



Jim Goody and Irene Jewett check a poinsettia at the Andover Congregational Church. They have decorated the church for many years at Christmas time with greens from Jim's property and plants donated by Irene.  
Photo by Judith E. Evans

## Andover Congregational Church

By Judy Evans

### Andover Congregational Church

Happy New Year! As we enter the year 2005 (wasn't it just yesterday that we came into the year 2000?) I find myself reflecting on what has happened at our church over the past year.

Attendance has grown, teens have become involved in leading worship, we have enjoyed hearing concerts of people sharing God's Word in song, and more people are becoming involved in outreach programs. Our church is growing in many ways and our most important mission is to show others the love of God.

At Andover Congregational Church you will find us ready to greet new people to join in worship on Sunday morning. Come as you are and know that you are welcome in God's house.

I often find myself thinking about how people feel when they come through the doors of church on Sunday morning. Surely everyone isn't full of joy. That just isn't the way life is. Some may be broken-hearted because a friend or loved one is in the hospital with a life-threatening medical problem. Perhaps some - including me - are missing loved ones who have passed on. Some are just plain lonely after the Christmas season.

Some young people may be confused about life and even angry at the world. Maybe money is tight at this time of year. There are many situations that make us feel much less than joyful.

Then there are those who are thrilled beyond belief over the birth of a new grandchild! A new job may be in the future for someone and young people may have just received the best grades ever! We rejoice with you!

We can all think of many instances when we feel either sadness or joy. Whatever your feelings, you will find comfort and peace as you worship with us.

In the Book of Matthew we read the words of Jesus: "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

Again, I represent the folks at Andover Congregational Church as I wish you a Happy New Year. May the year 2005 be full of many blessings.

For more information about services and outreach programs at Andover Congregational Church call Pastor John J. Wagner at 735-5160.

## Unitarian Congregation Welcomes Emily Burr As Its New Minister

By Chelsea Conaboy  
Concord Monitor staff

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In 1997, a friend asked Emily Burr where she found joy in her life. The answer was not at the environmental testing lab where she worked. It was not in one of the many classrooms where she had been a teacher. The answer did not lie fully in being a mom.

The answer was at church. She found joy through the love and support of the congregation where she was a member, she said. When she realized this, Burr decided to take a new step in her faith. She became a minister.

[In September] she joined the Kearsarge Unitarian Universalist Fellowship as a part-time consulting minister. Burr will spend 60 hours a month with the congregation, which averages about 35 members and meets on Sundays at the Proctor Academy Stone Chapel in Andover. She will give sermons every first and third Sunday.

The pairing is a chance for both to grow, Burr said. With more steady leadership, members of the congregation say they hope to grow in numbers. Burr said she hopes to grow in her knowledge of how a minister-led congregation works.

"It seems like a really good fit," she said.

In a sermon there [last fall], Burr told the history of the early Universalists in the United States, settlers teaching universal salvation. Many of these settlers were Unitarian in thought. They believed in one God and many paths to the divine. The two denominations would not join in an association of churches until the 1960s.

The history of Unitarian Universalism is one that Burr has learned in stages.



Concord Monitor photo by Ken Williams

Growing up, she attended a Congregational church where her father was a deacon. But by junior high she had decided that the Trinitarian ideas of the church, which hold that Jesus is God, didn't make sense to her. She had begun visiting a Unitarian church with friends who were members there. She heard teachings that said that God has many prophets and that Jesus, Muhammad, Buddha and others were all men with a strong connection to the divine. But they were human. These ideals appealed to her.

"I wasn't being asked to throw my reason out the door," Burr said.

Reason was something Burr held to. It was around the same time in her adolescence that she began developing an interest in science, she said. She would go on to major in physics at Vassar College and study astronomy at Boston University. Her schooling would lead her to weave between jobs as a

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### Kearsarge Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

Reverend Emily Burr, Minister  
Stone Chapel of Proctor Academy, Andover  
11 AM Worship  
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### ANDOVER CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

On the hill, beside the  
road in East Andover

Bob Thompson will present a  
concert of Gospel Music at 6 PM  
on Saturday, January 22 at the  
church - all are welcome!

Sunday Morning Worship &  
Sunday School at 9:30 AM  
Childcare provided

All are welcome!  
735-5160