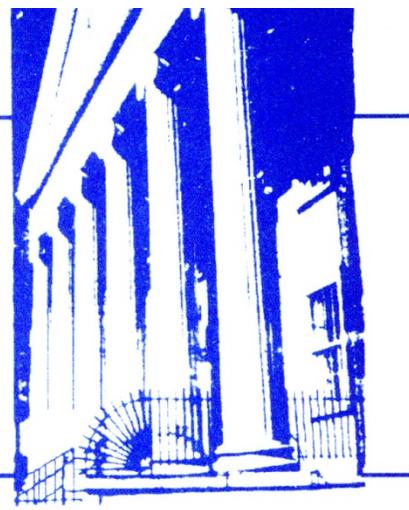


# COLUMNS

First Congregational Church East Hartford, Connecticut

*Over 300 Years of Ministry!*



## December 2012

### Sunday Schedule

- Dec. 2** *First Sunday of Advent*  
10:00 a.m. **Morning Worship with Communion & Sunday School**  
11:30 a.m. JYF
- Dec. 9** *Second Sunday of Advent*  
10:00 a.m. **Morning Worship & Sunday School**  
11:15 a.m. Library Committee  
11:30 a.m. **White Gift Rehearsal**  
11:30 p.m. Board of Missions Meeting  
3:00 p.m. Koinonia II
- Dec. 16** *Third Sunday of Advent*  
10:00 a.m. **Morning Worship & Sunday School**  
11:30 a.m. JYF  
6:00 p.m. **White Gift Pageant**
- Dec. 23** *Fourth Sunday of Advent*  
10:00 a.m. **Family Worship Christmas Cantata**
- Dec. 30**  
10:00 a.m. **Family Worship**



The **Senior Choir** rehearses each Wednesday evening at 7:00 p.m. and on Sunday morning at 8:45 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.



\*7:00 p.m.

**Christmas Eve Family Worship** in the chapel, Monday, Dec. 24, 2012. 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.

## *Holiday Fest At First Church*

**Friday December 7, 2012**

**"Voices LLC"**

7:30 p.m.

A concert of Holiday music



**Saturday, December 8, 2012**



**Pancake Breakfast**

8:00-10:30 a.m.

\$5.00

W.E.B. will use the proceeds from this event to purchase presents for families in need in East Hartford.



**Eighteenth 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.



**Eighteenth 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 a Candlelight Carol Sing of traditional Christmas favorites.



**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



**Coffee Hour** - Everyone is invited to Coffee hour following worship. Members of **Board of Christian Education** 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 9 at 11:30 a.m.

The **Board of Deaconesses** will meet Monday, December 3 at 1:00 p.m.

The **Board of Deacons** will meet Monday, December 10 at 7:00 p.m.

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

The **Board of Trustees** will meet Tuesday, December 18 at 6:30 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 20 at 6:15 p.m. for their Christmas Dinner.



### **Youth News**

#### **Saturday, Dec. 8**

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

#### **Sunday, Dec. 23**

6:00 p.m. JYF and PYF Christmas Caroling.



### **White Gift Pageant**

**Sunday, December 16 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.

Rehearsal for our Sunday School children for this presentation will be:

Sunday, December 9 11:30-12:30. A snack will be served to the children before rehearsal begins.

Please plan to attend this rehearsal.

### **Paul Bissacia - Piano Concert** **“Classic Christmas - Jazz Christmas”** **Saturday, December 1, 2:00-4:00 p.m.**



**Dec. 2** Sunday School following Children's Moment.

**Dec. 9** Sunday School following Children's Moment.

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

**Dec. 16** Sunday School following Children's Moment.

**Dec. 23** Children will remain in sanctuary to enjoy the Cantata

11:15a.m. *Wassail Bowl*

5:30 p.m. Children come for costumes.

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

**Dec. 24** 7:00p.m Christmas Eve Family Worship in the chapel led by the *Murdzek* family.

**Dec. 30** Family Worship. No Sunday School

## Stewardship Board

Delight in Giving – December 2012

The votes have been tallied and the winner of The Bald, The Bold, The Best contest is – Maggie Pardo! The contest raised \$113 to be donated towards the roof fund. Thank you everyone who took time to vote.

The fair has raised \$8,300 so far. If you did not have an opportunity to get to the fair, there are still some lovely baskets, holiday decorations and knit goods available for purchase on Sundays after church during December. It's a great opportunity to pick up a last minute gift. Poinsettia plants will also be available for purchase as a separate fundraiser in December.

Finally, if you haven't done so already, please turn in your pledge card. At the budget meeting in November, we voted to add an additional \$1,500 to the proposed budgeted pledge amount. Our congregation is amazing in its ability to rise to a challenge. With our dedication and delight in serving as Christ's ambassadors in the world, this increase should be met easily.

## The Pastor's Corner

It Will Be What You Make It!

Yes, I know, it's going to be another Christmastime of television commercials for luxury cars with giant red ribbons tied on the roof, gaudy decorations having no semblance of spiritual symbolism, and stupid songs about grandma getting run over by a reindeer! I'm trying to get ready for the onslaught so that I don't get too discouraged. The frivolity will come. There is nothing any of us is going to do about it.

But, of course, it need not have much effect upon us. For all the self-righteous complaining we may do about the public celebration that misses the point, Christmas for each of us will be pretty much what we make it.

You may have guessed that what you will next read here will be a plug to attend and participate in the Advent and Christmas events at church and you would be right. We work hard at First Church, professional staff and congregation alike, to provide faith building programs and soul stirring worship opportunities throughout the season. Many proper ways to celebrate our Savior's birth will be offered right here!

At First Church there will be numerous opportunities to practice generosity with families in need. There will be many celebrations through music and spoken word of the great gift of God's love in the birth of Jesus. Children and adults can take part in dramatic presentations of the holy nativity. Counting the events of East Hartford Holiday Fest that will be hosted by First Church, there will be almost two dozen opportunities of one type or another to celebrate rightfully and reasonably our Savior's birth!

But if we just want to buy presents that people don't really need, and spend money we don't really have, and be stressed out and passed out, well, we can do that too.

Perhaps there was a time when we could sort of take a ride on the general cultural recognition of Christmas and experience some spiritual quickening from it. I don't remember that time, but maybe it was once possible. I know it is not possible now. Now we will need to intentionally choose to rightly celebrate Christmas. Now, more than ever, we need the church. Now it is very much up to us.

*Ted*

## 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 GIFT PAGEANT** on December 16<sup>th</sup> 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 23 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.



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. 9 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 23<sup>rd</sup> during Coffee Hour. Please be generous with your donations to the *Coffee Fund* in the basket on the table in the dining room.



Christmas Cards

Remember to place your Christmas cards to church members only in the boxes below the stairs. Do not place cards for those in convalescent homes or anyone who does not regularly attend church.

**Toy Drive** The Board of Missions is collecting toys for children 0-10 years old to donate to the East Hartford's Social Services. Please place your unwrapped toys in the box in the dining room by Sun., Dec. 2. Thank you.

**Special Thanks** to *Pam Douglas*, coordinator, and the *donors* and *volunteers* who helped make our 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Community Thanksgiving Dinner for the homeless and alone continue in its success. Over one hundred meals were served. See you next year!

## **POINSETTIA SALE**



This year you can purchase your Christmas Poinsettia's right here at First Church! We will have 6-inch plants in red, pink and white for \$8.00 each available for pick-up on December 8th and 9th. Please see Kathy Cattanach or Donna Basler to place your order.

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

## **Family Game Night and New Year's Eve Celebration**

Monday, December, 31<sup>st</sup> at 7:00 p.m.

## **Looking Ahead**

Winter Weekend at Silver Lake will be February 8-10, 2013. Join us for a weekend of fun, fellowship, and friendship in the hills of Sharon, CT. Everyone -young or old, single or married, with or without children - is welcome to share in the unique experience. See Louise to reserve your space.

Just a reminder...if you have moved, have a new phone number, or your college student would like to receive news from their church in the Columns..... we want to know!!!



**Annual Report**

**Annual Report** information is due in the church office no later than **January 7, 2013!!** Every board, committee, club and scouts are asked to submit a report. Remember, what you submit is part of the history of First Congregational Church.

## Library Notes

Christmas, December 25, 2012

### 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 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*

## Riverside Donations

Christmas is coming up fast, and we would like to remember the Riverside Home residents this year. Please put your donation in the box under the stairs. Cost should not be more than \$10 each. Here are some suggestions for gifts:

lotion, perfumes/colognes      hair brushes or combs  
large print books/puzzle books      cards/games  
watches/costume jewelry      hard candies  
packaged crackers

Thank you for your giving!



### Christmas Memorial

This year in addition to Christmas poinsettias part of your donation will go to the Roof 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 Roof Fund. The cost of this donation will be \$ 13.00. Your check, made payable to the First Congregational Church, should clearly indicate Christmas Poinsettia and placed in the offering plate, given to a flower committee person or mailed to the church office by December 12<sup>th</sup>.

Jessie Slade, Chairman, 569-0461

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

In loving memory

In honor

In celebration

Of: \_\_\_\_\_

By: \_\_\_\_\_

### **EHIM**

East Hartford Interfaith Ministries

Human Needs Fund Office

*Beth Harlow, Coordinator*

(860) 289-4919

## Nice Note

*Flora Ranney* and her family would like to extend their heartfelt thanks for everyone's love and support throughout this difficult time with the loss of *Dick Ranney*.

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH  
837 MAIN STREET  
EAST HARTFORD CT 06108-3119  
**Address Service Requested**

**December 2012**

NON-PROFIT  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
HARTFORD CT  
PERMIT #4431

**TIME VALUE**  
**PLEASE RUSH**

