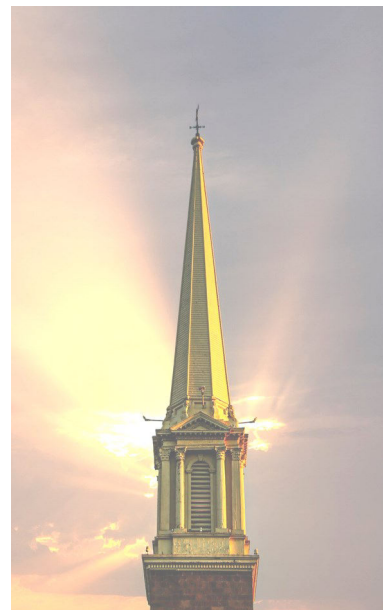


The lit candles in the Church Sanctuary and Steeple will shine perpetually as a beacon of God's strength. These lights reflect our prayers

First Congregational Church of East Haven
United Church of Christ
Old Stone Church
251 Main Street
East Haven, CT 06512



Old Stone Church

Church Office 203-467-2907 (fax ext. 111)

Office Hours: M-Th 9 am—3 pm

Pastor

Rev. Mark Pilletere, M. Div. Ext 102

Office Manager

Heidi Manley Ext 101

Minister of Music

Jonathan S. Budd, Ph.D.

Early Learning Center 203-467-0661

Jennifer Calonico, Director / Kim Oca, Assistant Director

ELC Hours: M-F 7:30 am—5:15 pm Office hours 8:30 am—1:30 pm

Old Stone Village 203-390-5977

OSCV Hours: 6:30am—6:30 pm

Nicole Ferrigno, Director / Kristen Sartor, Assistant Director

Thrift Shop 203-467-2907 Ext 107

Saturdays from 10 am—3 pm

E-mail: oldstonechurch97@gmail.com

Website: www..oldstonechurchucceasthaven.org

The Herald

January 2024

From the desk of Rev. Mark D. Pilletere, M. Div.

Greetings in Christ!

It's a New Year, and a New Beginning!

New beginnings can be both exciting and intimidating. They represent a chance to start fresh and make positive changes in our lives, but they also require us to let go of the familiar and step into the unknown.

As Christians, we can find hope and strength in knowing that God is with us in all things, including the new beginnings we face. In Isaiah 43:19, the Lord says, "Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?" God is constantly at work in our lives, creating new opportunities and possibilities for us.

When we encounter a new beginning, it can be helpful to reflect on the past and give thanks for the experiences and lessons we have gained. However, it's also important not to get too caught up in the past and to keep an open mind and heart for what God has in store for us in the future.

One way to embrace new beginnings is to plan and set goals for what we want to accomplish. This can give us a sense of direction and purpose and help us to stay focused and motivated. It's also important to remember that we don't have to go through new beginnings alone. We can seek the guidance and support of friends, family, and our faith community.

As we begin a new year, let us remember that with God's help, we can face any new beginning with confidence and hope. May we trust in His plan for our lives and embrace the opportunities and challenges that come our way.

"For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope." – Jeremiah 29:11

I pray this will be a fantastic new year for you and your loved ones!

Happy 2024!!

In Christ,

Pastor Mark Pilletere



Join us in our historic Sanctuary for In-Person Worship service or view us on Facebook Live and YouTube at 10 am Sundays

Join us for Fellowship after service in the hall

Upcoming Events

January 20, 2024
WISP Cabaret 6pm

January 26, 2024
Pasta-4-Pups 4pm

Don't forget to pick up your latest copy of "The Upper Room"

Happy New Year!

January 2024



Attention Old Stone Church Community,

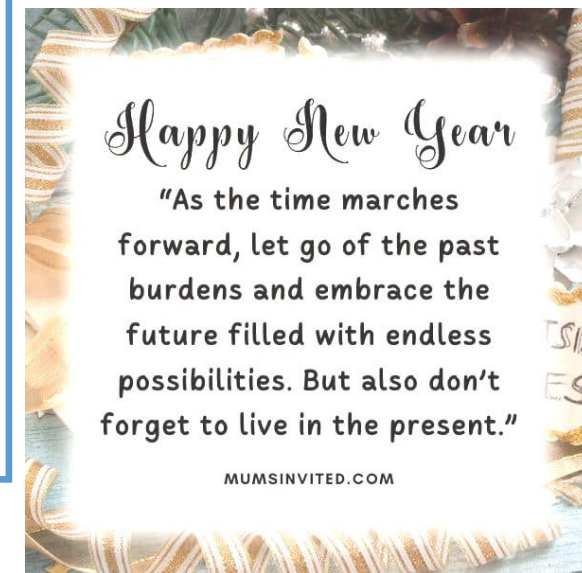
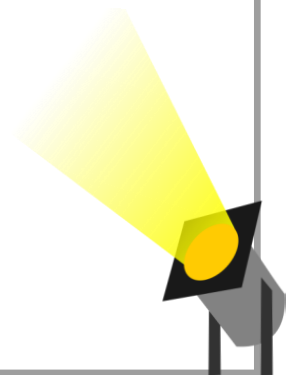
Do you ever wonder what makes this building such a well oiled machine? When I began the Village Day Care Center in 2019, I was amazed by this church community for many reasons. Two of these reasons included the outpouring of constant support from so many of you, but most importantly the many hats each person I encountered wore on a daily basis. As I watched fair preparations begin, and saw many familiar faces arise, I spoke with Heidi about an idea. Although many familiar faces were present with a smile and a wave, I unfortunately didn't know names or even roles of many of these people that I see quite frequently around the building. Throughout the 2024 year I would like to spend time getting to know some of the foundational members of this church community and share your roles/stories with not only the church community but to all those who have the privilege of being part of this vast community including teachers, parents, and the various clubs and organizations that call this building home. If you would like to share your role or nominate someone in the church I could interview, please email me at oldstonevillage@gmail.com

I look forward to getting to know many more of you throughout this year and create a stronger connection between church and non church members within this building.

Best,

Nicole Ferrigno

Director of Old Stone Village





Month of January Deacons in Charge: Hope Ryan and Dave Thomas

Prayer requests can be sent or called in to the church office at any time. Please send to the church's confidential email: oldstonechurch97@gmail.com or direct to Pastor Mark at: oldstonepastor@yahoo.com. Pastor Mark will read them aloud on Sunday during service.

Should you need a call, please note that in the message.



01/01	Shannon Artes
01/01	Jennifer Calonico
01/03	Eric Izzo
01/03	Brittany Torello
01/05	Avery Elizabeth LaPia
01/05	Rachel Korwek
01/06	Frank Chasney
01/06	David Thomas
01/06	Shane Crawford
01/07	Aubrey Torello
01/10	Sean Landers
01/11	Carol Culmo
01/12	Heidi Manley
01/13	Cheyenne Clark
01/14	Arianna May Ozoria
01/16	David Moon Jr.
01/20	Tracy Candelli
01/25	Stephanie Kilburn
01/26	Stuart Ennever
01/26	Art Longley
01/26	Megan Brennan
01/27	Michael Bilello
01/27	Joan Messina
01/28	Kathy LaPia
01/31	Lori Feola

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 Office Closed	2 Office Closed	3	4 Mah-Jong (P) 12 Choir (S) 7pm Cub/Boy Scouts (BSR) 6:30	5	6 Three Kings Day Reserved Party (FH) 1pm Thrift Shop
7 Worship 10am "The Baptism of Christ" Confirmation Class 11:15am	8	9	10	11 Mah-Jong (P) 12 Choir (S) 7pm Cub/Boy Scouts (BSR) 6:30	12	13 Reserved Party (FH) 12pm Thrift Shop Open 10-3
14 Worship 10am "Known and Loved"	15 MLK Jr. Day Office Closed	16	17	18 Mah-Jong (P) 12 Choir (S) 7pm Cub/Boy Scouts (BSR) 6:30	19	20 WISP Cabaret (FH) 6pm Thrift Shop Open 10-3
21 Worship 10am "Ecumenical Sunday"	22	23	24 Tentative Bell Install	25 Mah-Jong (P) 12 Choir (S) 7pm Cub/Boy Scouts (BSR) 6:30	26 Pasta-4-Pups (FH) 4pm 	27 Thrift Shop Open 10-3
28 Worship 10am "Health and Human Service Sunday"	29	30	31			

Pastoral Visits in Hospital

Pastoral Visits in the hospital are more possible, with particular guidelines that have changed to reflect the particular hospital's guidelines. If an in-person visit is not possible, telephone visits for prayer and comfort are an alternative, although certainly less than ideal. Please contact Heidi or Pr. Mark, in the office at 203-467-2907, if you anticipate a trip to the hospital or unexpectedly find yourself hospitalized, so Pr. Mark can respond.

What's Cookin'?

I am always looking for new recipes to share with you in the monthly Herald. With the New Year, here are just a few foods to eat for GOOD LUCK as per Readers Digest.



COLLARD GREENS *Collard Greens are a late crop mostly grown in the South, so they're easy to find in the colder months. Supposedly greens are a go-to New Year's Day food because they resemble money.*

2 lbs. Collard Greens	3 strips Bacon, chopped	1 small Red Onion, chopped
2 cloves Garlic, minced	2 ^{1/2} cups Water	1 Tbsp. Cider Vinegar
3/4 tsp. Salt	1/2 tsp. Pepper	1 can (15 oz) Pinto Beans, rinsed and drained

Remove and discard center ribs and stems from Collard Greens. Cut leaves into 1-inch pieces. In a Dutch oven, cook bacon over medium heat until crisp. Stirring occasionally. Add onion and garlic to bacon and drippings; cook and stir 2 minutes. Add collard greens; cook and stir until they begin to wilt. Stir in water, brown sugar, vinegar, salt and pepper. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat; simmer, covered, 55-65 minutes or until greens are tender, adding beans during the last 15 minutes.



CORNBREAD *Mix and match traditional New Year's food—fill your plate with black-eyed peas, greens and cornbread—to hopefully make a fortune this year. As the Southern saying goes, "Peas for pennies, greens for dollars and cornbread for gold"*

2/3 cup Butter, softened	3 large Eggs, room temp.	2 ^{1/3} cups All-Purpose Flour
1 cup Cornmeal	4 1/2 tsp. Baking powder	1 tsp. Salt

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. In a large bowl, cream butter and sugar until light and fluffy, 5-7 minutes. Combine eggs and milk. Combine flour, cornmeal, baking powder and salt; add to creamed mixture alternately with egg mixture. Pour into greased 13 x 9 inch baking pan. Bake for 22-27 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Cut into squares; serve warm.



ROASTED GRAPES & SWEET CHEESE PHYLLO GALETTE *Make sure to add grapes to your New Year's food and cheese platter this year. On New Year's Eve, Spaniards eat a grape for each stroke of midnight, with each representing a page of the calendar ahead. If one grape is bitter, watch out for that month!*

1- 8oz pkg. Cream Cheese, softened	2 Tbsp. Orange Marmalade	1 tsp. Sugar
8 sheets Phyllo Dough (14x9-inch)	4 Tbsp. Butter, melted	1 cup Seedless Grapes
1 Tbsp. Honey	2 tsp. Coarse Sugar	

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. In a large bowl, beat cream cheese, marmalade and sugar until smooth; set aside. Place 1 sheet of phyllo on a parchment-lined baking sheet; brush with butter. Layer with remaining phyllo sheets, brushing each layer. (Keep remaining phyllo covered with a damp towel to prevent it from drying out.) Spread cream cheese mixture over phyllo to within 2 in. of edges. Arrange grapes over cream cheese. Fold edges of phyllo over filling, leaving center uncovered. Brush folded phyllo with any remaining butter; drizzle with honey and sprinkle with coarse sugar. Bake until phyllo is golden brown, 35-40 minutes. Transfer to a wire rack to cool completely. Refrigerate leftovers.



RING-SHAPED CAKE *Ring-shaped cakes—sometimes with trinkets baked inside—are a symbol of coming full circle, making them a traditional New Year's food. This practice stems from the Greeks, who make a traditional vasilopita for New Year's Eve with a hidden coin baked inside. If you get the piece with the coin, you'll have good luck for a year.*

1 cup packed Brown Sugar	1 cup hot brewed Coffee	1 cup Canola Oil	1 cup Light Molasses
1/4 cup Sour Cream	2 large Eggs, room temp.	3 ^{1/4} cups All-Purpose Flour	5 tsp. ground Ginger
2 ^{1/2} tsp. Baking Soda	1 ^{1/2} tsp. ground Cinnamon	1 tsp. Salt	1 cup chopped Walnuts, toasted
1/4 cup chopped Crystallized Ginger (save some for top decoration)			

Glaze: 2 cups Confectioners' Sugar 2 tsp. Lemon Zest 3 to 4 Tbsp. Lemon Juice

Preheat oven to 350°. Grease and flour a 10-in. fluted tube pan. In a large bowl, beat brown sugar, coffee, oil, molasses and sour cream. Add eggs; beat until well blended. In another bowl, whisk flour, ground ginger, baking soda, cinnamon and salt; gradually beat into molasses mixture. Stir in walnuts and crystallized ginger. Transfer batter to prepared pan. Bake until a toothpick inserted in center comes out clean, 40-50 minutes. Cool in pan 10 minutes before removing to a wire rack to cool completely.

For glaze, in a small bowl, mix confectioners' sugar, lemon zest and enough lemon juice to reach a drizzling consistency. Drizzle over cake; sprinkle with additional crystallized ginger.

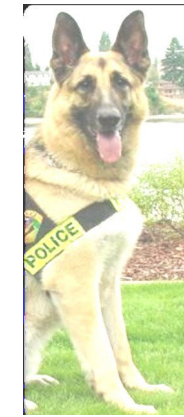
THRIFT SHOP

The Thrift Shop has been having a buy one, get one free sale, as a winter clear out of overstock. We have been doing very well with the sale, thanks to our loyal volunteers. We can always use more help on Saturdays.

Stop in to see all the fabulous deals in the store, and to volunteer.

Thank you,

*Carole Landers, Roberta Bruno,
Patty Andrews, Audrey Pochodowicz and
Sharron Shepard*



Pasta-4-Pups Fri., Jan. 26, 2024 4-7pm

Old Stone Church 251 Main Street -
East Haven, CT

Raising money for the East Haven Police
Department K-9 Officers Pasta and meatball
dinner with side salad and dessert.

Fee: \$10.00 (Dine-in or Take-out)

All proceeds go to EHPDK-9

Special presentation by the EHPD and K-9

Board of Deacons

This is always a great time of year to give thanks to the lord for the blessings we have received during the past year as individuals and as a church family. We all have our own favorites, but for me, the things that stand out are the completed renovation of our steeple and soon to be completed repair of the steeple bell, the awesome two part pageant that we recently had in December to celebrate the birth of Christ, and all the new faces we see joining us for worship Sunday mornings. Not only is our in person attendance growing from week to week, we continue to have many remote viewers on Facebook and YouTube. The word is out that the Old Stone Church is a joyful and welcoming place of worship. As we begin 2024, we are filled with hope and excited that the growth of our church will continue unabated.

At our recent deacons meeting, we were reminded that many of those people attending worship on Sunday like to arrive early and spend some quiet time at their seats prior to the service to calm their inner being as they meditate or pray to prepare for the service that follows. Although it is natural to have welcoming and friendly chatter as we greet others as they arrive, the deacons would like each of you to respect the need for this quiet time. When the organ prelude begins and the acolytes or ushers come forward to light the candles in front of the altar, we ask that everyone take their seats and begin this time of silence to observe quiet time. Keep in mind that we will have plenty of time for conversation during our fellowship time after the service.

We would like to remind you that there are many ways to contribute to our growth as a church family, especially as we become more engaged with supporting our community. If there is some activity that you would like to join, ask one of our church leaders and we will get you connected. If you are new to our services, please join us for a time of fellowship in Fellowship Hall after our Sunday worship service so that we can get to know each other. If you are unable to attend in person, we encourage you to join us online with live broadcasts on Facebook or YouTube.

The winter season is often a time when many of us face personal challenges, so we ask that you keep our family members and friends in your prayers for healing and recovery.

Best wishes and blessings to our family and friends for a healthy, happy, and prosperous new year.

Tom Collopy, Chairperson

SENIOR CHOIR

Join us as we praise God in a most musical way.

Rehearsals are on Thursday evenings in the Sanctuary at 7pm and Sunday mornings at 9:30am in the Parlor

Choir robes are available in all sizes.

Contact Dr. Budd or any of the choir members for more information.



Fellowship / Coffee Hour

Sign up to host a coffee hour after church service. There are plenty of Sundays available in the new year. You can ask any of the hosts or Deacons for details.

Sign up at the coffee table.



Christian Education

We began the Advent season with an Advent workshop and then a Movie Night.

We completed Adult Bible Study reading the book of Luke and will resume with a Lenten series study on Feb 19th.

The Sunday School children presented a 2 part Christmas Pageant with participation of 20 students and 9 adults.

This year "2023" the pageant presented The Annunciation, The Proclamation and Angelic visits as well as the traditional Bethlehem journey. We had wonderful music with vocal presentations by Art Longley and Karen Iovanne, with wonderful piano and organ music played by Dr. Jonathan Budd. Thank you too for the musical talents of the Senior choir.

All throughout December the students studied Peace, Love, Hope and Joy.

January brings Sunday School baking in the kitchen remembering the story of Esther.

Blessings,

Louise Ward

The 2024 Silver Lake summer camp schedule is here!

Look through the different programs and save the date: Registration Opens Thur. January 18



SUMMER CAMP at Silver Lake

www.SilverLakeCT.org

2024

Standard Program* Tiered Pricing: \$745 / \$670 / \$595
*Some programs may have slightly different pricing, or an additional program fee.

PRE-CAMP	FAMILY CAMP WEEKEND All Ages • Saturday-Monday, May 25-27
	PIONEER WORK WEEK Adults, 18+ • Friday-Wednesday, June 21-26
WEEK 1 June 30-July 6	ALL AGES WEEK Family Camp 1 Counselors-In-Training (CIT) • Sunday - Wednesday Family Camp 2 • Wednesday - Saturday
WEEK 2 July 7-13	PERFORMING ARTS WEEK God Song Sing Praise Rock of Ages grades 4-6 grades 7-9 grades 10-12
WEEK 3 July 14-20	FASTER, STRONGER, FURTHER - TOGETHER WEEK Silver Lake Sampler Fun in the Sun Linked by Love grades 4-6 grades 7-9 grades 10-12
WEEK 4 July 21-27	FUN IN THE SHADE WEEK Bring on the Monsters All Aboard! Reel to Real grades 4-6 grades 7-9 grades 10-12
WEEK 5 July 28-August 3	REGIONAL YOUTH EVENT Grades 7-12, with their adult leaders • Sunday - Wednesday
	ALUMNI & FRIENDS Adults, 18+ • Thursday - Saturday

SILVER LAKE

Camp & Retreat Center



LEARN MORE



GLOBAL OUTREACH / MISSIONS

Thanks to your generosity over \$1000.00 in gift cards was delivered to East Haven Social Services in time to make Christmas a little brighter for families in need this year. The amount of groceries that were delivered to the EH Food Pantry as part of the reverse Advent calendar program was overwhelming. This donation will help fill the shelves that are normally a bit barer after the holidays. All of this makes it evident that the presence of the Lord is in this place.

Thank you, *Linda Hargraves*, Chair



IN LOCAL NEWS

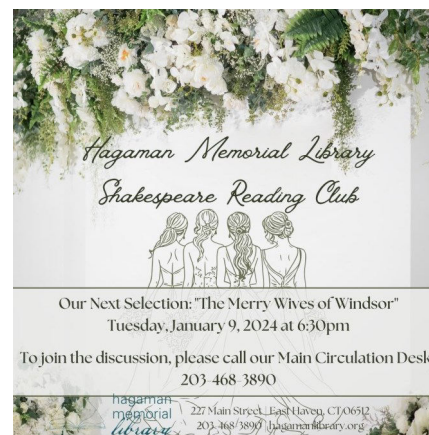


Month of Intro to Ballet

New Haven Ballet,
70 Audubon St, New Haven, CT, 06510

3-6-year-olds may participate in a month of introduction to ballet at New Haven Ballet from Jan. 8-Feb. 3, 2024, for \$48.

For more information, Tel. at 203-782-9038 or email administrator@newhavenballet.org.



Hagaman Memorial Library, 227 Main St, East Haven, CT, 06512

Join us for our next meeting (Jan. 9, 2024 at 6pm) of **Hagaman's Shakespeare Club**: we'll be discussing our latest selection, "**The Merry Wives of Windsor**." To RSVP, and to receive a copy of

the book, please either stop in, call Main Circulation at 203-468-3890, or email Reference Librarian Chris Hemingway at chemingway@hagamanlibrary.org.



Here's what you need to know about the days and hours of operation at the **East Haven Landfill** for Jan. and Feb. of 2024.

Ellyn Santiago, Patch Staff

For the months of January and February, the East Haven landfill operates on a winter schedule.

EAST HAVEN, CT —For the months of January and February, the East Haven landfill operates on a winter schedule. Still open every Friday, but Saturdays are staggered. So, it will be open on Jan. 20, 2023, the third Saturday in the month. And, on the third Saturday in February, the 17th. The landfill is not open on holidays or on days when holidays are observed.

In March, the landfill returns to regular hours. Please check back for closings, or call the Public Works Department for up-to-date information. (203) 468-3327 Passes are no longer needed; residents may go directly to the landfill. Debit and credit are the forms of payment accepted.



Tue, Jan 9, 2024 at 11:00 AM

James Blackstone Memorial Library
758 Main St, Branford, CT, 06405

Confused about your new iPhone or iPad? Need help formatting a Word document? Drop in to the library between 11am & 12pm to get a tech question answered. First come, first served. Sessions will be limited to 15 minutes per person.

Registration is not required to attend this IN PERSON event.



Sat, Jan 13, 2024 at 10:00 AM

James Blackstone Memorial Library
758 Main St, Branford, CT, 06405

Do you want to give back to your community, but aren't sure how to go about it? Check out our Community Volunteer Fair! You can chat with representatives from over a dozen local nonprofit organizations, find out what their missions are, and learn more about the skills they're looking for in their volunteers. Want to volunteer as a family? Many organizations take volunteers who are under 18! Whether you're looking to save lives, help those in need, or just file some paperwork once in a while, you're sure to find a volunteer opportunity that works for you.

Registration is not required to attend this IN PERSON event.



IN THE BEGINNING, GOD CREATED THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH.

Genesis 1:1 ESV

✠✠✠ Ministry-To-Children.com



Happy
New Year!

Old Stone Church Early Learning Center January News 2024

Happy New Year from the staff at the Early Learning Center! We're excited to kick off January with a lot of exciting things in store... not only for this month, but for the rest of the year! We are looking forward to a happy, healthy, and prosperous New Year!

Last month the children focused on Christmas, Hannukah, and Kwanza. The children had so much fun making holiday projects. They enjoyed their classroom Christmas party, singing Christmas songs in Fellowship Hall for family and friends, and their visit from Santa. Thank you to all of the parents who contributed to our classroom parties!

This was the first year we had a Christmas tree in our hallway that was decorated with Christmas cards from our students, teachers, and friends. It looked beautiful so will we do it again next year.



This month we will be focusing on winter, hibernation, and Martin Luther King Jr. The children will be observing the weather outside and how the temperature has been changing. We will be exploring winter weather and all the fun things to do during this season, such as, playing in the snow and making snowmen. We will also discuss how we dress in the winter. There will be snowman and snowflake art using a wide variety of materials. The students will have the opportunity to use their imagination to create anything they'd like using marshmallows. For Martin Luther King Jr. Day the children will do a special project and the teachers will read a story about Martin Luther King Jr. They will learn about his accomplishments and his dream. We will talk about cooperation, acceptance, peace and caring for all people. At the end of the month student progress reports will go home and parents will have an opportunity to sign up for a teacher conference.

The hallway in the education wing is now decorated for winter with hats, mittens, and ice skates that the children have made with the help of their teacher's.



A big **THANK YOU** to Jake Calonico and Sean Vallie for bringing back our beloved train all refurbished, it looks fantastic! And to Mr. Mezzanotte for playing Santa at our sing-a-long.



School will be closed on January 15th for Martin Luther King Day.

Don't forget to check out our Facebook page to see all the great things that are happening at the Early Learning Center.

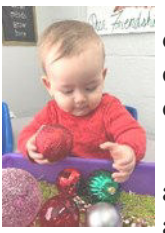
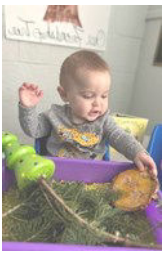


Happy New Year!

Jennifer Calonico, Director and *Kim Oca*, Assistant Director



January 2024 Herald

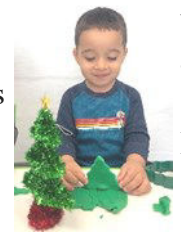
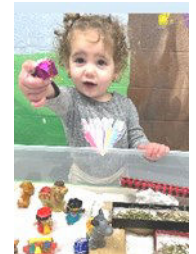
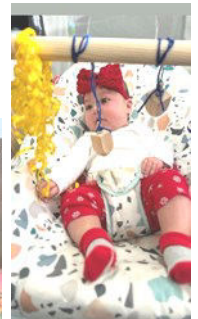


Happy New Year! During the month of December, our villagers enjoyed using their five senses to explore the holiday season. Every sense was utilized as we investigated smells, tastes, and sounds of this sensory heightened season.

Investigating was a key science standard this month as our villagers' manipulated materials and commented on the impact of their own actions. We explored the Evergreen tree through smell and touch, built our own Christmas trees with various materials, created ornament process art by investigating the different effects of rolling different sized ornaments in paint and creating imprints of textured ornaments in Play-Doh. This week ended with a focus on another delicious treat, candy canes. We continued to utilize our investigation skills as we created fizzy candy canes and dissolved candy canes in different temperatures of minted scented water.

During the second week of December, we continued using our senses to explore key holiday figures and famous holiday tunes including Rudolph, Frosty, Santa, Santa's Elves and even The Grinch. We spent a great deal of this week working on shapes as we matched familiar shapes with the same size and orientation and identified two-dimensional shapes in different orientations and sizes. Our villagers-built Rudolph and Frosty, created special reindeer food, created Grinch ornaments, turned themselves into elf ornaments, engaged in various sensory bins depicting the theme of the day, and even had a quick visit with Santa himself. Our villagers also utilized their sense of hearing as we used our Alexa to play various renditions of each of these Christmas classics.

The third week of December brought us to explore various cultural winter holidays throughout the world celebrated by some members of our village community. This was such a special week at our village as both children and staff learned about the different traditions and customs of our peers and staff. We began by learning about Saint Nicholas Day. During this Italian celebration, children receive stockings filled with goodies. Our villagers used their fine motor skills to sew stockings and create stockings for the animals of a nonprofit organization named Puppy Kitty NYC. We next investigated Diwali, the Indian **Celebration of Lights**. We were lucky to have Mrs. Champagne, one of our village moms, come in to share the traditions of this holiday with us. She instructed our villagers how to create **Rangoli**. Rangoli is the creation of shapes using special colored salt. We learned the importance of siblings' relationships during this holiday, so we also used pictures of our own siblings to build magnetic representations of them. **Three Kings Day** was the next winter holiday we encountered. Mrs. Delgado, another villager mom came in and shared a Three King's Day craft, made **Arroz Con Dulce** to share, and read a story to our older toddler room. We learned that **Hanukah** is the festival of lights. We loved manipulating the spinning **Dreidel** and building our **Menorah** by placing candles in and out. We ended this week by learning about **Kwanzaa**. Our villagers learned that corn is an important symbol of this holiday. So, we created **Mahindi**, or Corn paintings, and the **Mkea** placemat by using shapes to create patterns. It was a wonderful week learning about all the cultures and traditions that make up our village community.



The final week of December was our annual Polar Express week. Throughout this week our entire school community came in each day in our holiday jammies as we continued our work exploring the **Christmas** season using our five senses and our scientific investigation skills as we took on the roles of little engineers. We built tracks and watched and listened to trains on the go. The highlight of this week was our visit from **Santa** and our Christmas sing-along. Throughout the week we created our Christmas family gifts. This year we measured each child and created a wooden snowman measured to each child's height for families to enjoy throughout the years.

We're excited to blast off into 2024 with our village community as we dive into welcoming winter. This month we will expand upon the investigation work we did in December using our five senses. We start this month by focusing on key symbols of the winter season including winter weather and proper winter attire.

The next two weeks of January will lead us to learning about Arctic animals. We will spend one week studying Arctic land animals such as Polar Bears, The Arctic Wolf, Snowy Owls, Arctic Hares and Caribou. We will continue to use our senses to discover how these specific animals communicate, the way their fur looks and feels, and how they survive in their Arctic habitat. Next, we will move to Arctic animals of the seas. Throughout this week, we will discover Arctic Sea animals such as Beluga Whales, Penguins, Narwhals, Walrus', and Harp Seals. After spending two weeks on different Arctic Animals, we will begin to learn about animals who aren't able to adapt to live in very cold temperatures so they must hibernate or migrate.

We are excited to begin **2024** with our village family and community and wish all of you a **Happy and Healthy New Year.**

Nicole Ferrigno, Director and *Kristen Sartor*, Assistant Director

