

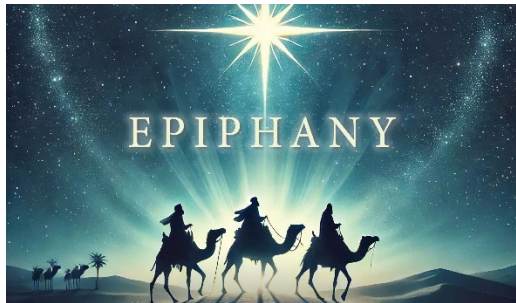


# BELL TOWER

A Westhampton Church and Community Newsletter  
published by Westhampton Congregational United Church of Christ,  
an Open and Affirming Church  
JANUARY 2025 Vol. 54 No. 1

## Epiphany

This Belltower message will likely reach you during Christmastide, the twelve days of Christmas. The twelfth day is Epiphany, also known in some churches as Three Kings Day. As a religious observance, Epiphany is a celebration of the first manifestation of Christ to Gentiles - the three Magi. Religious scholars tell us that the early Christian church in Rome first adopted this day of the observance of Epiphany around the 4<sup>th</sup> century. We invite you to join us for worship on Epiphany Sunday, January 5, 2025 at 10:00am.



## Un-Deck the Halls!

The Advent Festival committee will be taking down the Christmas decorations following the Epiphany Sunday service on January 5th. We would welcome anyone who is able to stay and help with this. It won't take long especially if we have some helpers. We particularly need people to help undecorate and disassemble the sanctuary tree. Thanks in advance.

## New Phase in our Pastoral Search Efforts – Designated Term Pastor

Our congregation is entering a new phase in our pastoral search efforts. We are seeking a Designated Term pastor to work with us. This is what other congregations like Southampton have done recently. A Designated Term pastor is called by a congregation to achieve a specific set of goals that are agreed upon up front. It is anticipated that at the end of that designated term period, with the agreed upon work accomplished, we would then be seeking our next settled pastor. In the meantime, we've been enjoying the guest preaching of several wonderful area ministers. We're fortunate to have them lead us on Sundays. Each of them brings their own unique set of talents to our worship. This variety of fresh perspectives and experiences can be helpful to us as we look forward to deciding our next minister. We hope that you will join us at worship and see for yourself. ~ Kevin O'Keefe, *Worship and Spirituality Committee*

## Nominating Committee

With Annual Meeting coming up, the Nominating Committee has been hard at work filling all the many roles needed to make the church run smoothly. How might you serve the church in the coming year. There are many opportunities where you can participate and share your thoughts and ideas in the life and workings of the church. If you are interested in sharing your talents with the congregation, you don't need to wait to be asked, you may contact any member of the committee: Lynn Cooper, Dolores Thornhill, or Bill Tracy.



## Church Annual Meeting

All church members and friends are encouraged to participate in the Church Annual Meeting following worship on *Sunday, January 26*. Please join us for morning worship at 10:00am, then we will gather in the dining room for a Potluck Brunch. There will be a sign-up sheet at coffee hour for several weeks prior to the annual meeting, but please feel free to bring whatever you wish to share if you are

able. After we eat, we will begin the meeting at approximately 12:00noon. Your voice and opinions are important to the discussion and decisions for the church budgeting and programming for 2024. We hope to see you there!

## Church Annual Reports Due

Attention committee chairs/secretaries, please submit your annual reports no later than *Sunday, January 5, 2025* via email to [westhamptonchurchucc@comcast.net](mailto:westhamptonchurchucc@comcast.net). (This is earlier than usual because Julie has 40th anniversary vacation plans in January to work around.) The Annual Report will be finalized and ready for distribution on January 19, one week prior to Annual Meeting to give everyone ample time to read and review and come prepared for discussion at the meeting. Print copies of the Annual Report will be available at the church, and will also be sent electronically to the church email list and posted to the website.



### Regular Church Meetings

Sun.	10:00am	Morning Worship in person and online: Zoom mtg ID 321 069 9076; Zoom passcode 248423
Mon.	7:00pm	WaS (1 <sup>st</sup> )
	7:00pm	Property (3 <sup>rd</sup> )
	7:00pm	Council (4th)
Wed.	5-6pm	Food Pantry
	6:00pm	WOW (3 <sup>rd</sup> )
Thurs.	6:00pm	Transition Team (1 <sup>st</sup> /3 <sup>rd</sup> )
	7:00pm	Choir
Fri.	11am-12pm	Food Pantry
	7:00pm	AA
Sat.	9-10am	Food Pantry

### Women's Fellowship Director

January Jean Webster

#### Greeters

January ↑ Dolores and Mark Thornhill  
↓ Wendy Blow

#### Coffee Hour

January 5 - Sue Tracy Small and Richie Small  
January 12 - Rhonda and Jeff Brooks  
January 19 - Lynn Willard  
January 26 - Lorraine and Kevin O'Keefe  
(Annual Meeting)

#### Flowers

January 5 - Poinsettias  
January 12 - Kate and Jason Johnson  
January 19 - Lynn and Bill Willard  
January 26 - Patty and Bob Green, Bonnie Paton

### Church Office Contact Info

Phone - 413-527-4204

Email - westhamptonchurchucc@comcast.net

Website - [www.westhamptonchurchucc.org](http://www.westhamptonchurchucc.org)

Facebook - Westhampton Congregational  
United Church of Christ

For pastoral care and emergencies  
please contact the church office.

### Regular Town Meetings/Office Hours

Mon.	9:00 - 3:00pm	Administrative Asst - Town Hall
	7:00pm	SelectBoard (bi-weekly) - Town Hall
Tues.	8am - 3:00pm	Board of Health – Annex
	9am - 3:00pm	Administrative Asst - Town Hall
	by appt only	Building Inspector – Annex
	4:30 - 8:30pm	Board of Assessors - Annex
	6:00pm	Fire Dept. (1 <sup>st</sup> , 3 <sup>rd</sup> ) – PSC
	6:00pm	Friends of the Library(1 <sup>st</sup> ) - Library
	6:00pm	Library Trustees (2 <sup>nd</sup> ) - Library
	6:30pm	Planning Board (2 <sup>nd</sup> ) – Annex
	7:00pm	Zoning Bd of Appeals (2 <sup>nd</sup> ) – Annex
	7:00pm	Historical Commission (3 <sup>rd</sup> ) – Judd Rm
Wed.	8am - 4:00pm	Town Clerk - Town Hall
	8am - 3:00pm	Board of Health – Annex
	9am - 3:00pm	Administrative Asst - Town Hall
	6pm - 8:00pm	Transfer Station hours
	7:00pm	Conservation (1 <sup>st</sup> , 3 <sup>rd</sup> ) – Town Hall
Thurs.	9am - 3:00pm	Administrative Asst - Town Hall
	10am - 12pm	Board of Assessors – Annex
	8am - 3:00pm	Board of Health – Annex
Fri.	7:00pm	AA (weekly) – Church dining room
Sat.	9am - 3:00pm	Transfer Station hours
	By appt only	Tax Collector

Town of Westhampton Website: [www.WesthamptonMA.gov](http://www.WesthamptonMA.gov)

### Thank You! Thank You!! Thank You!!!

The Westhampton Congregational UCC Women's Fellowship extends a heartfelt "thank you" to everyone who helped in any way to make our 2024 Holiday House Fair a very successful fundraiser! Kudos to a great team of workers and donors who made it possible for us to continue supporting the needs of our and surrounding communities. We were able to spread added joy to the holiday season by sending donations to nine (9) charities. Thank you again, and we wish you good health and peace in 2025! Happy New Year!

### Church's Snow Cancellation Policy

Occasionally during the winter months it becomes necessary for us to cancel Sunday morning worship for safety reasons. In the event of a cancellation, the announcement will be added to NBC Channel 22's list of cancellations that stream along the bottom of the television screen continually throughout the morning.

### Westhampton Congregational United Church of Christ Mission Statement

With God as our witness, we of the Westhampton Congregational United Church of Christ, commit to our Savior Jesus Christ as our model and guide. While cherishing our heritage, we look to the future, accepting ourselves and each other as individuals uniquely created in God's image. We covenant together to grow in our understanding of God's will. We nurture each other in faith so we may be empowered to serve in our community and the world.

We are called to love our brothers and sisters as God loves us, freely and without reservation. Our unconditional love is inclusive of all God's people. We denounce acts of discrimination and violence against any person. As an open and affirming church, we joyfully welcome all people into our community of faith, regardless of age, gender, race, sexual orientation, ethnic background, socioeconomic status or physical/mental abilities. Each person is invited and encouraged to participate in all aspects of our church life and ministry.



## At the Westhampton Library

Hours: Mon/Thurs 2-8pm; Tues/Wed 9am-12pm & 1-5pm; Sat 10am-1pm.

Library closed January 1 and January 20

Please check the town website or Facebook or Instagram @WesthamptonPublicLibrary for library updates.

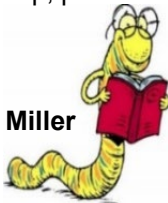
The library is open for in-person browsing and materials pickup as well as curbside pickup.

To place a request for curbside pick-up, please email [westhampton@cwmares.org](mailto:westhampton@cwmares.org) or call 413-527-5386.

### Recurring Programs . . .

(Holidays may impact schedule)

- **COA Computer Class is back with Bob Miller**  
2<sup>nd</sup> / 4<sup>th</sup> Mondays @ 10am-12pm
- **Knitting Group Mondays @ 6pm**
- **\*Yoga Mondays @ 6pm** - \*Yoga is now drop-in, first-come/first-served, and registration is not required. Please check Facebook and the town calendar for updates on yoga at the library.
- **Scrabble Group Tuesdays @ 2pm**
- **Book Group 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesdays @ 7pm BUT...** We will be meeting on January 7<sup>th</sup> at 7pm to accommodate the holidays – see separate article for book details.)
- **Walk-in Wellness Clinics: W'ton's Public Health Nurse 1st/3rd Weds @ 10-11:30am**
- **Coffee & Chat – Wednesdays @ 10am-12pm**



### Book Group - "Remarkably Bright Creatures"

Tuesday, January 7th from 7 - 8pm

This month's book group title is "Remarkably Bright Creatures" the best-selling debut novel by Shelvy Van Pelt. It's a lovely story about grief and unlikely friendship that is partially narrated by a Giant Pacific octopus named Marcellus! Pick up a copy at the library.

### Adventures in Generative Artificial Intelligence (A.I.)

Thursday, January 9th from 6 - 7:30pm

Are you curious or concerned about A.I. (artificial intelligence)? You'll learn about the definition of artificial intelligence, how it works, its implications for society and ethics, and engage in hands-on exploration. This program will be presented by R. Jordan Crouser, Pablo Frank Bolton, & Nicholas R. Howe from the Department of Computer Science at Smith College.

### Death Café

Thursday, January 23rd from 6pm - 7:30pm

A Death Café is an informal opportunity to talk about death. With cake! We often keep talk about death at arm's length, and it has become almost taboo in our culture. But it's a part of life that we all face, through loved ones, pets, and ultimately as part of our own journey. There is no pre-set agenda, and no presentation when using the Death Café model. It's simply a time to come together in a comfortable space, share refreshments, and talk about death, with the topics arising from the group gathered. You are welcome to come talk, or just be present. While it is not a question-and-answer session, there will be some takeaway information and follow up available. Recommended for adults of all ages.

Facilitator - Chris LaFond is a certified Death Midwife who loves talking about death and getting others to talk about it, too. He is available for consultations about advance planning, spiritual counseling, home services, clergy services, and more.

### For Kids and Teens...

- **CFCE Playgroup – Tuesdays @ 10am**
- **Storytime - Wednesdays @ 10:30am**
- **After School Fun Thursdays @ 3:30pm** – Fun activities every Thursday this month after school!
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Thursdays – LEGO Club
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursdays – Craft Club
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursdays – Nintendo Switch Happy Hour
  - 4<sup>th</sup> Thursdays – Comics Club
  - 5<sup>th</sup> Thursdays – Board Games
- **Teen Craft Night – 3rd Thursdays at 6pm – Jan 16**  
Materials are limited to 8 participants and registration is required. Please register by emailing Emily at [ewayne@cwmares.org](mailto:ewayne@cwmares.org). Special thanks to the Friends of Westhampton Library and the Lyn Keating Program Fund for sponsoring all teen crafts.

### Westhampton Library Friends

The Friends Board is looking for new members. The Board works with library staff in support of the library's mission. Have you or a family member enjoyed a program, class, or workshop hosted by our library, attended a Field Of Dreams Concert, participated in Kids and Teens Programming, or borrowed items from our Trybrary? These are examples of things that may be discussed at meetings. We meet in person on the 1st Tuesday of each month at 6:00pm and keep in contact via email. To find out more information, contact Anita Goddard at 527-0349. Please leave a message.

### December/January - Art Always Studio

Artists from the Art Always Studio in Florence will be exhibiting their work for the months of December, 2024 and January, 2025 at the Westhampton Library. The artists, from two different classes, have been painting together with their instructor Lindsay Fogg-Willets and will exhibit paintings done in class of various subjects and mediums.

### Good Works Group

The Good Works Group is going strong and spreading good cheer. I hope you were able to see the wonderful painted banner of thanks hanging on the Public Safety Complex on Stage Road...it looked great! I know that the First Responders appreciated it. In December, the Good Works group brought pine cone bird feeders and goodie bags to the residents at Westhampton Woods. It was a joy-filled field trip. Thank you to all the wonderful children in this group! ~ Sarah Madden

### WES PTO

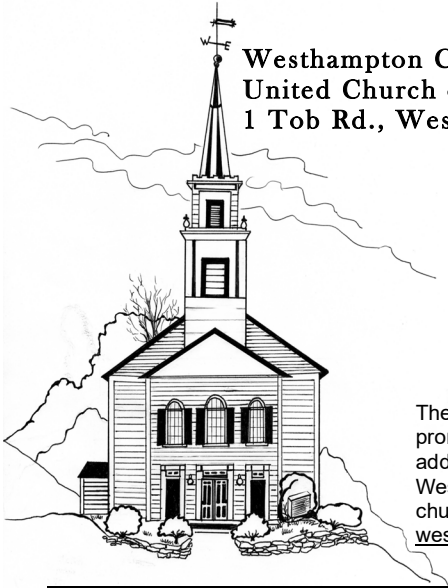
Happy New Year from the WES PTO!! We are starting off the year planning for new fundraisers, more movie nights and another family fun night with the Springfield Thunderbirds. More information will be coming soon for all of these events. Our next PTO meeting is on Monday January 6th @7pm. If you're interested in participating or have any questions for the PTO you may email us at [wes.pto.news@gmail.com](mailto:wes.pto.news@gmail.com).

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 Published by the Westhampton Congregational UCC  
 JANUARY 2025 Vol. 53 No. 11

Westhampton Congregational  
 United Church of Christ  
 1 Tob Rd., Westhampton MA 01027

NON-PROFIT  
 ORGANIZATION  
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 EASTHAMPTON, MA  
 PERMIT No. 6



The Bell Tower is a church and community newsletter whose intent is to inform and inspire. The Bell Tower shall promote the identity, programs and events of the Westhampton Congregational United Church of Christ. As an added service, the Bell Tower shall also provide information on community news and events to the residents of Westhampton. We invite you to join us for Sunday Morning Worship at 10:00am. Submissions to the Bell Tower for church and community articles and announcement may be sent to Julie Holt at the church email address [westhamptonchurchucc@comcast.net](mailto:westhamptonchurchucc@comcast.net) no later than the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month prior to the upcoming Bell Tower issue.

## Council on Aging

**January Potluck Lunch – Thursday, January 9th at Noon**

### **Westhampton Cemetery: Everything You Always Wanted to Know (But Did Not Know Who To Ask!)**

John Shaw, Chair of the Westhampton Cemetery Commission, will join us at the January Potluck Lunch and update us on the history of the Cemetery and provide useful facts about the policies and procedures. Among the topics John will cover are: • How many cemeteries has Westhampton had? • Are they still in service and if not, what occurred? • What is the oldest stone? • Who were the first married couple to be interred? • Is Rev. Enoch Hale really interred in Westhampton? • Is there a Potters' Field area? • Do we have veterans from the Revolutionary/Civil War, World War I and II, Vietnam?

We will also get an update on what the Cemetery Commission activities are: • All three sections that are presently open • What is the Commission doing to update records and grounds? • What are the rules and regulations, fee structure, signage, and gravesite upkeep?

And, hear what the future holds: • New section • How things have changed pertaining to the internment site. • Will there be less monuments and more flat markers? • Will we be able to continue to give free plots to residents?

John will also bring maps of the old sections along with an engineering proposal for the new sections and the oldest books in our library on Westhampton cemeteries. Join the COA for a delicious lunch and learn about our Cemetery.

## Stewardship Campaign Wrapping Up

We are working hard to wrap up our Stewardship Campaign as we prepare the budget for the upcoming Annual Meeting. If you haven't sent in your pledge card yet, please do so as soon as you can so we can make informed programming decisions for the coming year as we continue our good work together as a church family. Thank YOU! commitment to the church! ~ *Your Stewardship Committee: Kelly Challet, Lynn Cooper, Larry Didier, Sue Tracy Small*

## Outreach Programs

**Food Pantry** - The Food Pantry is open to all to supplement your needs. Stop by to pick up items you need, and stop by to donate items as well. The Food Pantry is located in the basement of the Westhampton Church, accessible from the door facing North Road. *Hours of operation are every Wednesday from 5 - 6pm, Friday from 11am - 12noon, and Saturday from 9 - 10am.* Volunteers are always welcome to help with various tasks of opening/closing and staffing the space. You can volunteer your help or get more info on the Food Pantry by visiting [www.westhamptonchurchcc.org](http://www.westhamptonchurchcc.org).

**Take & Eat** - The Take and Eat program is a non-denominational effort that serves elder and home-bound in need, by preparing and delivering weekend meals for up to 100 clients. Please visit [www.tinyurl.com/takeandeat](http://www.tinyurl.com/takeandeat) to sign up for the January 25 meal preparation and delivery.

	YTD Actual 12/14/24	YTD Budget 12/14/24
Pledged Local	93,015	89,923
Non-Pledged Local	12,823	9000
Other Local	24,389	28,202
<b>TOTAL LOCAL</b>	<b>130,227</b>	<b>127,125</b>
Mission Pledged	9,112	10,040
Special Offerings	2,521	3,836
<b>TOTAL MISSIONS</b>	<b>11,633</b>	<b>13,876</b>