

From: FCCV (fccv@snet.net)
To: fccv@snet.net;
Date: Fri, January 20, 2012 1:59:52 PM
Cc:
Subject: Pastor's Weekly Email

**When the song of the angels is stilled,
 When the star in the sky is gone,
 When the kings and princes are home,
 When the shepherds are back with their flock,
 The work of Christmas begins:
 To find the lost,
 To heal the broken,
 To feed the hungry,
 To release the prisoner,
 To rebuild the nations,
 To bring peace among people,
 To make music in the heart.**

Howard Thurman, The Mood of Christmas

++++
 When I got back from some time away in Florida last weekend, all the Christmas lights on the houses in my neighborhood had been taken down and Christmas trees were placed by the curb in front of many homes. The new year is here and Christmas 2011 is over.

Howard Thurman was a student at the same seminary I attended (many years before me) and every year, the Christmas card that the alumni get from the seminary includes this poem. I think it gracefully captures the important work of the church in these days. The joy and glow of Christmas is past and now is the time to draw on all the emotion of those days and use it in our efforts at discipleship.

This coming Sunday, our worship together will highlight several of the ways in which the people of God are challenged "to make music in the heart." As part of our ongoing efforts to remember our heritage and reinforce our hopes during our 250th anniversary year, two of our hymns will come from our historical roots. Joan Apel will share an historical moment that will explain and document this. And our children's choir, The Transformers, will sing "Down in My Heart," a song that always gets people to tap their feet and smile joyfully.

This Sunday's message is based on Jonah 3: 1-10. (No, that's not the part of the book that deals with Jonah being in the belly of a fish for three days.) The message will focus on our response to God's numerous summons to us. Let me suggest if you have a chance, take a few moments to read the entire book of Jonah before Sunday (In my Bible here, it is two and a half pages long). Although most of us recognize Jonah for his adventures in the belly of a fish, the story told here is a rich one that has much to offer us in our efforts to live faithfully.

Also this Sunday, after worship, we will have our Annual Budget Meeting. This is also an important part of our congregational history as it is our practice to approve the shared budget for the year to come. In its own way, this is a very sacred time in our church year, for by approving our budget, we are giving support and encouragement to the ministries and missions which the budget empowers. I want to encourage everyone to attend this meeting, ask the questions which you may have, respectfully acknowledge the diversity of opinions about this, and let us move ahead in hope so that "the work of Christmas may begin."

Hope to see you this Sunday.
 Pastor David

The First Congregational Church of Vernon

695 Hartford Turnpike
 Vernon, CT 06066
Paula J. Dascomb, Clerk

ANNUAL FISCAL MEETING

Sunday, January 22, 2012

The Annual Fiscal Meeting of The First Congregational Church of Vernon will be held on Sunday, January 22, 2012 after the Worship Service. The purpose of this meeting is to:

1. Receive and act upon the report of the Auditing Committee;
2. Receive and review prior year financial report;
3. Receive and act upon the budget for the fiscal year as presented by the Board of Finance;
4. Elect members of the Auditing Committee, the Stewardship and Evangelism Committee and the Safe Church Committee;
5. Receive and act upon the recommendation of the Board of Deacons for a Bylaw change to the Church Covenant;
6. Receive and act upon the recommendation of the Executive Committee and endorsed by Church Council for Staff reconfiguration;
7. Transact any other business as may properly come before this business meeting.

Date of this posting: January 12, 2012

Paula J. Dascomb
Clerk