

The Carillon

The First Congregational Church
of Vernon, UCC



CHURCH STAFF

Interim Senior Pastor	The Rev. David Minnick
Associate Pastor	Rev. Cynthia J. Carr
Minister of Christian Education	Linda Shivers
Church Secretary	Nancy Young
Sanctuary Choir Director	Mary Jo Simonds-Huneger
Organist	James Burr
Custodian	Earl Friedrich
Phone	(860) 875-7580
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Email	fccv@snet.net
Website	firstchurchofvernon.org

Sunday Worship 10 AM
Sunday School 10 AM

Church Office Hours
Monday – Friday
8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.



“Connect Through Christ – Connect With Us”

The *Carillon* is published monthly, except for July/August, by
First Congregational Church of Vernon
695 Hartford Turnpike
Vernon, CT 0606

PASTOR'S PONDERINGS

Do not pray for easy lives; pray to be stronger. Do not pray for tasks equal to your powers; pray for powers equal to your tasks. Then the doing of your work shall be no miracle, but you yourself shall be a miracle. Every day you shall wonder at yourself, at the richness of life which has come to you by the grace of God. - Phillips Brooks

Those who recognize the name Phillips Brooks, likely do so because they've seen him listed in their hymnals as the author of "O Little Town of Bethlehem." Legend has it that Brooks wrote the hymn, during a pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 1865. As he visited the fields around Bethlehem on a cold winter's night, he was moved by this sacred spot and the images of what had happened there centuries before. Remembering his congregation back in Philadelphia, he was moved to write a simple poem in their honor, hoping one day to share it with them.

Three years later, as he and the church organist, Louis Redner, were working on the children's pageant, Brooks showed Redner this simple poem and Redner went to work, composing what has become one of the most beloved carols of all time.

Remembering this story of inspiration, I recently came upon the prayer, printed above, which was also written by Phillips Brooks. This prayer is a timely one for us to reflect on and to offer ourselves during this season of Advent. How are we preparing ourselves to celebrate the coming anew of Christ?

I'm sure many can explain how they are preparing their homes, preparing their menus for holiday feasts, preparing their shopping lists for loved ones and friends, but this is the time of year when we are wise to look past all those distractions to ask ourselves--How are we preparing our hearts for the celebration of God's love coming to us in the human form of Jesus Christ?

Many families and individuals have various Advent rituals to help them to prepare. Some families like to have an Advent wreath in their homes and to light the appropriate candles on the wreath during dinner each night. Some find the seasonal devotional booklets of Advent a good resource while others count down one day at a time with an Advent calendar. Regardless of how you may choose to mark the days of this sacred season, the important thing for us to do as people of faith is to acknowledge the big difference between counting down for the holiday of Christmas from counting down for the holy day of Christmas.

God willing, by reclaiming the sacred rituals of this season, each of you may find that Brooks' prayer, printed above, is your prayer in these days of waiting, hoping and anticipation.

See you in church.....David

The Pastoral Search Committee

A discussion will be held on Sunday, December 12, on the important role of the Search Committee in the pastoral search process. This discussion will be led by the Interim Senior Pastor, David Minnick, in the Sanctuary, one half hour after the end of worship.

This will be an opportunity to learn of the expectations, demands, and rewards of serving on the Pastoral Search Committee for the next settled Senior Pastor. Anyone interested in serving on the next Pastoral Search Committee is encouraged to attend to learn more about this. All are welcome to attend.



Family Service - 5:30 PM

Candlelight Service - 11 PM

Christian Education News

Minister of Christian Education

Linda Shivers, necsvga@aol.com

Sunday School Superintendents

Cindy Madden, cindymadden@msn.com

Jen Condry, jbcondry@aol.com

Victoria Madden, vickimadden@msn.com

Youth Advisors

Dave and Deb Hockenberry, davendebihock@att.net

Fred and Jayne Gunther, jayne.gunther@snet.net



Sunday School News

Dec. 5 Grades 3 yrs-5th will start downstairs, end room of Kellogg Hall

Dec. 24 **Christmas Eve Family Service, 5:30 PM.** Children and youth are needed to fill several parts: angels, shepherds, guardian angels, wisemen, star. If interested, please contact Cindy Madden or Victoria Madden.

Mission Participation

The 6th grade Sunday School class collected over 60 pair of men’s pants. The request for the pants came from Mary Engelson, Director of the Cornerstone Soup Kitchen and Shelter.

Last month, the 4th/5th grade class collected men’s, women’s and children’s coats for “Button Up Connecticut.” During December, the K/1st grade class will be collecting gently-used or new scarves, hats and gloves for our **Mitten Tree**, to be donated to “KIDSAFE” and the Cornerstone Soup Kitchen.



At the 5:30 PM Christmas Eve Family Service, the Board of Christian Education will be **collecting new socks for men, women and children**. Donations will be dropped off at the Cornerstone Shelter on Christmas Eve.

Confirmation Class Schedule

Dec. 12 Class, 11:00 AM-1 PM. Topic - “Religions 101” and “Why Are There So Many Different Christian Religions?” Bring your lunch.

Dec. 19 Class, 11:30 AM-1 PM. Topic- “Do I Really Need To Learn About Religion?” and “How To Enrich My Religious Life So I Will Feel Closer To God.” Bring your lunch.

Dec. 24 **Christmas Eve** - Participate in the 5:30 PM Family Service or the 11 PM Candlelight Service

Activities/Church Hours Available for Confirmation Youth

Dec. 5 Giv2 mission – we’ll meet at Trinity Lutheran Church at 1 PM. From there we will be going to several nursing homes in the area and returning to Trinity. Pick up will be at 5 PM.

Youth Fellowship (6th-12th Grades)

Advisors: Jayne and Fred Gunther, Debi and Dave Hockenberry, Linda Shivers

Dec. 5 Giv2 mission – we’ll meet at Trinity Lutheran Church at 1 PM. From there we will be going to several nursing homes in the area and returning to Trinity. Pick up will be at 5 PM.

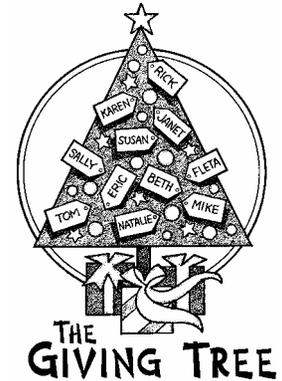
Vacation Bible School (VBS)

Believe it or not, it’s not too early to start thinking about VBS, which will be held June 27- July 2 (date subject to change if the last day of school changes). Please keep these dates in mind when planning summer programs for your children. This year’s theme will be “Shake It Up Café.” Registration forms will be mailed to those who attended last year and also will be available in the Church Office after Easter. Sign up now to volunteer.

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BOARD OF MISSIONS NEWS

The **Christmas Giving Tree** will once again be making an appearance! We will be collecting toys for the Vernon Social Services “Toy Workshop” where a family in need can choose the toys that best fit their children’s needs and wants for Christmas. Vernon Social Services has a specific need for games, multicultural dolls, arts/crafts, science kits, and other educational toys.



The Christmas Giving Tree will be set up in the Sanctuary where you may **choose a tag from December 5-12**. Each tag bears the age and gender of a child in need. Place your new, **unwrapped** toy(s) under the tree by Sunday, December 19. Any questions? Contact Lisa Rylant, 860-498-0035.

Note: If (only if) inclement weather cancels church on December 19, unwrapped gifts will be collected in the church breezeway between 8-10 AM on Monday, December 20. Any questions regarding inclement weather? Contact the Church Office.

Please Note: The Board of Missions and Outreach now has a bulletin board in Fellowship Hall to keep you informed about our meals at the Soup Kitchen. Stop by and check it out if you are interested in helping prepare/serve/or shop for the food. There is also a list of the non-perishable foods that we use each month. Working at the soup kitchen couldn’t be easier. There is a booklet that gives the shopping list, recipes and loads of other information. Consider volunteering with your family, scout troop, friends....

OPERATING BUDGET SUMMARY

Year-to-Date 9/30/10

	<u>2010</u>	<u>2009</u>
Pledges & Unrestricted Giving Received vs. Budgeted Amount	79.2%	80.4%
Pledges & Unrestricted Giving Income	\$184,524	\$190,194
Total Income	\$259,840	\$263,752
Total Expenses	\$250,067	\$265,131
Net Income	\$9,773	(\$1,379)

Detailed financial information is available from Bill Boutwell, Treasurer (williamboutwell@comcast.net).

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP NEWS

Thanks to all who helped make the church fair a great success. So many people contributed in so many different ways - we thank you all! It was a wonderful day of fun and fellowship.

Box O'Cookies Sale - December 12 during Coffee Hour. Fill a box with delicious home made Christmas cookies. This is an FCCV tradition. If you would like to contribute some cookies to the sale, just drop 2-3 dozen off at the table before church.



Parish Nurse News

YOGA...Our Parish Nurses sponsor Yoga classes on Wednesday evenings from 5:30-6:30 PM. Classes are based on practical Hatha Yoga stretches and are geared for all levels. Donation is \$5 per class. Please bring a mat. Questions? Contact Sara Koziol, 875-0203.

Your Parish Nurses take **blood pressures** on the 4th Sunday of every month. We also offer supportive listening and provide information and referral resources.

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STEWARDSHIP & EVANGELISM NEWS

2011 Pledge Campaign

“Let Your Light Shine”

“Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in Heaven.”
Matthew 5:16 (NIV)

Have You Turned in Your Pledge Card?

All Pledges where due by November 14.

This is vital to planning the 2011 budget. If you did not receive your pledge packet or need one, please notify the Church Office. The Stewardship & Evangelism Committee will be sending out friendly reminders via phone calls for those who may have forgotten to return them.

Thank You For Your Support!

2011 PLEDGE GOAL - \$240,000

Welcome to FCCV

If you bring a guest to church or know of a first time visitor, please ask them to sign our Guest Book located in the Narthex on the table beneath the Flower Chart. There they will also find a special Welcome Bag just for them.

Wear Your Nametag

Reach out in fellowship. Wear your nametag. If you need a nametag, please contact the Church Office, fccv@snet.net or (860) 875-7580.

Interested in Becoming a Member?

Contact the Church Office, 860-875-7580 or fccv@snet.net.

January Carillon

DEADLINE

Tuesday, December 7

Merry
Christmas!



POINSETTIA ORDER FORM
\$11 per plant

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone # _____

In memory of _____

In honor of _____

To beautify the Sanctuary _____

Deadline for ordering is December 12.

Please make checks payable to FCCV.

Thank You...

In the days that have followed Maggie's recent diagnosis of breast cancer, we have been overwhelmed with so many calls, cards, encouraging words and offers to help. We so appreciate all this kindness and caring. Maggie was deeply touched by the knitted prayer shawl given to her by the group that does this very caring outreach here. The experience of being, literally and figuratively, wrapped up in prayer has been quite encouraging. At this point, the surgery is now complete and Maggie is preparing for her follow-up therapy. Thanks again for your prayers, kindness, comforting words and understanding.

David Minnick

The **Men's Club Breakfast Group** meets every Tuesday at 6:30 AM at the Vernon Diner. A brief devotion and excellent conversation is served each week. We invite all men of the church to join us.

CARING and SHARING GROUP

Anyone interested in attending this grief support group is invited to join us on **Fridays at 10:30 AM** in the Library. This group is open to all who have experienced the loss of a loved one and is being run by members of the congregation. Please feel free to come alone or bring a family member or friend. Any questions? Contact the Church Office, 860-875-7580.



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, would like more information or would like to join the Care Network, please contact the Church Office.

The Library is self-serve and open when the church is open.

The **Prayer Shawl Group** is now meeting at the church on the 2nd Wednesday of the month at 1 PM in the Library.

T. P. C. News

Charlie Nichols was ordained on Sunday, October 17 in the New Britain Congregational Church. It was a lovely service in which Rev. Peter Brenner participated and Serena Volovski sang a solo. Your T.P.C. was in attendance as well as other FCCV members.

We want you, our congregation, to be aware of the wonderful ministry you have provided and what Rev. Charlie Nichols is now doing as a Chaplain at Tampa General Hospital. Following are excerpts from comments made by Charlie's colleague at the hospital, the Rev. Brock Leach. He thanked everyone who was part of Charlie's preparations. Know that you all played an important part.

"Tampa General is a safety net hospital. It is a Level One Trauma Center and operates five med-evac helicopters, a transplant center, a regional burn center and an acute care psychiatric unit.

Interfaith chaplains serve people from every religious tradition you can imagine. Chaplains are on duty in the hospital 24 hours a day, on trauma teams, responsible for finding the identities of patients, working with EMT crews, police agencies, using the Internet to track down individuals and call their families. Often Chaplains are the first to tell them what's happened.

Chaplains greet family members when they arrive in the ER. They are paged to every Code Blue (cardiac arrest), every Code Gold (strokes) Code Grays (helping calm unruly patients or family members) and to most deaths. Chaplains most frequently are called to be with patients approaching the end of life. Charlie was recently certified in palliative care. Chaplains change and protect the identity of patients hospitalized due to abuse. Chaplains respond to some 250 orders a week for "routine" pastoral care.

One day Charlie attended to three very difficult deaths starting by being present for a family in the last moments. In the second case, the wife of a patient collapsed into Charlie's arms at the very moment that he got paged to be with the parents of a full-term baby girl who had just died. To be able to handle that whiplash of spiritual and emotional demands by being authentically and calmly present for patients and still respond to emergencies is not for the faint of heart. Few are bestowed with gifts that make them uniquely suited to this work, and Charlie Nichols is one of them.

Twenty survivors of the earthquake in Haiti were airlifted to Tampa General. Charlie did not speak French, let alone Creole, but there was something about Charlie's loving presence that transcended language. Haitians he'd barely met would immediately come up and give him a hug. They placed themselves in the care of a middle-aged white man, who didn't speak their language purely on spiritual instinct and their instincts were darned good.

There's something about Charlie - maybe it's his diverse life experience, his approachability, his humor and ever-present smile, or his reassuring hand on the shoulder - that brings him into a deep caring relationship with people from all walks of life at the very moment when their world is being rocked to its foundations.

Charlie's great gift is to be that ambassador of God for people in crisis. We are so blessed to have him present with us in our Tampa General ministry. We are deeply grateful to you at FCCV for preparing him and supporting him and sharing him with us."



We extend sincere sympathy to the following individuals who have recently experienced the loss of a loved one.

The family and friends of Rev. Nancy Allen on her death
The Sexton family on the death of Valerie's mother-in-law,
Dorothy
Rev. Davida Foy Crabtree on the death of her husband,
David T. Hindinger, Jr.

PRAY FOR OUR MILITARY

Following is a list of people in our church family on active duty. We ask that you keep them and their families in your prayers. If you would like to add someone to this list, please contact the Church Office.

Maj. Joel Cummings, son of Hal and Ibbey Cummings, at Fort Bliss, TX
Michael Wilson, son of Nancy Beimler, serving in the U. S. Navy in San Diego
Steven Beimler, son of Nancy Beimler in the National Guard
David Roy, nephew of Bess and Harmon Howe and Donna and Dave Symonds,
in Afghanistan
Charlie Oster, Mary Hurst's daughter's fiancée, in Afghanistan





Merry Christmas!

From the Church Staff