



NEWSLETTER

THE ORTHODOX CHRONICLES

January

4th - Epiphany - Matthew 2:1-15 & Exodus 1:8-2:10

11th - The Baptism of Jesus - Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

18th - Second Sunday After Epiphany - 1 Corinthians 12:1-11

25th - Third Sunday After Epiphany - 1 Corinthians 12:12-31a

Church Calendar

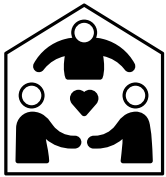


- Choir Practice, Wednesdays 7 pm
- 1/18 - New Members Informational Meeting in the Parlor 11:30 am
- 1/26 - Medical/End of Life Directives with Peter Ham 12:00 pm in Vestry



ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Congratulations to Earl Mason
on 70 years as a Mason**



Informational Membership Meeting

Sunday, January 18th the Parlor @ 11:30 am.

Come learn and ask questions about church membership.

Winter Weather Reminder

To ensure our congregation's safety during inclement weather, if necessary, services will take place on Zoom. During the winter months of January - March, in-person services will be canceled if a winter storm with a forecast of 4 inches of snow or more is projected. Decisions will be made by the church leadership including the Council, Deacons, Trustees, and Pastor. An email will be sent out to the congregation before 2 pm on the Saturday before service. Weather cancellation notices will also be posted on all social media platforms.



Join Zoom Meeting <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7757368812>
Meeting ID: 775 736 8812





DISCIPLESHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Winter/Spring Intentional Discussions

Join us as we journey through the powerful stories in 2 Samuel, a book filled with courage, calling, and God's hand at work in the lives of unlikely people.



Advanced Directives Workshop

Sunday February 1st following Coffee Hour

More information to follow.

Pastor Marissa Rapoza



***"Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing!
Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?" – Isaiah 43:18-19***

As the calendar turns to 2026, we stand at the threshold of a new year, an opportunity for new beginnings, new dreams, and fresh possibilities. Winter, with its cold and stillness, often invites us to slow down, reflect, and reconnect with what matters most. It's a time when the ground seems to rest under a blanket of snow, waiting for spring's renewal. Yet, in this quiet, there is also the invitation to imagine.

Scripture teaches us that God is ever-present in the world and in our lives, creating, renewing, and working in ways we may not always see. Isaiah reminds us that God is always doing a "new thing." This new thing may not always be immediate or visible yet we know, God is at work in the seasons of life.

Winter's quiet can be a time to listen to the stillness and allow our imaginations to be stirred. Dreaming is not just a pastime; it is an act of faith. It is trusting that God has placed within us the ability to envision a world that can be healed, restored, and made whole. When our world seems frozen, we are called to hold space for hope, for imagination, and for new beginnings. This new year invites us to ask: What is God calling us to dream in this moment? What new things does God want to bring forth through our lives?

As we step into 2026, let us not be bound by the limitations of the past, but instead allow our imaginations to be shaped by the love of God. Let us dream not only of personal renewal but of collective transformation. The work of imagination is not just for artists, poets, or dreamers; it is for everyone. It is a holy act, one that joins us with God's creative work in the world.

Winter's coldness can make us feel isolated, but let it also remind us that God is with us in every season, shaping our hearts, guiding our dreams, and empowering our imaginations to see beyond the visible. The new year is a gift, full of promise and potential. Let us open our hearts to the new things God is doing and trust that, with God's help, our imaginations can lead us to places of hope, peace, and justice.



Emma Ceurvels, Music Director

Happy New Year!

As I reflect on this past year at the OCC, there is SO much to be thankful for! I am deeply grateful for the choir and guest musicians who were willing to step in, stretch themselves, and try new things this past year. As always, their flexibility and commitment to trying new things makes such a difference and makes making music with them so much fun! Thank you for sharing your gifts so generously.

As we reflect on 2025 and look forward to a new year, I thought I'd share this blessing from one of my favorite authors, Kate Bowler. With love, Emma

Becoming in the New Year by Kate Bowler

I carry around this incompleteness,
this drive for fulfillment that always seems *just out of reach*.

If only I could get it together and find my true calling,
my real passion, or the right plan.

If only I stuck to my resolutions.

I've worked so hard *and for what?* What am I missing?

Blessed are we who strive earnestly
to change ourselves and the world around us,
but feel the drag and pull of what won't budge,
the weight of all our limited and frail humanity.

We carry it with us.

Blessed are we, the hungry,
in lives that are both too much and *not enough*.

May this new year be one of becoming.
Becoming *brave*. Becoming *true*. Becoming *love*.

Blessed are we who see life *as it really is*
painful, gorgeous, stingy, and wonderful.

May we expand. May we contract.

Cheers to doing the next best thing.

Changing parts of ourselves not for others *but to become who we really are*.

Blessed are we who put one foot in front of the other *even though we're scared*.

May we always keep our eye on love.

Sunday School/Children's Ministry

Sunday School Schedule



January 4th: Communion / Intergenerational Sunday — No Sunday School
January 11th: Sunday School
January 18th: Sunday School
January 25th: Sunday School



Meghan Rego, Children's Ministry

Hello Families,

January, Sunday School will learn about the Holy Spirit and how God brings us together as one church family. Through stories from Luke and 1 Corinthians, we'll discover that God loves each of us, gives us different gifts, and calls us to care for and help one another.

We are in need of Sunday School volunteers for these dates. If you are available to help, please let Meghan know. As a reminder we do need to background checked adult volunteers for Sunday School classes to run. We ask that families who have children attending please contact Meghan to fill out the background check paperwork and consider volunteering. Volunteers don't need to plan any classes (unless they would like to) and just need to join us for the Sunday School class and assist the kids with the activities.

Volunteers can sign up to assist with Sunday School on the Sunday Extras tab of the Worship Assistant sign up sheet.

Meghan Rego

Church Council and Ministry Leaders

Council

Moderator - Peter Ham
Treasurer - Kim Greenberg
Clerk - Rick Haines

Deacons

Chair - Eric Greenberg
Nate Adkins
Kerrie Schlager
Deb Svenson
Dick Kelsay

Parish Relations Team

Co-Chair - John Partridge
Co-Chair - Peter Ham
Laurie Geminiani
Krista Young
Will Reynolds
Kerrie Schlager

Ministry Leaders

Christian Ed. - Meghan Rego
Hospitality - Annie Schwehm
Prayer Team - Mary Hourigan
Missions - Dick Kelsay and Kathy Haursh

Trustees

Nicole Reynolds
Carol Ham
Dick Kelsay

Staff

Office Administrator - Emma Ceurvels
office@occmansfield.org
Sexton - Ed O'Connell

Electronic Ways to Give
QR Code (paypal)
E-Giving (forms in office)



The Congregational Church of Mansfield
An Open and Affirming United Church of Christ Congregation

Leadership Communication

As we move through this new program year, we are aiming to provide streamlined communication for the congregation to our leadership team. Please refer to the following contact information if you need to contact a member of our leadership team.

Leadership Preferred Method of Communication Contact information Update

Pastor Marissa Rapoza – pastor.marissa@occmansfield.org or
508-207-7803 (cell)

Office Admin/Music Director, Emma Ceurvels – office@occmansfield.org
To schedule an event at the church, order flowers for the communion table, sign up for coffee hour, and anything music related, please contact Emma using the office email to ensure all information is in one place.

Council Officers

Church Moderator, Peter Ham – peterwham@comcast.net
Treasurer, Kim Greenberg – kim.greenberg12@gmail.com
Clerk, Rick Haines – jalama23@gmail.com

Ministry Leadership

Head Deacon, Eric Greenberg – greenberg.eric101@gmail.com
PRT Co-Leader, John Partridge – partridge_john@wheatoncollege.edu 508-243-0019 (cell)
Prayer Team, Mary Hourigan – Omahourigan@yahoo.com
Sunday School, Meghan Rego – meghanrego233@yahoo.com
Hospitality, Annie Schwehm – annieschwehm@gmail.com

Trustees

For all building related issues, please contact a trustee

Carol Sosman Ham – Sosham@comcast.net 774-266-6220 (cell)
Nicole Reynolds – 508-951-2036 (cell)
Dick Kelsay – dickkelsay@yahoo.com