



## MISSION OF BELLEVILLE CHURCH

Centered in the inclusive love of Jesus Christ, we seek to be a welcoming, affirming, and healing congregation. Led by the Holy Spirit, we are inspired to grow and be renewed through our worship, fellowship, Scripture study and the sharing of our gifts. Strengthened by God's love and guidance, we strive to serve with compassion those in need, both near and far.

Ponderings	1
Calendar	2
The Littlest Angel	3
Service Club & Thrift Shop Pettengill House	4
Birthdays	5
Advent Candle Lighting Scripture Readers	6
Ushers, Coffee hour	7
Contacts	8

Dear Friends,

This year, on the second weekend of Advent, I get to play the part of Democritus, a Greek Philosopher in the play *The Littlest Angel*. In this role, I insist that Heaven is just a dream, and I try to negate heaven with rational, logical arguments. It's a rather fun part to play! Acting is often about playing a part very different from oneself, but I think if we are honest, most of us have plenty of questions about heaven and angels.... they fall into the category of the "mysteries" of our faith.

So Advent is here, and we hear once again the old, familiar story about shepherds, angels, wise men, and the birth of Jesus. And we sometimes ask why we are doing all the things we do.... why keep putting up greenery, even trees, why light candles on an Advent wreath, etc.? And I wonder which traditions have anything to do with Jesus birth and which ones are simply going along with our commercial culture?

It is easy to see that all the shopping, starting Thanksgiving eve now(!), is a sacrilegious twisting of the meaning of Christmas, of Jesus' humble birth in a stable. The glitter that bombards us from Thanksgiving onward betrays the gentle awakening, the dawning of light that comes into the world. To reclaim Christmas from commercialism is an Herculean feat..... or maybe just an attention to deeper religious meanings of this season's images.

Take angels, for example. We know the word comes from the Greek word "messenger." So some sort of divine message is the heart of the matter, whether we physically see any angels or not, whether they have wings or not. Ask people about angels, and at the very least, we point to a beloved child..... yes, she's my "little angel!"

And what makes them angels? Exuberance, honesty, hope, love, joy..... all qualities that we call "divine." Anytime we get a clear message about what is good, true, beautiful, etc, we have received a "message," which is to say and angelic visitation!

We love the messages of many famous stories at Christmas time..... the Grinch whose heart grew many sizes, Scrooge who also found a heart, Charlie Brown and his special tree, Miracle of 34th Street (a miracle of Love), and the latest Disney movie "Frozen" deals with thawing frozen hearts, also with Love, of course!

We are all have a bit of Doubting Thomas (or Democritus) in us. We put stock in the physical things we can see, touch, taste, hear, and smell..... and rightfully so, since we do live as physical beings on Earth. But things of the Spirit always go deeper; they deal with cherished memories and hopes for the future, honesty and peace and love in the present, even moments of Joy! Let's enjoy ALL the wonderful stories of Christmas..... no need to fret about which ones are literal or scientifically verifiable.

Stories are full of symbols that point to the deeper realities of the divine, the spiritual world, and our inner being. By spending some time with all the wonderful Advent and Christmas stories, we will be led more and more into the experiences of Hope, Peace, Love and Joy! May it be so for us all, in Christ's spirit,  
Pastor Ross

# 2013 CALENDAR



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<b>1</b> 10am Worship 	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b> 7pm The Littlest Angel	<b>7</b> 9am Thrift Shop 9am 3MB Fencing 2 pm & 7pm The Littlest Angel
<b>8</b> 10am Worship 2pm The Littlest Angel 	<b>9</b> 9am Roots Mtg 7pm CODA	<b>10</b> 1:30 Service Club	<b>11</b> 9am Thrift Shop 6:30pm Worship & Education 7pm Stewardship & Finance	<b>12</b> 7:30pm Choir practice	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b> 9am Thrift Shop
<b>15</b> 10am Worship 	<b>16</b> 9am Roots Mtg 7pm CODA	<b>17</b> 7:30pm Executive Board	<b>18</b> 9am Thrift Shop 6:30pm Worship & Education 7:30pm Stewardship & Finance	<b>19</b> 7:30pm Choir practice	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b> 9am Thrift Shop 9am 3MB Fencing
<b>22</b> 10am Worship 	<b>23</b> 9am Roots Mtg 7pm CODA	<b>24</b> 7pm Christmas Eve Candlelight Service	<b>25</b> 	<b>26</b> 7:30pm Choir practice	<b>27</b> News & Views deadline	<b>28</b> 9am Thrift Shop 9am 3 MB Fencing
<b>29</b> 10a m Worship	<b>30</b> 9am Roots Mtg 7pm CODA	<b>31</b> 				



### *The Littlest Angel*

**The Belleville Church, 300 High St., Newburyport**

**Dates: December 6, 7, 8.**

**Friday & Saturday Nights @ 7:00pm**

**Saturday & Sunday Matinees @ 2:00 pm**

**Anna Smulowitz presents a classic family favorite, *The Littlest Angel*, by Charles Tazewell. Years ago, this charming Christmas musical delighted audiences in the region and is now being brought back by popular demand. The original music & lyrics by Michael Yell & Bill Plante Jr. is a cross between rock & roll, blues & ballad. Some local actors fill the cast. Woody Woodiel and Jeff Larson play St Peter. Madeline Sherwood as Mother, Steven Berger as Father, Emily Fluett as Patience, James Nation as Virgil and Rev. Ross Varney as Democritus. The double cast includes Joey Cates and Jesse Rosenthal as the Littlest Angel.**

*The Littlest Angel* tells the story of a precocious young child who suddenly arrives in Heaven and must make the difficult transition from “child” to “angel”. With the help of a delightful and quirky troop of characters, the Littlest Angel not only discovers a place in Heaven, but also realizes that the greatest gift an angel could bring is the one they had left behind. With its light-hearted sense of humor and soulful music, *The Littlest Angel* is a moving story sure to charm audiences of all ages.

*The Littlest Angel* is Directed by Anna Smulowitz and Choreographed by Linda Zirin and Deirdre Budzyna. Original Music is by Michael Yell & Bill Plante Jr. The play is adapted by Anna Smulowitz and Laila Streiff.

**Tickets are \$12/\$15. Tickets are available at the door. For more information, call 978-502-8468. On-line tickets at <http://ww1.mktix.com/page.php?wpage=events/eventdetail.htm&Parent=SP-E35359>**

Anna Smulowitz has been producing and directing original theatrical works as well as popular musicals in the Merrimac Valley for 35 years. She founded Newburyport Children’s Theatre which is now known as Theatre in the Open. Her community theatre in Newburyport has produced television, film and Broadway actors and has enriched the artistic life of the region.

**Part of the proceeds from the gate will go to the Belleville Church to benefit their programs and charitable work.**

## SERVICE CLUB

Our next Service Club meeting will be on Tuesday, December 10th at 1:30 in the Bannister Room. We will be having our annual Christmas party featuring goodies, a Yankee swap (around \$10), and singing carols with Ross. We would love to see some new faces. Hope to see you there.

## THRIFT SHOP



**The thrift shop is open every Wednesday and Saturday 9am – noon.  
Come by and see what's new.**

### **The Pettengill House**

**The Pettengill House, located in Salisbury, will be the recipient of the December 15th Extra Mile.**

**The Pettengill House, as an award winning, community based social service lead agency has extensive experience in providing interventions and support services to at-risk adults, children and families.**

**Throughout the past year Pettengill House provided numerous basic needs, programs, support services and interventions to 3,454 individuals, children and families residing in the Greater Newburyport Community.**

**Please support the Pettengill House. Thank you**



*December*

- 2 Stephen Middler*
- 6 Cathy Morrow*
- 10 Jennifer Allard*
- 10 Tyler Jay*
- 20 Jean Kirkpatrick*
- 21 Michael Allard*
- 22 Scott Smith*
- 24 Jenny DeLong*
- 25 Norm Hansen*

*January*

- 1 Robert Locke*
- 5 Kip Tyler*
- 10 Caden Allard*
- 12 James Guyette*
- 15 Jennifer Locke*
- 23 Robert Crofts*



### Advent Candle lighting

The Christmas season is upon us! The Worship and Education Board is looking for Advent readers for Hope, Peace, Joy and Love and the Christmas Eve lighting. If you would like to volunteer this year please let us know. The first Sunday of Advent is December 1st.

Board of Worship and Education



### December Readers

- |           |                        |
|-----------|------------------------|
| <b>1</b>  | <b>Emery Rice</b>      |
| <b>8</b>  | <b>Bill Silsby</b>     |
| <b>15</b> | <b>Lynn Varney</b>     |
| <b>22</b> | <b>Hunter Anderson</b> |
| <b>29</b> | <b>Cathy Morrow</b>    |

**If you cannot read on the date that you have been assigned, just call the next person on the list or send out an email and trade.**



**December**

- 1 Norma Dean & Audrey Clarkson
- 8 Gail Gandolfi & Anna Guyette
- 15 Rita Vreeland & Hans Erwich
- 22 Jean Kirkpatrick & Judy Smith
- 24 Jon Pearson, Gail Gandolfi, Kathy Raywood  
& Norma Dean
- 29 Sue & Ben Heersink

**January 2014**

- 5 Peggy Utterback & Mardee Beauparlant
- 12 Carolyn Kyle & Shirley Locke
- 19 Jean Kirkpatrick & Bob Locke
- 26 Hunter Anderson & Keri Pennell

**COFFEE  
FELLOWSHIP**

Join us!



**December**

- 1 Peggy Utterback, Marge Killam & Mardee Beauparlant
- 8 Nancy Canali, Norma Dean & Diane Crofts
- 15 At the Parsonage: Lynn Varney, Jean Hansen & Janet Woodman
- 22 Audrey Clarkson, Lori Wiswell & Debra Moore
- 29 No coffee hour

**January 2014**

- 5 Sue Heersink, Dorothy Williamson & Carolyn Kyle
- 12 Sue Wolfendale, Gail Gandolfi & Jane Thomas
- 19 Shirley Locke, Karen Conway & Marcia Samuelson
- 26 Mary Lou Tyler, Diane Crofts & Jennifer Allard



*Belleville Congregational Church*  
*United Church of Christ*  
300 High Street  
Newburyport, MA 01950  
978-465-7734  
[bcchurch@worldpath.net](mailto:bcchurch@worldpath.net)  
[bellevillechurch.org](http://bellevillechurch.org)

#### Church Staff & Contact Information

Pastor Ross Varney 978-462-4899  
Office hours: Tuesday 11 AM - Noon;  
Wednesday & Thursday 10:30 AM - Noon;  
or by appointment, suggested Wed/Thur.  
evenings  
Please call to assure the pastor is available.

Church Office 978-465-7734  
Valerie Gates, Office Administrator  
Office hours: Tuesday, Thursday and  
Friday; 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Church Email: [bcchurch@worldpath.net](mailto:bcchurch@worldpath.net)  
Website: [www.bellevillechurch.org](http://www.bellevillechurch.org)

David Morrow, Organist/Choir Director  
Bob Locke, Sexton

#### Newsletter Submissions

Do you have an article that you would like to include in  
the monthly newsletter?  
If so, please submit your article to the church office by the  
20<sup>th</sup> of each month.  
Thank you!

#### Church Officers

Moderator: William Silsby  
Clerk: Rita Vreeland  
Treasurer: Mary Lou Tyler  
Memorial Fund Treasurer: Kelly  
Burke-Anderson  
Auditor: Kathy Raywood  
Members-at-Large (Ex. Board)

#### Contact Persons

Board of Fellowship & Outreach:  
Diane Crofts  
Board of Worship & Education:  
Kelly Burke-Anderson  
Board of Stewardship & Finance:  
Hans Erwich, Jim Samuelson  
UCC Delegate: Emery Rice

#### Sunday School Coordinator

Pam Ellis

#### Flower Coordinator

Shirley Locke

#### Hospitality Coordinator

Audrey Clarkson