

CHURCH & COMMUNITY NEWS

December 2015/January 2016



THE PASTOR'S CORNER

Has something gone wrong with the calendar? The last time I checked there were supposed to be 365 days separating one Christmas from the other, but it seems as though it was only yesterday that Diane and I were taking the tree down and packing up the decorations. How can the holidays be here so soon?

Well, like it or not, it's beginning to look and feel a lot like Christmas, and I **do** like it. And since we know that it's coming right on schedule, why don't we make it our goal to make this the best Christmas ever? Too often we find ourselves so caught up in the busyness of Christmas, that we don't take time to reflect on the wonderment of it all. I wonder what ever happened to the way that Christmas used to be? You know, sitting by the fire roasting marshmallows and chestnuts, singing Christmas carols, exchanging simple gifts and stories with family and friends. I wonder if we could ever get that back?

But of course sacrifice is what the true Christmas story is all about. It's not so much about giving as it is about sacrificing. (All sacrifice is giving, but not all giving is sacrifice) God sent His only Son from the glory of heaven to the pitfalls of earth knowing what would happen to him while He was there. Now that's sacrifice! Sacrifice means to give to another person something we could've kept for ourselves. It means to choose, to deny, to love, to give, and to find the deepest pleasure in another's joy. Because the heart of the Christmas message is sacrifice, we ought to look for ways this Christmas and the new year coming to give sacrificially. It means to look for ways to put others' needs, desires, and joy ahead of our own.

Henry Ward Beecher, a 19th century Protestant once said, "In this world, it is not what we take up but what we give that makes us rich." With that being said, there's lots of ways to become rich. There is no shortage of opportunities to sacrifice by sacrificing our time and our money by reaching out to those to whom Christmas might not be a joyous time of year; the homeless, the students who aren't able to travel home for the holidays, shut-ins, those in hospitals, nursing homes, prisons, an elderly neighbor who lives alone, or one who might be experiencing the first Christmas after the death of a spouse.

The challenge is to be willing to provide a gift as big as the need. Sometimes the need is bigger than what we can comfortably give in terms of our time or money. And that's where sacrifice comes in. Giving becomes sacrificial giving when we take something we might've normally channeled toward ourselves and dedicate it to increasing the joy of another. The way of sacrifice is the way of the one who said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts 20:35)

Merry Christmas to you all, and a happy New Year!

Pastor Earl

AT A GLANCE

DECEMBER

1	Angel Tree Up
4-6	North Country Chorus Concerts
6	FD Breakfast
6	Memory Tree
12	SideShow Dance
15	MCS Concert
21	Angel Tree Gifts Due
21	Winter Solstice Bonfire
22	Ornament Making
23	MCS, SJA Christmas Break Starts
31	First Night St. J

JANUARY

1	Bird Count
4	MCS Back to School
12	SJA Back to School
22, 23, 24	Madrigal Dinner: Return of the Admiral

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BE AN ANGEL!

The Angel Tree will be going up at the Monroe Town Offices on **Dec. 1st**. This tree is decorated with tags listing people in need. If you know of a Monroe family in need this Christmas, please call Barb Farr at 638-2612 or Ciindy Frazer at 638-2644 or 4446. Ideally, they would like the names and ages. All information is kept confidential. You can stop by Town Offices after the 1st to choose a tag. If you can't get there during business hours, you may call Cindy and she can "give" you a tag over the phone. Gifts should be delivered UNWRAPPED with the recipient's tag attached and brought to Town Offices by **December 21st**.

DONATE @ FILL THE BOOT BREAKFAST

The Monroe Fire Department is holding their annual "Fill the Boot" breakfast on **Sunday, December 6th**, from **7:30 am – 10 am** at Town Hall. This breakfast is by donation, and all proceeds go to help Monroe families in need. Thank you to the men and women of the Fire Department for all you do.



As of this writing, there are still tickets available to the December "Christmas" dance featuring the band SideShow. The Dance benefits the FAST Squad, and will be held at Monroe Town Hall on **Saturday, December 12th at 8 pm**. 21+ and only, BYOB. Tickets are \$10. You can get yours by calling or e-mailing Maynard Farr, 603-638-2612, or mfar30@roadrunner.com, or get them at Paul's Whistle Stop in McIndoes.



ANNUAL SOLSTICE BONFIRE

The Sherman's are again graciously hosting the Solstice Bonfire on **Monday, December 21st**, at **7 PM**. Find the fire at the corner of Winchester Drive and Hammond Road. Hot cocoa and hot cider are provided; you can bring other holiday treats to share.

Jessica Sherman will also be hosting ornament making at the Monroe Library the following day, **Tuesday, December 22nd**, from **3 to 6 PM**. Treats, too!

NORTH COUNTRY CHORUS NEWS

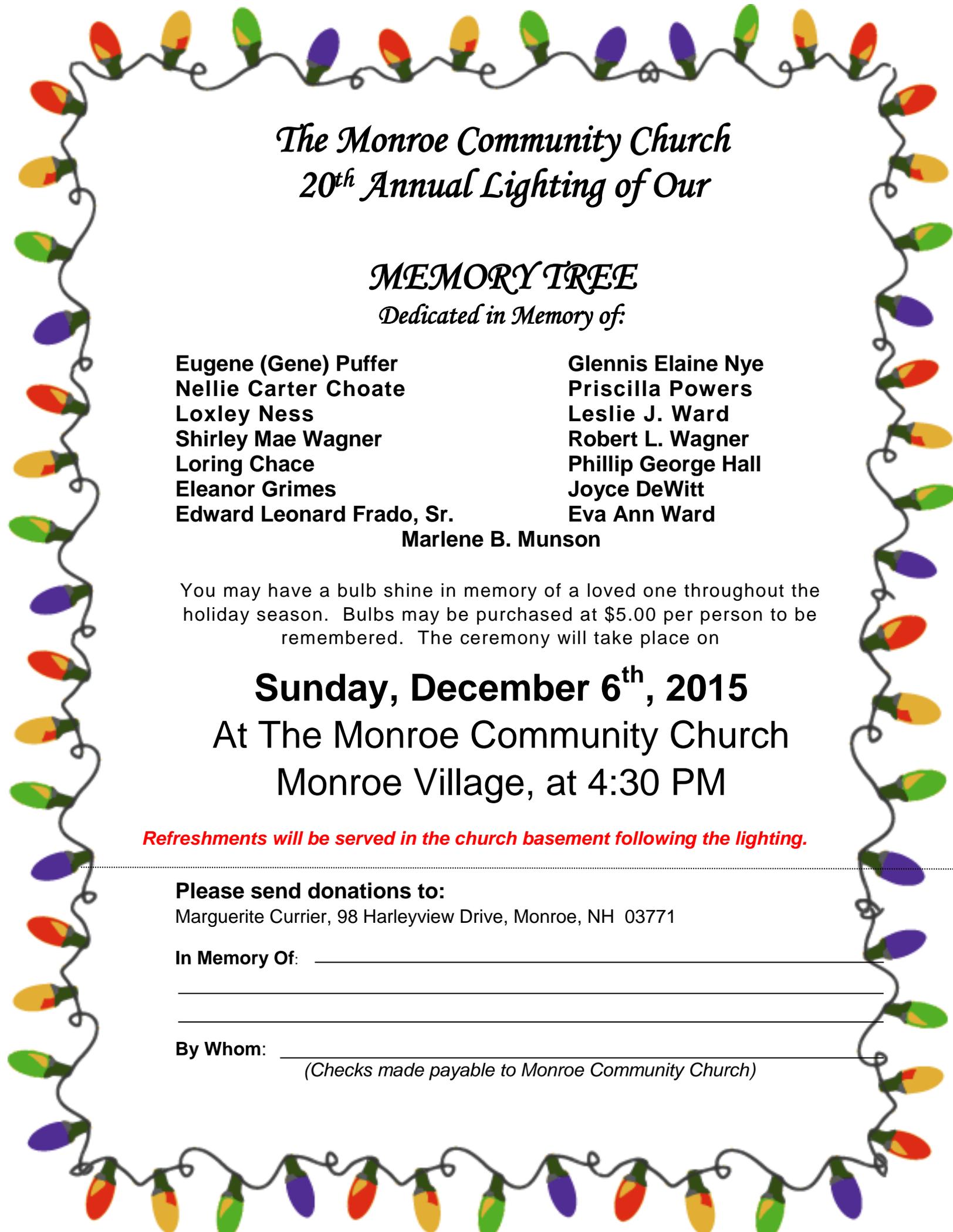
The North Country Chorus presents their annual **Christmas Concert** over 3 nights. This year they are featuring Bach's Magnificat as well as excerpts from Dylan Thomas' A Child's Christmas in Wales. Tickets are available from [Catamount Arts](#) and are \$10 adults, \$5 for students. Tickets at the door are \$12 and \$5. Performances are:

- Friday, December 4th, 7:30 PM, First Congregational Church, Littleton
- Saturday, December 5th, 7:30 PM, Wells River Congregational Church
- Sunday, December 6th, 3 PM, Peacham Congregational Church

Tickets for the **Madrigal Dinner** are also on sale. This year's production is titled "The Return of the Admiral", and runs over three nights at Town Hall:

- Friday, Jan. 22nd, 6:30 PM
- Saturday, Jan. 23rd, 6:30 PM
- Sunday, Jan. 24th, 4:30 PM

Tickets are available from [Catamount Arts](#) and are \$30 per person. Dinner is included and you are welcome to BYOB. Tables of 10 are available for the price of 8 for any date.



*The Monroe Community Church
20th Annual Lighting of Our*

MEMORY TREE

Dedicated in Memory of:

**Eugene (Gene) Puffer
Nellie Carter Choate
Loxley Ness
Shirley Mae Wagner
Loring Chace
Eleanor Grimes
Edward Leonard Frado, Sr.**

**Glennis Elaine Nye
Priscilla Powers
Leslie J. Ward
Robert L. Wagner
Phillip George Hall
Joyce DeWitt
Eva Ann Ward**

Marlene B. Munson

You may have a bulb shine in memory of a loved one throughout the holiday season. Bulbs may be purchased at \$5.00 per person to be remembered. The ceremony will take place on

**Sunday, December 6th, 2015
At The Monroe Community Church
Monroe Village, at 4:30 PM**

Refreshments will be served in the church basement following the lighting.

Please send donations to:

Marguerite Currier, 98 Harleyview Drive, Monroe, NH 03771

In Memory Of: _____

By Whom: _____

(Checks made payable to Monroe Community Church)



Northeast Kingdom Audubon Society

1302 Main Street

St. Johnsbury, Vermont 05819

www.nekaudubon.net

JOIN THE 116TH ANNUAL CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT!

Each year, on New Year's Day, Northeast Kingdom Audubon joins in an international citizen science effort, the **Christmas Bird Count**, that tracks winter bird populations here in the western hemisphere. With dynamic change in the global climate system and in regional habitats, local Christmas Bird Counts throughout the hemisphere have provided scientists with vital data for understanding trends in bird migrations and populations.

On **January 1, 2016**, we'll be counting every bird we see within our designated **Barnet Count Circle**. Parties of birders of all skill levels head for the hills, forests, fields, wetlands, and river valleys. Others carefully count the birds that visit their feeders on that day, and the most intrepid volunteers may be out in the dark hours before dawn or after sunset scouting for owls. Contributing to this science-based conservation initiative sponsored by the National Audubon Society is a great New Year's Resolution; it's fun and provides valuable information for current and future conservation science.

The Barnet Count Circle, centered on the north end of the Comerford Dam, includes **specific parts of St. Johnsbury, Danville, Peacham, Barnet, Waterford, Monroe, Lyman, and Littleton**. If you wish to join one of the field parties for all or part of the daylight hours, count the birds at your feeder, or get out for owling, **[contact Barnet CBC Coordinator Charlie Browne at ccbrowne63@gmail.com before December 21](mailto:ccbrowne63@gmail.com)**. He'll provide you with all the necessary details, hook you up with other birders, and provide the tools, rules, and tips necessary for observing, tracking your effort, and recording your observations.

Bohemian Waxwing – Photograph by Tom Berriman



JOIN IN THE WINTER FUN OF THE BARNET CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT! START THE NEW YEAR AS A CITIZEN SCIENCE VOLUNTEER!

DID YOU KNOW?

Edith Anne Emery has been a loyal participant in the Barnet Christmas Bird Count since this Count was established over 20 years ago. According to Charlie Browne, she is **THE QUEEN** of birding in Monroe and the upper Connecticut Valley, and she always finds and counts birds that no one else sees! Laura Tobin assisted Edie Anne with her route last year and learned of some of her favorite birding hot spots in Monroe. Thanks to Laura for suggesting we add this bird count info.



Thank you to everyone, including the Fire Department for setting up, April Brown and family for seeing us through a transition year, and the great kids of the Monroe School (and their parents) for lunch! And where would we be without all the crafters, bakers, customers, and donut makers? Between bake sales and table rentals, the FAST Squad raised almost \$1800. That money is used for supplies and training so that we can continue to serve you at no cost. Stay tuned for next year, when the show turns 30!



And another thank you from Boy Scout Troop 209. We collected almost 600 food and related items this year in Monroe, all of which went to the Food Pantry at the Woodsville Armory. More scouts collected on routes around Littleton, and at Shaw's and Wal-Mart. The final numbers? 38 Cub & Boy Scouts, 33 adult volunteers, and 4,400 food items!



PTF SAYS THANKS, TOO!

The Monroe School PTF also wanted to pass along their thanks for everyone's support. The Fall Soccer Tournament raised \$1,200 and the Silent Auction at the Craft Fair brought in \$1,800. They would also like to invite everyone to the Pot Luck Dinner at **5 PM** on **Tuesday, December 15th** at Town Hall, immediately preceding the school concert.

FIRST NIGHT[®] 2016

ST. JOHNSBURY, VT

Monroe's own Back Shed String Band will be performing at First Night again this year. You can find them at the Unitarian Universalist Church (say that five times fast!) at 5 PM, 7 PM, and 8 PM. Mary Choate says they always have a fun crowd and they hope to see lots of familiar Monroe faces there. You can see the full schedule for First Night on-line at firstnightstj.com. If you get your "button" before New Year's Eve, it's \$15 for adults, \$10 for students. Waiting until New Year's Eve means they cost \$20 for adults and \$13 for students. The buttons get you into any and all events, and they are available on-line or from lots of area shops, including the Barnet Village Store.

MARCHING BAND STILL WANTS YOU

The Summertime Marching Band warmly invites YOU to join them as they get ready for their 2nd season. All ages of players of marching band instruments are welcome. Mary Choate says it is so exciting for them to have young new players and seasoned players pick up their instrument again after an extended hiatus. They practice one Sunday a month at 6 PM at the Monroe Town Hall. You can call Mary at 638-4903 for more info.



MCS "WINTER PROGRAM" INVITATION

Principal Leah Holz invites everyone to the school's "Winter Program" on Tuesday, **December 15th** at Monroe Town Hall, **6:30 PM**. The PTF hosts a Pot Luck Dinner immediately before the concert, at 5 PM downstairs. Paper goods and drinks are provide

UPCOMING ELECTION INFO

Note: This info comes from the New Hampshire Secretary of State's Office, and we apologize if any of this is inaccurate. Please double check all dates with the Town Clerk!

- **January 19th, 7 PM – 7:30 PM**, Supervisors of the Checklist in session.
- **January 20th** – First day to file for any Town Office opening.
- **January 29th, 5 PM** – Last chance to file for any Town Office opening. Note that if you are filing on the last day, you must do so in person with the Town Clerk. Any registered voter in Monroe is eligible to run for office – and keep in mind, even if you do not run, your neighbors might write you in, anyway!
- **February 2nd** – Last day to petition for the addition of a warrant article. You need a minimum of 25 voters or 2% of the voting population, whichever is less.
- **March 8th** – Town Meeting. This year, it will be School first, Town second.

Did we miss something? Call Eileen at 638-3002 to get it in the next 'e-newsletter.' If you would like to receive this newsletter via e-mail (where links are live), please send a note to leen_brown@hotmail.com. First Night St. J artwork reproduced with permission from First Night St. Johnsbury. Audobon letter reproduced with permission from NEK Audubon Society.

NO, THIS ISN'T JUNK MAIL!

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