

THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF VERNON, UCC

December 23, 2012

Fourth Sunday in Advent ~ Love

GATHERING MUSIC “Love Came Down at Christmas”
“Of the Father’s Love Begotten”
“It Came Upon the Midnight Clear” Whitworth

CHIMING of the HOUR

WELCOME and ANNOUNCEMENTS The Rev. David Minnick

STEWARDSHIP MOMENT

ACOLYTES

PRELUDE “God’s Love Made Visible” Dave and Iola Brubeck
(#171 in the Chalice Hymnal)

WORDS of REFLECTION

“Never forget this. God loves you just the way you are and too much to let you stay that way.” Anne Lamott

***RESPONSIVE CALL to WORSHIP** The Rev. Joanne Myer

Leader: Surprising God, You shock us when You call us to serve You in ways we never expected!

People: We may be amazed when You call us to be shepherds of your sheep; to groom them, to guide, to nourish and protect them, but most importantly to love them.

Leader: Some of us may feel as though surely You could have chosen someone better, someone more worthy, someone else.

People: But, Mother God, You know better than any of us that we all have a shepherd within us. It is one of the characteristics that we share with You, as You have created us in your own image.

Leader: Father God, You have shaped us and set us in new and surprising directions.

People: Let our love for You be recognized in the way we care for one another.

All: Let our care for your children be your will and not our own so that generations to come may be blessed to know You; led and inspired to praise your name! Amen.

***OPENING HYMN #150 “Hark! the Herald Angels Sing”**

UNISON PRAYER of INVOCATION

O God of the Coming One, our Savior, how we long for you to be active in our lives and how we tremble at that possibility. As we gather today, we trust once again in your promise. The prophets have told of the day that is coming when Christ will come anew to exceed our hopes and comfort all fears. The day is quickly coming and we gather in hope and faith. Bless our gathering together in this hour and our time apart in the days to come. May these sacred days enrich our souls, that we might sing to your glory like the angels. We offer this in the name of Jesus, whose coming anew we await with hope. Amen.

***GLORIA PATRI (#35 in hymnal)**

LIGHTING of the ADVENT CANDLE Allan and Marilyn Newton

SHARING of JOYS and CONCERNS

***CENTERING HYMN #147 “Away in a Manger”**

MORNING PRAYER and the LORD’S PRAYER (unison...“debts”)

PRAYER RESPONSE

CALL to OFFERING

OFFERTORY “Christmas Sanctus” Dengler

***DOXOLOGY (#46 in hymnal)**

***UNISON PRAYER of DEDICATION**

Holy God, in the miracle of this season, we are ever mindful of how you take small things and turn them into the things that change the world.

By the power and wonder of your love and grace, take these our offerings and magnify them to be the instruments of good news and lasting peace to all the world. We ask this in Jesus’ name. Amen.

LESSONS and CAROLS

INTRODUCTION

CAROL #149 “Angels, from the Realms of Glory”

LESSON The Prophecy Isaiah 9: 2-6 Phyllis Chase

CAROL #104 “Of the Father’s Love Begotten”

LESSON The Birth Matthew 1: 18-25 Robert Warner

CAROL #148 “O Come, All Ye Faithful”

LESSON The Angels Luke 2: 8-14 Mary Wheeler

ANTHEM “Glory to God in the Highest” Pergolesi

LESSON The Shepherds Luke 2: 15-20 Jim Wilson

ANTHEM “Where Shepherds Lately Knelt” Courtney

LESSON Proclamation Philippians 2: 5-11

CAROL #167 “Go, Tell It on the Mountain”

BENEDICTION

BENEDICTION RESPONSE

“O Wonder Amazing” Fetke

POSTLUDE “Carols of the Bells” Ritter

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

Today’s Call to Worship was written by and used with the permission of Carmen Gray, a member of the Denison UCC in Cleveland Ohio. Ms. Gray, a community leader, works with at-risk teenagers to help them in their high school and further education.

There is no Children’s Message today. There will be a combined Sunday School class (3 years-5th grade) in Fellowship Hall. Grade 6-8 will meet in their classroom.

WELCOME TO FCCV!

If you are a guest, please take a moment to sign our Guest Book (on the table in the Narthex) and help yourself to a Welcome Bag made especially for you.

Guests are encouraged to use the Pew Cards to request information about our church, to provide addresses/emails for communication purposes or to ask for a pastoral visit. The Pew Cards can be placed in the plates with the offering.

TODAY DURING COFFEE HOUR downstairs in Fellowship Hall

Have your **blood pressure checked** by one of our Parish Nurses.

THIS WEEK'S ACTIVITIES

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

Family Service

5:30 PM

Candlelight Service

9 PM

Support Group: Friday, December 28, 10:30 AM, Library

Socks (children and adults) will be collected at the 5:30 PM Christmas Eve Family Service. All donations will be given to the Tri-Town Shelter.

There will be No Sunday School on December 30 (winter break). The Toddler Room will be open and staffed for children 5 years and under.

Please join us for a reception after the worship service on Sunday, December 30 to honor and celebrate The Rev. David Minnick's 28 months as our Interim Senior Pastor. During this time David's pastoral leadership has enriched our lives and prepared us for the next chapter in our journey as a congregation. Please join us as we thank David and wish him well.

PLEDGE DRIVE UPDATE

Pledges Were Due November 11.

If you have not turned in your pledge, we encourage you to do so as soon as possible. Your pledge is vital to the planning of our 2013 budget.

If you need a pledge packet or have any questions, contact the Church Office (860-875-7580 or fccv@snet.net).

Thank You and Merry Christmas!

"FCCV's GALLERY OF FAITH" is a gallery filled with love...love of God through Christ and love for each other. We exhibit this love through the many opportunities provided at FCCV...opportunities for worship, service and fellowship that are a blessing to each of us.

The Board of Missions thanks all those who donated over 200 toys and gifts for the Vernon Social Services "Toy Workshop" where a family in need can choose toys that best fit their children's needs and wants for Christmas. Thank you for bringing joy, hope and love to these children.

People are needed to serve on the Stewardship & Evangelism Committee. If interested, contact Tony Muro.

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** located downstairs in the Kellogg wing is open for **children 12 months to 3 years old.**

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, contact Jan Muro (872-1757 or jmoze@hotmail.com) or Jon Dunlap (875-7254).

Please Wear Your Name Tag! Reach out in fellowship by wearing your name tag. If you need one, please contact the Church Office, fccv@snet.net or (860)875-7580.

Acolytes Needed! To all parents of Sunday School children...if your child would like to be an acolyte, please contact Delythe Kracke at DelytheK@yahoo.com or (860) 872-3004.

Want to Meet New People? Volunteer to Serve! Whether it's welcoming others at the door before the Worship Service or providing a baked good or snack, making coffee or setting up and cleaning up after Coffee Hour, volunteers are needed. A sign up sheet is posted on the refrigerator in the kitchen. All help is welcome.

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.

In Our Ongoing Prayers. . . . **Lewis Frost**, father of Suzanne Maki, in hospice with colon cancer; **Maddy Slicer** (friend of Ann Harford and sister-in-law of Herb Slicer) and her husband **Art**. Maddy is in Yale Hospital recovering from open heart surgery; **Ruth Woodcock** and her daughter **Sarah** (friends of Becky Burr); **Will Livermore**, Pat Lazeren's brother, who suffered an eye injury and may need surgery; **Shirley Bryant**; **Dick Saich**; **Mike Kermode** deployed in Afghanistan; **Mike Swan**; **Claudette** and **Art Weingart**; **Pat Lazeren**; **Meredith Ross**, 3 year old daughter of Megan and Eli (friends of Emily Westerberg), diagnosed with T-cell Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia (ALL); **Deborah Costello**, friend of Angel Hockenberry, (breast cancer); **Richard Brooke**, Betsy Gerakaris' brother; **Stephen Volovski**; **Ann Garrison**; **Ray Turner**, father-in-law of Cheryl Turner (stroke); **Martha Fowler** (cancer); **Michael Bebrin**; **Joyce Smith**; **Thelma Gifford**; **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**; **Donald Chase**