

December 2010

Sunday Schedule

- Dec. 5** *Second Sunday of Advent*
10:00 a.m. **Morning Worship & Sunday School**
11:15 a.m. **White Gift Rehearsal**
11:30 p.m. Missions Meeting
- Dec. 12** *Third Sunday of Advent*
10:00 a.m. **Morning Worship & Sunday School**
11:15 a.m. Library Committee
3:00 p.m. Koinonia II
6:00 p.m. **White Gift Pageant**
- Dec. 19** *Fourth Sunday of Advent*
10:00 a.m. **Morning Worship & Sunday School**
Christmas Cantata
- Dec. 24** *Christmas Eve*
7:00 p.m. *Christmas Eve Worship* in Chapel
10:30 p.m. *Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship*
- Dec. 26** *First Sunday after Christmas*
10:00 a.m. **Family Worship**
No Sunday School
- Dec. 31**
7:00 p.m. *Family Game Night & New Year's Eve celebration*



The **Senior Choir** rehearses each Wednesday evening at 7:30 p.m. and on Sunday morning at 9:00 a.m. unless otherwise notified.

Children's Choir and Youth Choir rehearse immediately following morning worship on Sundays (11:15-11:30 a.m.) unless otherwise announced.

Bell Choir rehearses from 11:30 a.m.-12:15 p.m.



Christmas Eve Family Worship service in the chapel at 7:00 p.m., Friday, Dec. 24, 2010. The Family Worship time is an earlier service open to everyone. It is geared to young families, but is enjoyed by all who attend. The service will be led by the *Murdzek* family. There will be music, dance, and joyful celebration.

*10:30 p.m.

Candlelight Worship with Communion in the sanctuary.

Saturday, December 4, 2010

Holiday Fest

First Church Participates!!



Pancake Breakfast

8:00-10:30 a.m.

\$4.00 in advance/\$4.50 at the door

The proceeds from this event will once again be used to benefit East Hartford families this Christmas.

For reservations, call 860-528-3133



Sixteenth Annual Live Nativity

1:00-5:00 p.m.

As part of Holiday Fest Weekend, this event features live farm animals in the courtyard. Come and view our church members standing in tableau representing the holy family and their visitors.



Sixteenth Annual

Carol Sing

4:30 p.m.

The community is invited to gather around the Live Nativity in the courtyard of

First Congregational Church for Candlelight Carol Sing of traditional Christmas favorites.



Bank.)

Boy Scout Troop 1

Spaghetti Dinner

4:30-6:00 p.m.

\$7.00 pp/\$12.00 for 2

\$5.00 senior/ \$5.00 pp-3 or more

No reservations are necessary. Continuousserving. Everyone is welcome. (½ of the proceeds to benefit FCC Food



White Gift Pageant

Sunday, December 12 at 6:00 p.m. Join us as we

witness the miracle of Jesus' birth. Our Sunday School children will recreate the nativity story.

This service is sponsored by the Board of Christian Education and will be followed by a time of fellowship and light refreshments of cocoa and cookies. Everyone is invited to attend.



Coffee Hour - Everyone is invited to Coffee hour following worship. Members of **Board of Trustees** are serving for the month of December.

The **Board of Christian Education** will not meet in December.

The **Board of Missions** will meet Sunday, December 5, at 11:30 a.m.

The **Board of Deaconesses** will meet Monday, December 6 at 1:00 p.m.

The **Board of Deacons** will meet Monday, December 13 at 7:00 p.m.

The **Board of Stewardship** will meet Monday, December 13 at 7:00 p.m.

The **Board of Trustees** will meet Tuesday, December 14 at 7:00 p.m.

W.E.B.

Women Empowered and Blessed is a group comprised of members of the **Guild**, the **Business & Professional Women's Group** and **Mother's Club**. All women of the church are invited to attend.

W.E.B. will meet on Thursday, December 16 at 6:15 p.m. for their Christmas Dinner.



Youth News

Saturday, Dec. 4 4:00 - 5:00 p.m. Live Nativity JYF and PYF during the candle light carol sing. Dress warm!

Sunday, Dec. 5 4:00 p.m. PYF: Contemporary Christian Music

Sunday, Dec. 19 No JYF meeting. 6:00 p.m. JYF and PYF Christmas Caroling.



Dec. 5 Sunday School following Children's Moment.

11:15 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Rehearsal for the White Gift Service for all Sunday School classes and their teachers in the sanctuary.

Dec. 12 Sunday School following Children's Moment.

6:00 p.m. White Gift Pageant followed by a time of fellowship and light refreshments.

Dec. 19 Sunday School following Children's Moment.

11:15a.m. *Wassail Bowl*

Dec. 24 7:00p.m Christmas Eve Family Worship in the chapel .

Dec. 26 Family Worship. No Sunday School

From the Board of Missions

At this time of year we often turn our thoughts to those who are less fortunate than ourselves – especially the children. **ELON HOMES** in North Carolina provides a safe and nurturing home environment for children and teens who, for one reason or another, are unable to stay with their own families. All offerings received at the **WHITE GIFTS PAGEANT** on December 12th at 6:00 p.m. will be used to support Elon.

* * * * *

In 1902 a concerned church member sent the Congregational Church Secretary *William A. Rice* a special offering so that retired ministers would be remembered at Christmas. Since then there has been a **CHRISTMAS FUND OFFERING** (formerly known as "Veterans of the Cross") and it will be collected on Sunday, December 19 and Christmas Eve. This resource might provide an emergency check to help a clergy family pay mounting medical bills; a grant to assist an annuitant couple meet unexpected increases for nursing home care; pension and health premium supplementation to low-income retirees. Your gifts to the Christmas Fund Offering are an expression of love and thanks to those who serve us as pastors and leaders in the United Church of Christ.

Looking Ahead

Winter Weekend at Silver Lake will be February 11-13, 2011.

The Pastor's Corner

Culture, George Frederick Handel, and the Church

I hope everyone on the church e-mail list was able to open the video which I forwarded of the singing of the Hallelujah Chorus in the downtown Wanamaker's store (now Macy's) in Philadelphia. On a regular shopping day in the grand old Wanamaker's (home also to what may still be the largest pipe organ in the USA), an opera company in cooperation with many church choirs, sang the Hallelujah Chorus. The link you can access to hear and see what happened is:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wpRHnQ-igu>

All those shoppers just stopped what they were doing and joined in the singing or stood still and were inspired. To my mind it was not only a Random Act of Culture, it was also a random happening of faith! One thought I had as I watched the clip was, *all those people, they obviously have faith to enthusiastically join in the singing or stop what they were doing and happily listen, I wonder how many of them actively participate in a church somewhere? With all the spiritual life evidenced in that tape, why are so many metropolitan churches struggling for members and attendance?*

Well, I think there may be many answers to that last question but what I resist doing (it is done quite enough, I think, by others), is to totally blame the church! There are also wider cultural issues pressing. We are surely a consumer oriented people (after all, Macy's had plenty of people in attendance shopping) and I think we want to *consume* something from the church as well. Fair enough. But we who participate in the church know that the church is more than just a provider of something, albeit a spiritual something. The church is also a place where we are challenged to live more according to what we believe, and to work together for Christ, and to support financially that work through the organized church. In short, the church asks something of us, as well as giving something to us, just as God does.

Thank you to everyone who joins with me throughout the year worshipping and serving Christ through the church so that things like that Random Act of Culture (Faith!) can happen in a department store. Handel wasn't inspired to write the Hallelujah Chorus by shopping at Macy's!

Thank God for the world wide Church!
Thank God for First Congregational! God bless all of you who along with me help to keep it going!

Ted



Wish Tree

Our church proudly sponsors a **Wish Tree** located in the dining room. Christmas pictures with suggested items on the back are hung from the tree. Please remove the tag and take it with you to remind you what you have chosen to donate. **Place the unwrapped items under the tree by Dec. 12 so they may be delivered to the East Hartford Homeless Shelter in time for Christmas.** Thank you for your generosity!

Wassail Bowl will be served on Sunday, December 19th during Coffee Hour. Each week the Board of Deaconesses provides the refreshments. Please be generous with your donations to the *Coffee Fund* in the basket on the table in the dining room.

EHIM

East Hartford Interfaith Ministries
Human Needs Fund Office
Beth Harlow, Coordinator
(860) 289-4919

Special Thanks to *Pam Douglas*, coordinator, and the *donors* and *volunteers* who helped make our 30th Annual Community Thanksgiving Dinner continue in its success. See you next year!

"Care & Share" Sunday is the first Sunday of every month when we bring items for Food Bank. You will find white envelopes marked Food Bank in the pews in which monetary donations may be made. All donations are gratefully accepted.

Stewardship Board

The Board of Stewardship is very excited about the opportunity offered by the Viridian Co., an alternate energy supplier approved for use through your electricity account with CL&P. By choosing Viridian as your energy generation supplier, (you STILL be supplied and serviced by CL&P), the Church will receive a \$10.00 sign-up bonus PLUS \$2.00 per month. And now, for every new customer who signs up between now and the end of 2010, an additional \$10.00 will be returned! At the Special Church Meeting held Sun. Nov. 14th to approve the proposed budget, it was voted to place the amount of anticipated interest for our Roof Fund loan to the Pledge portion of our income. This will require more income on our part to keep the budget balanced. If anyone reading this has not already joined us in this fund-raising effort, by doing so before the end of this year you will generate \$20.00 plus two dollars per month on an ongoing basis. Plus, you will be receiving a more competitive rate on your bill. You will save yourself money and create income for the Church at No Cost to you! If you have not signed up yet, why not? We now have our own web site for our account, and you can sign up online (It takes less than 10 minutes). The web address is www.Viridian.com/first_church_of_east_hartford. Have a copy of your electric bill handy, and click on "Become a Customer". If you have any questions, call Neal Forte at 860-883-7801 or Rich Beebe at 860-569-0163. Friends and neighbors can also sign up for this great competitive rate at the same web site. P.S. As of Jan. 1 CL&P will drop their rate, Also Viridian will to stay lower.



Christmas Memorial

This year in addition to Christmas poinsettias part of your donation will go to the East Hartford Human Needs Fund. We will purchase the number of plants necessary to deliver to the ill, bereaved, or homebound members with the remainder of your donation going to the Human Needs Fund. The cost of this donation will be \$ 11.00. Your check, made payable to the First Congregational Church 837 Main St. E.H. CT, should clearly indicate Christmas Poinsettia or placed in the offering plate, given to a flower committee person or mailed to the church office by December 12th.

-----PLEASE PRINT & CHECK ONE-----

- In loving memory
- In honor
- In celebration

Of: _____

By: _____

RESOLUTION HONORING FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

Whereas, the town of East Hartford was incorporated in 1783; and
Whereas, in 1699, the General Court, now known as the General Assembly, of Connecticut granted approval for a church organization east of the Connecticut River, now known as East Hartford; and
Whereas, the existing First Congregational Church building is the third church structure having been constructed and dedicated for use in 1836; and
Whereas, for the first hundred years of the town of East Hartford's existence; the town held its governmental meetings in the basement of the First Congregational Church, reflecting the close ties between the church and the operations of town government; and
Whereas, in 1886, the town of East Hartford built a separate town hall for government operations; and
Whereas, the First Congregational Church has continued to grow and thrive-along with the town of East Hartford;

Now Therefore Be It Resolved:
That the Town Council of the Town of East Hartford hereby recognizes the long and close relationship between the community of East Hartford and the First Congregational Church and takes note that the ever-growing religious and ethnic diversity of our town serves to strengthen the common bonds and goals of our town and its churches; and extends its appreciation-on behalf of the current Town Council and all previous Town Councils and Boards-to the First Congregational Church for its unique contrition to the community of our town.

On call of the vote, motion carried 9/0.

MAYORAL

PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, THE BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA, TROOP I OF OUR TOWN, IS CELEBRATING THEIR 100TH ANNIVERSARY; AND
WHEREAS, TROOP I IS THE OLDEST CONTINUOUSLY SPONSORED BOY SCOUT TROOP IN THE UNITED STATES; AND
WHEREAS, TROOP I WAS SPONSORED BY THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH WHEN BOY SCOUTING FIRST CAME TO THE UNITED STATES IN 1910; AND
WHEREAS, PAST AND PRESENT MEMBERS GATHERED IN THE SCOUT ROOM OF THE CHURCH TO CELEBRATE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE TENETS OF THE BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA: TRUSTWORTHY, LOYAL, HELPFUL, FRIENDLY, COURTEOUS, KIND, OBEDIENT, CHEERFUL, THRIFTY, BRAVE, CLEAN AND REVERENT.
NOW, THEREFORE, I MELODY A. CURRY, MAYOR OF THE TOWN OF EAST HARTFORD, JOIN WITH MEMBERS OF THE TOWN COUNCIL TO CONGRATULATE THE
BOYSCOUTS OF AMERICA, TROOP I
100TH ANNIVERSARY

Christmas, December 25, 2010

C is for CHRISTMAS

C is for Cards C is for Creche

C is for Carols C is for Cradle

- ❖ These are Christian symbols prominent in many religious stories about Christmas.
- ❖ Explore reading resources in your Church Library to celebrate this holy season.
- ❖ Examine the Christmas books and videos on display on the Library table.
- ❖ Discover meaning and inspiration in your reading throughout this month.

and

Have a very Merry Christmas,

The Library Committee

