias to decorate our sanctuary during the Advent and Christmas Seasons. As in the past, you may designate your contribution “in memory of” or “in honor” of a loved one. Please complete the form below and return it to the church office by Monday, December 15th. Names will be listed in our bulletins beginning December 21st.

In loving memory of _____
Or In honor of _____
By: _____

Church services will continue to be live streamed on Facebook each Sunday at 10:00 and the services can be viewed anytime through the church website.

Sunday church services are also recorded on DVD for SAPA TV to be shown at a later date. The present channels are 160 for VTEL TV and 1077 for Xfinity Comcast and services are shown on Sunday at 10AM and Wednesday at 4PM. There is at least a one-week delay.



CELEBRATING DEC. BIRTHDAYS

Dec 1 *Greg Matulonis*
Dec 6 *George Bean*
Dec 10 *Jill Markert*
Dec 13 *Nancy Bellows*
Dec 17 *Sally Riefenstahl*
Dec 21 *Diane Holme*
Dec 23 *Helen Moore*
Dec 25 *Pat Townsend*

CELEBRATING DEC. ANNIVERSARIES

Dec 15 *Mary & Richard Cross*
Dec 17 *Mari & Dan Csiszer*

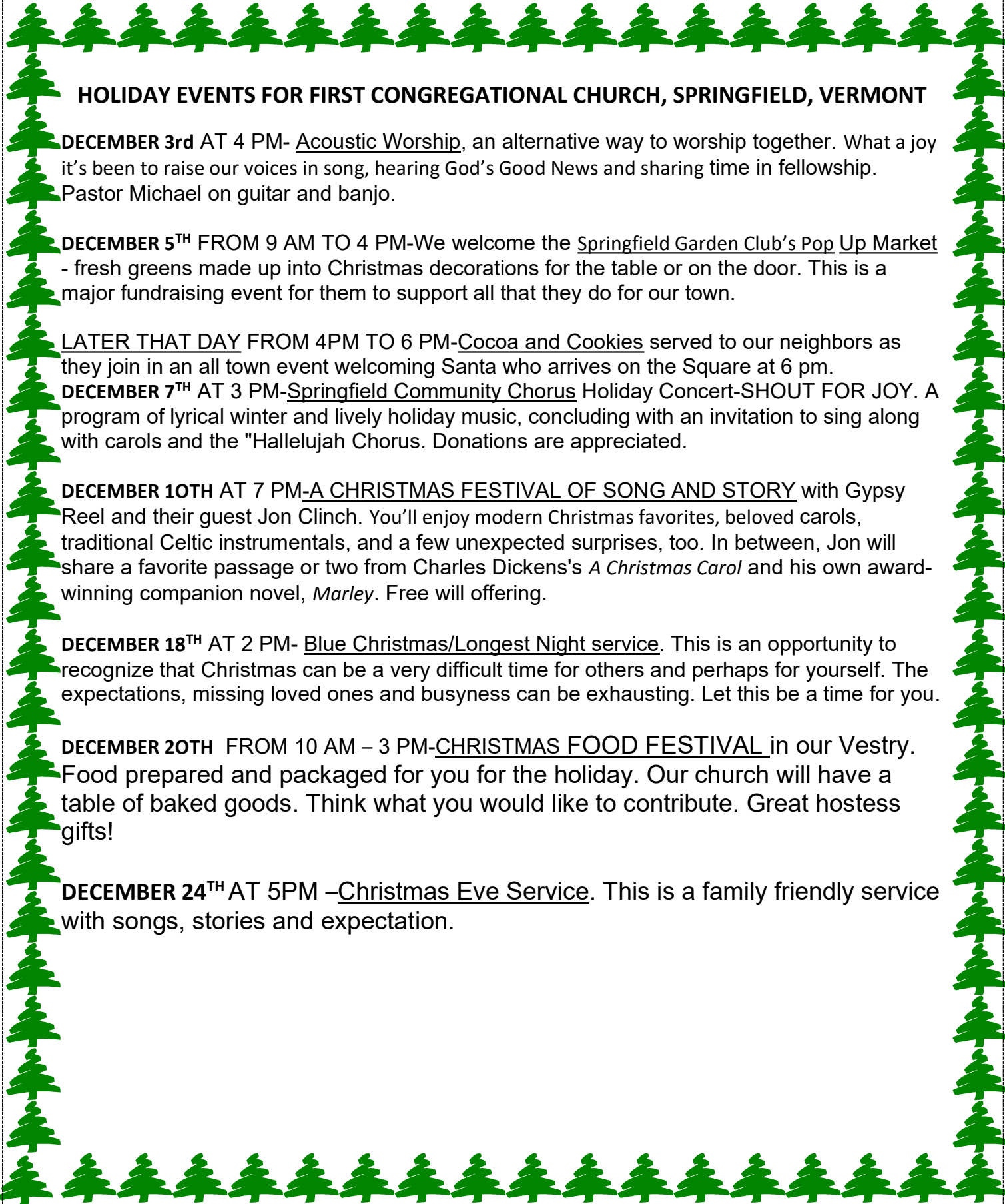
TREASURER'S REPORT

(as of Oct. 31, 2025)

YTD income \$ 92,979.
YTD expenses \$151,146.
Difference (\$58,167.)
Total Liquid Assets \$267,231.
Restricted Funds \$161,912.
Avail. Liquid Assets \$105,319.

DECEMBER 10
INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS DAY





HOLIDAY EVENTS FOR FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, SPRINGFIELD, VERMONT

DECEMBER 3rd AT 4 PM- Acoustic Worship, an alternative way to worship together. What a joy it's been to raise our voices in song, hearing God's Good News and sharing time in fellowship. Pastor Michael on guitar and banjo.

DECEMBER 5TH FROM 9 AM TO 4 PM-We welcome the Springfield Garden Club's Pop Up Market - fresh greens made up into Christmas decorations for the table or on the door. This is a major fundraising event for them to support all that they do for our town.

LATER THAT DAY FROM 4PM TO 6 PM-Cocoa and Cookies served to our neighbors as they join in an all town event welcoming Santa who arrives on the Square at 6 pm.

DECEMBER 7TH AT 3 PM-Springfield Community Chorus Holiday Concert-SHOUT FOR JOY. A program of lyrical winter and lively holiday music, concluding with an invitation to sing along with carols and the "Hallelujah Chorus. Donations are appreciated.

DECEMBER 10TH AT 7 PM-A CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL OF SONG AND STORY with Gypsy Reel and their guest Jon Clinch. You'll enjoy modern Christmas favorites, beloved carols, traditional Celtic instrumentals, and a few unexpected surprises, too. In between, Jon will share a favorite passage or two from Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* and his own award-winning companion novel, *Marley*. Free will offering.

DECEMBER 18TH AT 2 PM- Blue Christmas/Longest Night service. This is an opportunity to recognize that Christmas can be a very difficult time for others and perhaps for yourself. The expectations, missing loved ones and busyness can be exhausting. Let this be a time for you.

DECEMBER 20TH FROM 10 AM – 3 PM-CHRISTMAS FOOD FESTIVAL in our Vestry. Food prepared and packaged for you for the holiday. Our church will have a table of baked goods. Think what you would like to contribute. Great hostess gifts!

DECEMBER 24TH AT 5PM –Christmas Eve Service. This is a family friendly service with songs, stories and expectation.

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United Church of Christ 77 Main Street
Springfield, VT 05156



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Michael Mario, Pastor
Sheila Turner, Admin. Assistant
Todd Murray, Sexton
Office 885-5728

Church Office Hours	Tues. - Wed. 9:00 A.M. - 1:00 P.M
Pastor's Hours	Wed. & Thurs. 9:00 A.M. – 1:00 P.M