

THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF VERNON, UCC

December 11, 2011

Holy Communion ~ Third Sunday of Advent ~ Joy

GATHERING MUSIC "God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen" R. Elmore
"Offertoire sur Deux Noels" Guilmant
"Carols of the Bells" F. Ritter

WELCOME and ANNOUNCEMENTS

(Please sign the Friendship Register before passing it down the pew.)

PAY IT FORWARD

CHIMING of the HOUR

ACOLYTES Sophie Becker, Brianna Markunas

WORDS of REFLECTION

I think I began learning long ago that those who are the happiest are those who do the most for others. Booker T. Washington

PRELUDE "The Holly and the Ivy" J. Rasley

LIGHTING of the ADVENT CANDLE of JOY

Lydia Pettigrew, Megan Hasty, Julia Assard, Sarah Kline

*OPENING HYMN #132 When God Is a Child"

PRAYER of INVOCATION (*unison*) Sarah Cutting

Surprising God, you bring joy to an unexpected world. Into our busy days, you place Bethlehem moments -- a stillness that strengthens our hearts, a cry that kindles memories and draws smiles across our faces, visitors who bless us with kind words and warm gifts, angelic music that lifts our weariness. Surprising God, usher us into the wonder of Bethlehem and the peace of the Christ child and let our hearts abound with joy. Amen

RESPONSIVE READING Psalm 126 Ryan Moreau

Leader: When the Lord brought back the captives to Zion we were like people who dreamed.

People: Our mouths were filled with laughter, our tongues with songs of joy. Then it was said among the nations, "The Lord has done great things for them."

Leader: The Lord has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy.

People: Restore our fortunes, O Lord, like streams in the Negev.

Leader: Those who sow in tears will reap with songs of joy.

People: They who go out weeping carrying seed to sow will return with songs of joy, carrying sheaves with them.

GLORIA PATRI (#35 in hymnal)

TIME with the CHILDREN

The LORD'S PRAYER (*unison... "debts"*)

CHERUB CHOIR "Away in a Manger"

"The Wisemen Came from Afar"

(Children may leave for Sunday School after the Cherub Choir.)

SHARING of JOYS and CONCERNS – Marion Ordway Turro and family on the loss of her son, Robert Ordway

MORNING PRAYER

PRAYER RESPONSE

CALL to OFFERING

OFFERTORY "Put Peace Into Each Other's Hands" D. Schwoebel

*DOXOLOGY (#46 in hymnal)

PRAYER of DEDICATION

SCRIPTURE Isaiah 40: 1-5

*HYMN #122 "Comfort, Comfort You My People"

SERMON Rev. Cynthia Carr

*CLOSING HYMN #138 "Awake! Awake, and Great the New Morn"

BENEDICTION

Leader: May the rough places in our lives be made smooth.

People: **May the valleys of despair be filled with comfort.**

Leader: May the door to our hearts be wide open.

People: **May the glory of Immanuel be with us all our days. Amen.**

POSTLUDE "Christmas Joy" F. Ritter

**All who are able are invited to stand.*

Greeters and Coffee Hour: Flower and Memorial Garden Committees

Pay It Forward: Today we feature Dee Kidd. Last week, Dick Wurst shared with us his gift to the Hartford area Habitat for Humanity, an organization that provides home ownership to those who qualify in the Hartford and Tolland County areas. In support of this organization, the Wurst family doubled the gift.

WELCOME TO FCCV!

If you are a first time visitor, please take a moment after the worship service and sign our Guest Book located in the Narthex on the Welcome Table. There you will also find a special Welcome Bag just for you.

TODAY'S ACTIVITIES

Transformers: 11:30 AM, Choir Room

Confirmation Class: 11:30 AM, Library

The Christmas Giving Tree: We are collecting toys for the Vernon Social Services "Toy Workshop" where a family in need can choose toys that their children need or want for Christmas. There is a specific need for games, multicultural dolls, arts/crafts, science kits and other educational toys. **Choose a tag** from the tree, located in the back of the Sanctuary, **today**. Each tag bears the age and gender of a child in need. Place your new, **unwrapped** toy(s) under the tree by next Sunday, December 18. Questions? Contact Lisa Rylant, 860-498-0035. Note: If (only if) inclement weather cancels church on December 18, gifts will be collected in the Breezeway from 8-10 AM on Monday, December 19. Questions about the weather? Call Deb Hockenberry, 860-712-6466.

Today is the last day Sunday School children ages 3 through 2nd grade will be collecting mittens and gloves (sizes to fit ages 4- 5th grade) for a local school.

TODAY DURING COFFEE HOUR downstairs in Fellowship Hall

Today is the last day to order Poinsettias to be displayed in the Sanctuary during Christmas.

Box o' Cookies Sale: Fill a box with homemade Christmas cookies for only \$5.

THIS WEEK'S ACTIVITIES

Search Committee: Monday, December 12, 7 PM, Library

January CARILLON Deadline
Tuesday, December 13

Men's Club: Tuesday, December 13, 6:30 AM, Vernon Diner

Finance: Tuesday, December 13, 7 PM, Library

BCE: Tuesday, December 13, 7 PM, Chapel

Prayer Shawl Group: Wednesday, December 14, 1 PM, Library

Yoga: Wednesday, December 14, 5:30 PM, Fellowship Hall. All are welcome.

Please bring a mat. Donation: \$5 per class.

Missions: Wednesday, December 14, 7 PM, Library

Bell Choir: Thursday, December 15, 6:30 PM, PF Room

Sanctuary Choir: Thursday, December 15, 7:30 PM, Choir Room

Caring and Sharing Support Group: Friday, December 16, 10:30 AM, Library

Contemporary Worship Rehearsal: Saturday, December 17, 9:30 AM, Sanctuary

Youth Fellowship (6th-12th grade) Sleepover: Friday, December 16 at 7 PM.

Bring a friend, a sleeping bag (with something to put on the floor under it) a snack to share, games or a movie. If you plan to attend, please sign up on the bulletin board down the hall from the Library.

CHRISTMAS CONCERT
Sunday, December 18
4 PM

Please Note: Next Sunday, December 18, children are invited to remain upstairs with their families for a special service of music, singing, stories and placing Chrismons on the tree. The Toddler Room will be open and staffed for the very youngest children. Also, there will be a short rehearsal after the worship service for all children participating in the Christmas Eve Family Service.

Please take time this season to enjoy the Christmas items in our 250th Anniversary Display Case in Fellowship Hall. We hope to change the display often during the year, in keeping with the season and/or moments of significance in our history. If you have an artifact or memento you would like to share, please contact Joan Apel, our Historian, through the Church Office: fccv@snet.net or 860-875-7580.

There will be no Sunday School on December 25 and January 1. The Toddler Room will be open and staffed.

CHRISTMAS SERVICES

Christmas Eve Family Service

a celebration of the birth of Jesus

5:30 PM

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Lessons and Carols, concluding with candle lighting and Silent Night.

The Rev. David Minnick will preach and the Sanctuary Choir will be singing.

9 PM

Christmas Day Worship Service

a festive service to which all are invited

Children are welcome to come in their PJs.

10 AM

Giv2: Sunday, January 8, 1-5 PM. More info to follow

A **Crib Room** is available upstairs near the balcony for **parents with infants up to 12 months of age** where the worship service can be heard via intercom. A staffed **Toddler Room for children 12-36 months** old is located downstairs with the classrooms. Donations are gratefully accepted in the free-will offering box.

Cancellation of Church Services or Activities Due to Inclement Weather:

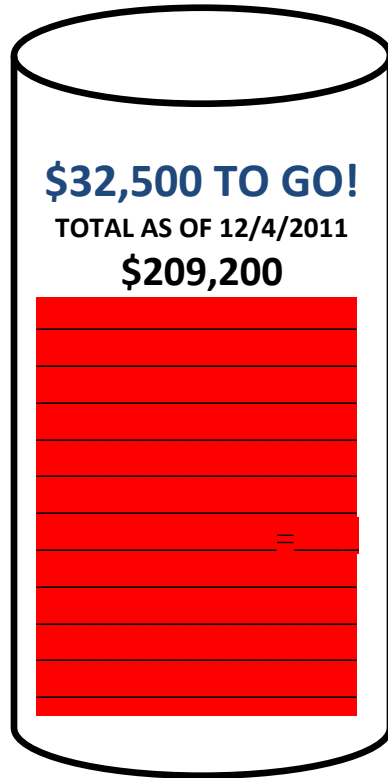
Please listen to any of the following radio stations: WTIC AM (1080), WTIC FM (96.5), WRCH FM (100.5), watch WFSB Channel 3 or go to wfsb.com.

The **Care Network** is offered by the Deacons as a helping hand during difficult times. If you are in need of a ride to church, the doctor, hospital, grocery store, etc., in need of meals or a visit, please contact Margaret Klukas (643-0710) or Jan Muro (872-1757 or jmoze@hotmail.com).

In Our Ongoing Prayers... Amy and Molly Shannon on the death of Mary Shannon, mother and grandmother; **Alexandra Fisher**, granddaughter of Pat Aldrich; **Pam Lyons** recovering from arm surgery; **Mike Swan** undergoing chemo for a reoccurrence of cancer; **Kathy Fuller**, Barbara Evensen's sister; **Caleb**, infant son of Jessica Gwara (friend of Annie Longo); **Richard Waddell**, nephew by marriage of Mary Wheeler, recovering from cancer surgery; **Debbie Morris**, Jan Peacock's niece; **Donna Peacock**; **Carol Whitney**; **Kyle**, son of Rob Czaplicki (friend of Rob Horton); **Joyce Smith**; **Dolores Tomolonis**, friend of Mary and Jim White, (cancer); baby **Ava**; **Thelma Gifford**; **Kaylin Gifford**; **Rick Gagnon**, brother-in-law of Michelle Bower (cancer); **Warren Clay**; **Gary Edwards**, friend of Serena Volovski; **Cooper Doyle**, Al and Marilyn Newton's grandson; **Paul and Susan Shimer**; **Candy Buswell** (heart); **Mary Jo Simonds-Huneger**; **Horst Pohlmann**, friend of the Gerakaris'; **John Mayhew**; **John Kaminski**, Susan Moreau's father; **Bess Howe**; **Jane Morse**; **Melissa Morse**; **Charlotte Driggs**; **Aaron Huneger**; **Stephen Volovski**; **Donald Chase**; **Audrey Clay** (breast cancer)

PLEDGE DRIVE UPDATE

2012 GOAL - \$241,700



To date, 155 pledges have been received.

If you have not already done so, please return your pledge as soon as possible. It is vital to the planning of our 2012 Budget.

Together we can demonstrate our commitment to the First Congregational Church of Vernon and the blessings we share here.

If you did not receive a pledge card, they are available in the Church Office.

If you have questions or concerns, please contact any member of the Stewardship and Evangelism Committee.