

**THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF VERNON, UCC**

~Third Sunday of Advent ~

December 13, 2015

**WELCOME!**

*"There is a special power being with a whole lot of believers in one place with the same purpose. You don't feel alone...It gives you hope."*

~ a college student

**PRELUDE** "A la ru" arr. Osterland  
"Rise Up, Shepherd" arr. Osterland  
"Cold December Flies Away" arr. Busalow/Kolander

**WELCOME and ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**WELCOMING the LIGHT of CHRIST**

**\*CALL to WORSHIP** (based on Isaiah 12:2-6 and Philippians 4:4-7)

Leader: Surely God is our salvation; we will trust, and we will not be afraid,

**People: for the Lord God is our strength and our might; God has become our salvation.**

Leader: Sing praises to the Lord, for God has done gloriously; shout aloud and sing for joy, O royal Zion, for great in your midst is the Holy One!

**People: Rejoice in the Lord always!; again we will say, Rejoice!**

Leader: Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near.

**People: We will not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let our requests be made known to God.**

Leader: And the peace [and love] of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

**All: Come, let us worship, Come, let us love, Come, let us sing!**

**\*OPENING HYMN** #129 "Lift Up Your Heads, O Mighty Gates"

**ADVENT WREATH** Kathleen Gallo and Cindy Dubuque  
**The Candle of LOVE** (from John 8:12)

Reader 1: "Again Jesus spoke to them saying, 'I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.'"

Reader 2: In lighting this candle, we celebrate the miracle of Love, and we ponder the wonder and mystery of God's great love for us,

as revealed in the life of Jesus Christ. Lighting this candle today, we rekindle an ancient flame, and recognize a love that will burn through all eternity.

*Lighting the Candle of Love (in silence)*

**Prayer (unison)**

**Holy God, we stand in awe of your unfailing love for us and we thank you for the transforming love of Jesus Christ. Grant that we might reflect your great love in our words and deeds. Amen.**

**Hymn Response** #467 "Fill the World with Love" (vs.3)

*We whose spirits long to share, long to comfort and to heal, know that when we act alone, hope is difficult to feel; but together as we labor God's compassion to reveal we will fill the world with love, when God fills the world with love.*

**LITTLE BELLS** "Joy to the World"  
(youth may leave for Sunday School)

**SHARING of JOYS and CONCERNS**

**MORNING PRAYER**

**The LORD'S PRAYER (unison)**

***Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.***

**\*GLORIA PATRI**

***Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.***

**CALL to OFFERING**

**OFFERTORY** "March of the Kings" Traditional  
Jim Montlick - trumpet

**\*DOXOLOGY**

***Praise God from whom all blessings flow; praise him, all creatures here below; praise him above, ye heavenly host; Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.***

**\*PRAYER of DEDICATION (unison)**

**We present to you, O God, our gifts. May they be used to make a difference in the lives of people where hope and peace are scarce. May our gifts be a reminder, to those who receive them, of your love. Amen.**

CHRISTMAS CANTATA (see below)

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE "Sing We Now of Christmas" Hudson

*The Spirit of the Lord is upon us, because he has anointed us to bring **good news** to the poor.  
He has sent us to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind,  
to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor. ~ based on Luke 4:18-19*

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

**Join us for coffee and conversation after the service in Fellowship Hall.**

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### The Christmas Story: A Classic Carol Celebration

by Tom Fettke and Thomas Grassi

Presented by

***The Sanctuary Choir***

*Leanne Connolly ~ Director*

*James Burr ~ Piano*

*Lynn and Tom Sweet ~ Narrators*

1. The Awaited One
2. Rejoice and Be Merry
3. O Holy Night
4. On Christmas Night All Christians Sing
5. A Midnight Clear
6. Rocking Carol  
*Joanne Myer, Kurt Dembeck ~ Soloists*
7. A Spanish Carol Suite  
*Gaile Dembeck, Joyce Smith ~ Soloists*
8. Wexford Carol  
*Halene Fujimoto ~ Soloist*
9. Sing We Now of Christmas

### In Our Ongoing Prayers . . .

San Bernardino, CA; stricter gun laws; intolerance of religious diversity/skin color/sexual orientation; a home for refugees; for hope and peace; remembering our widows and widowers; Jeannie and Ernie Uthgenannt; Heather and Dave Rumbold, Cathy Foote's niece and her husband on the loss of their home; Phillip Bogard, Cathy Foote's brother; Cindy Dubuque on the loss of her mother, Jane Dubuque; Bob Langone, Karen Bradford's father; Bertha Sullivan; Terri Carr; Dave LaPlante; Jake and Deb Garrow; David Hollister; Daniel Burnett-Pollock; Emmalee Watkins; Bess Howe; Dave Toolan; Lillian Morse; Debbie Chase; Dick Myer, Margaret Klukas; Candy, Lynette Melanson's sister; Dave Boucher; Joyce Smith; Gilmay Markunas and family; Pat Lazeren; Bobby Dwire; Warren Little; Tom Fitzgerald; Melinda Singh; Paul Westerberg; people struggling with mental illness; Ed Rockland; the people of Syria, including the family of Tarek Eid; Heidi Howie; Wendy Parker; Rachel Andrews; Carol Shea; Bobby Kelley; Nancy Bailey; Will Fisher and Jessica Surratt; Mason Bower; Debbie Marshall; Michael Turner; Richard Brooke; Ray Turner; Martha Fowler; Michael Bebrin; Thelma Gifford; Cooper Doyle; Horst Pohlmann; John Kaminski *New additions in bold print*

**Greeters:** Bev and Bill Duncan

**Coffee Hour:** Furnishings & Memorials Committee

~ ANNOUNCEMENTS ~

**\*TODAY DURING COFFEE HOUR downstairs in Fellowship Hall\***

**Christmas Cookie Sale:** For just \$5, fill a box with Christmas cookies!  
Sponsored by Women's Fellowship.

**Today is the last day to order Poinsettias** which are displayed in the Sanctuary during Christmas.

### TODAY'S ACTIVITIES

**Junior Choir Rehearsal:** 11:30 a.m., PF Room

**Christmas Giving Tree** sponsored by the Board of Missions. **Please place your new, unwrapped gift (or gift card) under the tree by today.**

### THIS WEEK'S ACTIVITIES

**Bible Study:** Monday, December 14, 11 a.m., Library

**Mind & Spirit Support Group:** Monday, December 14, 7 p.m., Library

**Ways & Means:** Monday, December 14, 7 p.m., Chapel

**Men's Breakfast Group:** Tuesday, December 15, 6:30 a.m., Vernon Diner

**BCE:** Tuesday, December 15, 7 p.m., Library

**Furnishings & Memorials:** Tuesday, December 15, 7 p.m., Chapel

**Library Committee:** Wednesday, December 16, 1 p.m., Library

**Finance:** Wednesday, December 16, 7:15 p.m., Library

**Basket Group:** Thursday, December 17, 10 a.m., Fellowship Hall

**Choir Rehearsal:** Thursday, December 17, 7:30 p.m., Sanctuary

**Support Group:** Friday, December 18, 10:30 a.m., Library

**Advent Bible Study:** Friday, December 18, 7 p.m., Library

**Ladies Luncheon:** Tuesday, December 22, noon at Mitchell's. Anyone needing a ride should call Jan Muro at 860-872-1757. Please sign up in Fellowship Hall.

**Junior Choir** for children in grades K-5, rehearses each Sunday after the worship service and a quick snack at 11:30 a.m. for 20 -30 minutes in the PF Room (Kellogg Hall). New members are welcome. Questions or suggestions? Contact Althea Madigan at 860-870-5185 (leave a message) or [childsings@gmail.com](mailto:childsings@gmail.com).

**Scrip-Your-All Update:** Last week was our greatest week ever with just over \$200 earned! We are now \$4750 towards our \$5,000 goal for 2015! If you placed an order last week, you may pick it up today. Remember, **today is** the last day to order to receive gift cards in time for Christmas. New cards are available at the Scrip-Your-All table. We now have cards to Best Buy, KMart, Toys R Us, LL Bean, in addition to Walmart, TJ Maxx, Macy's, Amazon, iTunes, Target, and Rave Theater. For complete information, check out our FCCV website ([firstchurchofvernon.org/scrip-your-all](http://firstchurchofvernon.org/scrip-your-all)) or stop by the Scrip-Your-All table during Coffee Hour.

**Please Note:** To request a visit with one of the pastors, please contact the Church Office at 860-875-7580.

## **ADVENT CALENDAR**

### **Advent Bible Study**

*led by Barbara Hesse*

Friday, December 18, 7 p.m. in the Library

### **Christmas Eve Children's Pageant**

Thursday, December 24, 5:30 p.m.

### **Christmas Eve Candlelight Service**

Thursday, December 24, 11 p.m.

### **Lessons and Carols**

Sunday, December 27 during the Worship Service