



# The December 2007 Landmark

The First Congregational Church  
United Church of Christ  
An Open and Affirming Congregation

Guilford, Connecticut

Vol. 54, Number 11

## APPLE TREES AND ADVENT PRAYERS

I had three apple trees in my yard in Tolland. The sight of them, along the stone wall, was home to me. In every season and every year, I watched their lives as they watched mine. Delight and awe struck me this June when I first came through the backyard of the parsonage on 19 Church Street and saw its apple tree. I walked near to it and thought ... perhaps now I am home. In August, as Bob and Ray prepared the house, I welcomed its early apples.

This Fall, as I walked through the backyard almost every day, I recalled a poem I saved through the years. It has taken on a new meaning for me now; it is my prayer for our church and each one of you. In this Advent season, may we pray this poem for ourselves, our families, our church and our world.

### The Apple Tree

What I want for it, I want for you –  
That you take hold  
That your roots find home in stony winter soil  
That you take seasons in stride, seasons that shape and reshape you  
That like a dancer's, your limbs grow pliant, graceful and surprising  
That you know in your branching to seek balance –  
    knowing when to flower and when to wait for returns  
That you know fruit as it ripens, trusting that what is lost to you will be replaced  
That in early summer afternoons, as a full blossoming tree, you cast lacy shadows  
That change not frighten you, but meets your embrace  
That remembering your small history,  
    you find your place in an orchard  
That you be your own orchard  
That you prepare for the world, the fallen world,  
    something shapely, useful, new, and delicious  
And that always and everywhere, you turn to a giving sun.

*Author unknown (lost but not forgotten)*

This sacred season of Advent stirs our deep yearnings for the Christ child and beckons our deep hopes for the new creation. May we respond to all these longings rooted fully and firmly in the One who sustains us in every season.

**Advent blessings,  
Susan**

**DECEMBER 2007  
WORSHIP & EDUCATION SCHEDULE**

**December 2: 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday in Advent/Communion**  
– *Mary Klaaren preaching*

10:00am Worship/New Members Received/  
Nursery/Church School

11:15am Coffee Hour/Harvest Mini-Fair– FH  
5:00pm Contemporary Worship Service  
6:00pm Advent Family Supper – FH

**December 9: 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Advent - Susan**  
*preaching*

8:30am Worship- Chapel  
10:00am Worship/Nursery Care/Church School  
4:00pm Service of Lessons and Carols – Sanct.  
5:30pm Soup & Bread Supper – FH  
by Pilgrim Fellowship

**December 16: 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Advent, Rev. Dr.**  
*Michael Penn-Strah preaching*

8:30am Worship – Chapel  
10:00am Worship/Nursery/Church School  
11:15am Adult Forum – Chapel

**Wed., December 19, 7:00 PM Service of Prayer  
and Healing- Sanctuary**

**December 23: 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Advent**

8:30 AM Worship/Advent 4  
10:00 AM Christmas Festival Service/Special  
Christmas Program for children up through grade 4  
PF Cookie Walk - in FH between services and after  
the 10 AM service.

**December 24: Christmas Eve**

5:00 PM Christmas Pageant – Sanctuary  
★10:00 PM★ Candlelight Communion  
Service – *Mary Klaaren preaching*  
**Please note earlier time**

**December 30:**

10:00 AM Single Service of Worship – Sanctuary  
*Rev. David Colton preaching*  
No Church School



**BAPTISM**

**November 25, 2007**

Evelyn Jane Bertolini

daughter of Sarah & Peter Bertolini



**DEATH**

George Hurlbut Baldwin

October 16, 1923 – October 31, 2007

**DEACONESS OF THE MONTH**

**Deaconess for December** is Sue Walden (458-3735). Please notify her of births, adoptions, or anyone who may need a note of sympathy or encouragement. Pam Welch (458-2340) the contact person for the Deaconesses' **Prayer Shawl Ministry**. New hands are always welcome to knit or crochet shawls; materials are provided. If you know of someone who would welcome a Prayer Shawl as a tangible sign of First Church's prayers, please call Pam. **Audiotapes** of Sunday services are available to sign out in Spencer House kitchen.



**ALPHA CLUB**

The Alpha Club Christmas Party will be held at Carin Small's home, 52 Church Street on Tuesday, December 11th at 7:00 PM. We will continue our tradition of collecting new, unwrapped toys which will be donated to Christian Community Action in New Haven. All are welcome. *Cynthia Magee (453-5487)*



**THE MUSTARD SEED GROUP**

This is an interfaith discussion group for mothers of children with special needs. We typically meet monthly to share information, network with other moms, and provide and receive comfort and inspiration. Most often we meet for lunch at Anna's Temptations or at Kim Beckett's home. If you would like more information, please call Kim Beckett (453-9957).



**Thanks to Office Angels for November:**

Kim Beckett, Betty Brown, Liza Catino, Barbara Eismeier, Kelly Garcia, Cynthia Hirni, PattyAnn Meyer, Beth Milliron, Alice Mitchell, Charlotte Mousch, Ruth Neale, Marty Neale, Sandy Nicholas, Donna Nielsen, MaryJo Puchini, Martha Rebuzzini, Meg Rebuzzini

**41<sup>ST</sup> ANNUAL HARVEST FAIR  
\* THANK YOU \***



**From the Harvest Fair Committee:**

It was a great day: the weather couldn't have been more beautiful as we welcomed over 800 people through our doors. It was a great time of fellowship and hard work; we raised over \$20,000 and we still have the Mini-Fair on Sunday, Dec. 2<sup>nd</sup>! To all who contributed their time, energy and creativity to our Harvest Fair, the Committee is most grateful. The Harvest Fair is very grateful to the PF who helped with set-up and clean-up—GREAT JOB!

**Thank You From 'Attic Treasures':**

Heartfelt thanks from the Attic Treasures group all who donated their treasures, all who purchased, and all who helped set-up, worked at the booth and packed up the leftovers. We are grateful for your contribution to our success. Remember to start saving your lovely items again for next year's Harvest Fair – we cannot do it without you!

*Betty Allen, Nancy Brown, Kay Honsberger, Cindy Magee, Carin Small, Wendy Sullivan*

**From the Bakery Room:**

Thank you to all the people who baked all the delicious food for the Harvest Fair Bakery booth. We appreciate your help in making the fair a success. Thank you too to those who worked at the booth and made calls to remind people to bake. A special thank you to Barbara Bishop for her dozens of jars of jelly and baked beans, and to Peggy Benton for the many loaves of friendship bread plus jars of relishes.

Debbie Peluse and Karen Kalbfeld

**HARVEST MINI-FAIR SUNDAY, DEC. 2<sup>ND</sup>  
11:15 AM in Fellowship Hall**

Looking for a few special gifts? Look no further than downstairs! Jellies and jams, handcrafts, wooden crafts, bird carvings, and knitted goods will be available for you to purchase. Marty & Ruth take orders all year long for their carved birds, but for everything else it's your last chance until next year! See you then!

**TOP TEN REASONS TO PLEDGE**

- #1. *God has given us abundance in life to share with the world (what do you think?)*
- #2. *A desire for all of God's children to have food, shelter, clothing and peace (seriously)*
- #3. *Gratitude for fellowship, inspiration, and support (a men)*
- #4. *250 church school children learned about God last year (really!)*
- #5. *Mary may play either half the postlude or the entire postlude with one hand (ha, ha)*
- #6. *Susan is designing a windmill generator to replace our steeple (not really)*
- #7. *Heat and light in the sanctuary during worship adds to the experience (true)*
- #8. *It's Convenient: Just remember to add an extra zero! (ok?)*
- #9. *Daphne may resort to conducting Church School on-line (just kidding)*
- #10. *It's the perfect gift, easy to wrap, always fits, and you don't have to walk it (true)*

"Stewardship is not about 'paying our dues'. It is a spiritual practice of an abundant and faith-filled life".  
From: "The Big Secret of Giving".

2008 Stewardship Goals:

Pledging date: November 18, 2007 or asap  
 Pledging amount:  
 Current Expenses: \$470,000 (87% of total)  
 Comm. & World Concerns: \$ 70,000 (13% of total)  
 Total: \$540,000 (100%)  
 (Increase over 2007 pledge total: 10%)

We are well on our way to our goal. Pledges received to date total \$361,251. If you haven't yet mailed your pledge, please do so today. We need everyone's help to continue to be the strong and healthy church that we are. Thank you to all who have already given their 2008 financial pledge.

God bless,  
 Your Stewardship Committee

**ALL CHAIRPERSONS TAKE NOTE**

Its time the think about your Annual Report!  
Annual Reports need to be submitted by each of the Boards and Committees for inclusion in our Book of Reports prepared for the Annual Meeting – Sunday, February 3<sup>rd</sup>. **To insure the Book of Reports is ready by January 20 for all members and friends to review before the meeting, your reports need to be submitted to the Church Office by Monday, January 7<sup>th</sup>.** If you can submit them early, by all means do so!

Reports may be submitted in different ways. Certainly the easiest for me is to receive it as an email attachment to [office@firstchurchquilford.org](mailto:office@firstchurchquilford.org). - I use Microsoft Word. You may also submit a hard copy that is “copy-ready.” Of course, if you do not have access to a computer, I am happy to key your report into the computer – just submit it as early as possible, please. Check last year’s Book of Reports if you need guidance in preparing this year’s report. If you have any questions, please call me. Thank you!

*Penelope*

**RED TENT ADVENT RETREAT**

We will gather on Sat., Dec. 1 from 8:30 AM – 11:30 AM at the Mercy Center in Madison to prepare our spirits for the meaning of Christmas. Led by Kim Hartmann our retreat title is “*Light a Candle in Your Heart.*” Please bring an object or picture that represents for you some aspect of the Advent journey. The Red Tent is open to any woman interested in spiritual reflection and fellowship. For more info call Penelope at 453-5149. Please RSVP if attending, but as always, if you find you are able to come at the last minute please come along even without an RSVP.

***Heartfelt Thanks to the First Church Family***

Thank you one and all:

Words cannot express my appreciation for the outpouring of prayers and love from my Church Family. Your calls, cards, flowers and visits have been a great boost for my morale. Again many thanks for your prayers.

Most sincerely, *Charlotte Mousch*

God’s spirit is alive here: I am humbled and most grateful for all your expressions of caring, support, and prayers during this difficult time. My special thanks to our staff who so embody Jesus’ love, to Liza who jumped in to cover the office and all the office volunteers who helped answer phones and do what needed to be done. Thank you all.

In Christ’s love- *Penelope*

**PARKING REMINDER**

As we move into winter, we remind you of our parking plan which ensures that people with physical limitations will be able to park closest to the church. (Those individuals are asked to display a Priority Parking Card which is available by request from the Church Office.) All able-bodied persons are asked to leave open the spaces in the Church parking lot and in front of the Church on both sides of Broad Street for those who need to park close. There are plenty of spaces around the Green and on State Street. Thank you for your cooperation. A copy of the Parking Guide is in the narthex.

**CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP SERVICE  
HELP SPREAD THE WORD!**

As First Church’s Contemporary Worship Service moves into its second year we ask you to help spread the good word. If you’ve never been to one of these upbeat and more casual worship services, please give it a try and bring some friends with you. We want to share our church with others and the Contemporary Worship Service provides a spirited alternative to our traditional Sunday morning services. We follow a standard order of worship with each service providing a different and inspired message. We want to involve people of all ages – both in attendance and participation.

Join us on the first Sunday of each month at 5:00 PM in the Sanctuary. And bring lots of friends – you never know for whom this service will strike the perfect note and keep them coming back for more! We welcome comments, suggestions, questions, or a willingness to participate: Call me at 458-9253 or e-mail [contemporary@firstchurchquilford.org](mailto:contemporary@firstchurchquilford.org). Hope to see you there!

*Stuart Wilkie*  
*Contemporary Worship Team*

**Church Council Highlights**

November 13, 2007

DeWitt Zuse opened the meeting at 7 pm with a moment of silent reflection and Susan Murtha led us in prayer.

Bob Howard and Stephen Dudley presented a fire suppression system update. They said the project is currently “dead in the water” because we cannot determine its actual cost without hiring an engineer to do a structural analysis of the building and the space required by such a system would have significant impact on some of our committees and programs. Stephen estimates that the cost of hiring an engineer to provide a structural analysis and design for the project would be at least \$10,000. He observed that installing a fire suppression system would not be impossible, just complex and expensive. In response to a question from Kim Beckett, Bob said that he had contacted every historic church in the New Haven, New Haven East and Middlesex Associations and found that none of them have installed a sprinkler system. In response to a question from Virginia Corbiere, he noted that the most common sources of fires are human error (especially on the part of repair and maintenance personnel), the electrical system and the kitchen. He also acknowledged that there is currently no annual safety inspection at our church. DeWitt added that the Guilford Fire Marshall has offered to talk with the church about what more we can be doing to prevent fires. Stephen Dudley thanked Bob Howard and Ray Dudley for all of their efforts on behalf of the church and recommended that if the fire suppression system is to be pursued, we need a new ad hoc committee to do so.

Stephen Dudley reported that the Church Property Study Committee needs information to develop a framework for their planning. He distributed a Church Property Survey and requests that all members of boards and committees, officers and staff complete it and return it to him. (All those completing the survey are asked to use names so the committee may make follow-ups as needed).

Susan Murtha introduced the concept of covenant time by summarizing a program she did for Council last fall. During covenant time, committee members move away from the table where they do business and devote time to prayer and spiritual sharing, often surrounding a particular topic or reading. She

observed that the benefits of covenant time include a growth of shared community within the committee, the growth of faith and our relation with God as we both talk and listen, a reduction in difficult group dynamics as we gain insight into one another, and the development of more fruitful ministry as committees make better use of their time and move beyond managing and fixing things. Peter Carleton shared ways the Welcome and Inclusion Committee have used the idea of covenant time to honor their mission, reflect on what they are doing and discuss such topics as the meaning of change and the “thin places” when we seem closer to the realm of God. He also noted that it is necessary for the committee chair to have time management skills in order to honor a commitment to covenant time. Stuart Wilkie reported that Mary Morreale leads the Music Committee in covenant time at the beginning of each meeting. He said it has “brought the committee together like you can’t imagine.” Much of the business of the committee is conducted by e-mail. There is more active involvement by committee members and there are no vacant slots for next year because no one wants to leave. Mary Morreale reported that among the “springboard” topics she has used for covenant time are words to hymns, the meaning of faith, forgiveness, the meaning of music (and how the words we use to identify that meaning also reflect our experience of God), the Apostles Creed, and meditating on scripture.

Charlie West distributed a recommended time table for considering changes to the by-laws. He proposes that the 2008 Annual Meeting consider changes in Financial Coordination and Leadership Structure as well as a number of minor changes. Other possible changes will not be considered until some time in the future. He asked all committees impacted by proposed changes to review them carefully and contact him before the end of the year at 453-6817 or [westcm@gmail.com](mailto:westcm@gmail.com). There will be informational meetings about the proposed By-law changes on December 2 and January 13 at 11:15 am.

The Council unanimously approved 2008 Housing Allowance requests for Kendrick, Susan and Mary, as well as the October Minutes and September Financial Reports.

DeWitt distributed an article for our reflection entitled “Who’s Robert? And Why Do We Follow His Rules Anyway?”

*Linda Carleton*

♪ ♪ **MUSIC NOTES FROM MARY** ♪ ♪

The music of the Advent and Christmas season is always such a joy to participate in fully through listening and making music together. Our Senior Choir has been working on the music since October; however, newcomers are welcome to join our Senior Choir for rehearsals on Nov. 29, Dec 6 for Lessons and Carols on December 9 at 4:00 PM.

Come to **Lessons and Carols** on December 9 at 4:00 PM, a tradition at First Church with 9 readings from Scripture, carols sung by all and special music. Our Senior Choir, instrumentalists, soloists and organ music will be joined by the fabulous 5x5 ringers (who will dazzle you with each person ringing at least 5 or more bells each!). This is a service not to be missed!

The **Service of Prayer and Healing**, a new tradition for our church will be held in the sanctuary on December 19 at 7:00 PM. **Note: this is a different date than listed in the "We are First Church" booklet.** Come join us for a time of music, prayer, story and quiet. For those who wish there will be laying on of hands and anointing with oil. Come for yourself and/or others to offer prayers for healing and wholeness. Bring in the light of God's blessing through this special service near to the time of Winter Solstice.

The **Christmas Festival Service** is at 10:00 AM on Sunday December 23. This year the choir presents a very special offering of the **Christmas Cantata** by Daniel Pinkham. This beautiful and exciting 3-movement vocal work is accompanied by double brass choir (9 players), so you will not want to miss it. Our **Christmas Festival Bell Choir** will also be ringing that morning at this family Christmas celebration.

The music of **Christmas Eve** crowns the year with our Senior Choir and soloist Nichole Hodges-Abbasi. **Note that the Candlelight Service is at 10:00 PM this year.** The children of the church present the Christmas Pageant at 5:00pm Christmas Eve with the Junior Choir. Join us for Christmas in the "stable" at 5:00 PM, and in the "cathedral" at 10:00 PM. ***If you would like to sing in the choir for Christmas Eve, meet us in the balcony at 9:00 PM. All are welcome!***

Have a blessed holiday season from all of the Ministers of Music. Mary

**FROM THE CHURCH SCHOOL OFFICE**

**Church School Missions**

UNICEF – It's not too late for Church School children to return their UNICEF boxes to the box outside the Church School office any Sunday. The final total of our collection will be announced in the January Landmark.

"Can-Can" Thanksgiving – Remember that providing non-perishable food for some of our Guilford neighbors is an on-going project for our church at all times of the year. Please help us make their Thanksgiving and Christmas celebrations truly joyful.

Christmas Trees – In December, Church School classes will be decorating small Christmas trees for members of our own congregation – fun for the children, and a special blessing for some of our elderly and home-bound friends.

**Advent Supper**

The Board of Christian Education will be hosting their annual Family Advent Supper on Sunday, December 2 at 6:00 PM in Fellowship Hall, immediately following the Contemporary Worship Service, which starts at 5:00 PM. This supper is not only for families with children, but for anyone, of any age, who belongs to our entire church family. Please join us for pasta, salad, bread and desserts. The Cherub Choir will entertain us, and the Board of CE has planned a special Advent activity for everyone to enjoy. We look forward to seeing you then.



**Christmas Eve Pageant**

If you are planning to be in town on Christmas Eve, we hope you will encourage your children to take part in the Christmas Eve Pageant. This is a wonderful opportunity for them to learn the story of Christmas through their own participation in telling the story. Children are invited to attend the "one-and-only" rehearsal on Saturday, Dec. 22 from 9:30 AM – 11:00 AM in the sanctuary. We will give out parts and costumes at that time. The pageant itself takes place at 5:00 PM on Christmas Eve - Monday, December 24.

Daphne

**CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICE**

★★★ 10:00 PM ★★★

### HISTORIANS' CORNER

#### FIRST CHURCH MONEY RAISERS PAST AND PRESENT part 3

The weather forecast on Saturday, November 3, 2007 was for threatening rain and wind, the spin off from an approaching hurricane. Yet 815 customers passed through our door eager to browse and shop at our annual Harvest fair. The first goal of this event as stated in the By-Laws is to provide fellowship which this year was successfully played out through the warm reception provided by over 100 of our church members. Our reputation for high quality items and fair prices once again resulted in a financial success.

After the decline of the Christmas Fair in the early 1970s, there was a feeling expressed for the revival of a similar money raiser. To avoid competition of other fairs in the Christmas season, we decided to hold ours on the first Saturday in November called THE HARVEST FAIR. In 1975, we voted to open a separate fair account under the auspices of the church treasurer. Co-chairmen agreed to organize and guide the committees to set up in booths and tables the items to be sold. . For three years, these events were based on a theme, the Corn Crib Fair, Harvest Fair Pot Pourri, and the Kaleidoscope Fair with decorations and costumes reflecting these .motifs. In ensuing years a successful Silent Auction offered outstanding hand made quilts, knitting, and craft items donated by church members. A Children's Room "just for small fry" to do craft works or watch a movie kept them happy and enabled their parents to shop

Many of the types of items offered for sale remain the same today such as bakery, candy, handcrafts, dried flowers, tools etc. ,etc.. For logistic reasons, White Elephants were discontinued while Attic Treasures today has grown to be a leading money raiser. Originally some commercial products, knives, dish clothes, note cards, cheeses, were sold. but today virtually every item is member-made or donated.

As this event grew in size and profits, a proposal was introduced to create an official committee under the church by-laws whose members would be automatically appointed by the Nominating Committee. In 1989, this became official and consists of a maximum of six people, three elected annually for a term of two years. The expenditure of

the proceeds to supplement maintenance of church property. will be determined by the Harvest Fair Committee, the Alpha Club and the Improvement Society.

A concern voiced at this time was that our lovely sanctuary had to be locked for safety reasons during the Fair. Unless attending a church service, the general public had no access to this historic and beautiful space. One way to address this was to feature in the sanctuary some display and/or demonstration with church members present to oversee and welcome visitors. In this outreach of fellowship for 18 years, there have been presented many excellent exhibits all of which were well attended and received. The open sanctuary with its exhibits added a whole new dimension to the HARVEST FAIR. The history of our vibrant Pilgrim Fellowship program was featured this year.

November 1, 2008 we'll see you at the Fair!!!



### SANTA BREAKFAST

Please come to the annual Santa Breakfast on Saturday, December 1st, from 8 am to 11 am in the Fellowship Hall hosted by the Pilgrim Fellowship. Tickets are available at the door (children \$3, adults \$5) and Santa will be there to take photos with the children (\$5). All proceeds benefit the annual PF spring mission trip.

### BYLAW REVISIONS PRESENTATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

Church Council over the past year has been reviewing and preparing modifications to the Church Bylaws, some of which will be presented for a vote at the Annual Meeting in February. A review of the proposed changes will be presented on two occasions, both at 11:15am in the Minear Library on Sundays, December 2nd and January 13th, giving all members an opportunity to make adjustments to any current procedures or proposals now in consideration. Comments are always welcomed, at these meetings or anytime, to Charlie West, 203-453-6817 or [WESTCM@GMAIL.COM](mailto:WESTCM@GMAIL.COM). All are welcome!

*Charlie West*

**TAKING STOCK” OF YOUR GIFT GIVING**

Using appreciated securities (stocks, bonds, and mutual funds which are worth more now than when you purchased them) to fund a charitable gift can have considerable tax advantages for the donor. By giving an outright gift to the church, you can bypass the capital gains tax that would be due on an ordinary sale, and can enjoy a charitable tax deduction (if you itemize) for the full amount of the gift.



If you hold stock which is worth more today than it was when you purchased it but the dividends paid are low, you may be able to significantly increase your spendable income by using these appreciated securities to fund a life-income gift (Gift Annuity, Pooled Income Fund gift, or Charitable Remainder Trust). Donors of life-income gifts also enjoy a tax deduction, but not for the full amount of the gift; the charitable deduction is prorated, based on the part of the gift that is considered “charitable,” and the part that returns income to you.

**Please note two cautions regarding gifts of stock:** 1) If securities are *appreciated*, they must be *transferred* to the church in order to preserve the capital gains advantage. We have a sample letter you can use with your broker to make this transfer. 2) If your stock is worth less today than when you purchased it, you *should* instruct your broker to sell these depreciated shares, thus enabling you to declare the loss on your income tax return and then donate the proceeds to gain an income tax deduction as well.

For more information, please contact The UCC Financial Development Ministry at 800-846-6822 or contact Tom Grant at 203-457-1816.



**CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICE**  
 ★★★ 10:00 PM ★★★



**Community and World Concerns**  
**Holiday “Mitten” Tree to Expand**

Columbus House has an urgent need for new socks and underwear this year - especially over-sized underwear - for the homeless population they serve. Therefore, we are expanding our traditional “mitten tree” to include socks and underwear. Consider supporting those in need through a purchase of:

- gloves, mittens (all sizes / ages)
- hats, scarves
- adult-sized socks
- adult-sized underwear, especially XL sizes

Place your mittens & gloves on the tree; socks and underwear beneath the tree. Gloves, mittens, hats and scarves will be distributed to Christian Community Action, Covenant to Care, and Fair Haven Parents Ministry. Socks and underwear will go to Columbus House.

**Christmas Toy Box**

We will collect toys & other gift items for children in need who are served through Covenant to Care and Fair Haven Parents Ministry. A box to collect these gifts will be in the narthex on Dec 2<sup>nd</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, & 16<sup>th</sup>. Gift cards (Target, Walmart, Music stores) are great ideas for teens. As always, your generosity is greatly appreciated. Any questions about these collections, call Linda Cantley @ 458-2569.

**PILGRIM FELLOWSHIP LEADERSHIP RETREAT**

On the November 9<sup>th</sup> weekend, the PF Leadership Committee traveled to Mountainside Lodge in Canaan, Connecticut for our first annual leadership development retreat. Its purpose was to put the leadership committee through a series of challenges in order to develop unity, leadership, and coping skills. We camped out on the mountain in twenty degree weather. The next day the PFers navigated the challenge course and then hiked to the summit of the mountain. On Sunday, we entered and explored a large cave in Millerton, New York. It is my hope that the kids will grow from this experience and be able to better lead the group on the mission trip.

That Sunday evening, the rest of the PF camped out at the church to raise money for BAWA, a health care organization headed by doctors at Yale who provide care to villages in Cameroon victimized by malaria. We raised about \$700.00 for this group.



**THE GIVING TREE**

Most of us at First Church have the means to provide Christmas presents for our families and loved ones. However, there are many families in this town who do not have this ability. For those families just providing food and basic clothing is a challenge. The Giving Tree is our opportunity to help **Guilford Families** have a Merry Christmas.

For the last several years First Church has helped provided a Merry Christmas for 5 families registered with Guilford Social Services. Social Services asks each family member for 3 needed items and 1 "most wished for" item. This information is then given to us, and we get the fun of shopping and giving. Remember that these families do live in Guilford, the children attend Guilford schools, and we are in an age of technology, so some items may be expensive. For more expensive items join with another family or 2 to share the cost.

The tree will be in the narthex December 2<sup>nd</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>. Choose a gift and take the gift tag. Return the wrapped gift, **with the tag firmly attached to the package, on DECEMBER 16.** Call Jeanie Cacopardo (453-6981) with any questions.

**REQUEST FOR 2008 CALENDARS**

At this time of year many of us receive free calendars from organizations we support financially. If you are not able to use all the calendars you receive, you may donate them for a worthy purpose. Women at York Correctional Institution enjoy having calendars of the new year. You can imagine that marking time is important and the pretty pictures brighten up their drab environment. So bring your extra calendars to First Church on any Sunday and leave in the narthex for Charlotte White, Chaplain at York CI, to pick up. You may also leave them in Spencer House. Questions, call Charlotte at 453-3727.



**CHRISTMAS FLOWERS**

It is time to place your order for Christmas poinsettias with the Flower Committee. These flowers, given in memory of your loved ones, decorate our Sanctuary for the holidays and are then distributed by the Deaconesses to those who are home-bound, reside in nursing homes, or any one who is in need of cheer.

The poinsettias will be ordered for \$12.00 per plant. **The deadline for ordering flowers is Monday, Dec. 9th.** Complete this form, enclose your check, and mail to:

First Congregational Church  
122 Broad Street  
Guilford, CT 06437

Please note "Poinsettias" on your check. If you have questions, please call Barbara Wells at 453-5949.

Please order \_\_\_\_\_ plant(s) @ \$12 each.

Total cost \$ \_\_\_\_\_

The poinsettias are given in loving memory of:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

By: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICE**  
★★★ 10:00 PM ★★★

**THE GIVING ALTERNATIVE**

The giving of a gift is the greatest act of love that we can share with our Lord. As you plan Christmas remembrances for your family and friends, won't you consider the Giving Alternative?

In lieu of buying a gift for that friend or relative who "has everything," why not make a gift in that person's name to one of the following organizations? Acknowledgement cards can be mailed to you or directly to the recipient.

**GUILFORD INTERFAITH HOUSING** achieves affordable housing for people of modest means in Guilford.

**GUILFORD INTERFAITH MINISTRIES:** Meals on Wheels--meals for homebound Guilford residents; Friendly Visiting--visits with homebound or lonely; Food Bank--food for Guilford people in need.

**GUILFORD WELFARE GIFT FUND** helps to pay for utilities, food, medicine, clothing and blankets for Guilford people in need.

**WOMEN AND FAMILY LIFE CENTER OF GUILFORD, INC.** helps to provide education, support services, advocacy and referrals for women of all ages and families in need of support.

**GUILFORD ABC** gives educational opportunities to disadvantaged young women, providing them a home in Guilford and education at Guilford High School.

**SARAH** provides job training and social skills to people with developmental disabilities.

**CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY ACTION** provides food, advocacy, and temporary shelter for homeless families in New Haven.

**COLUMBUS HOUSE** provides food, accommodations, referrals and evening health services for homeless in New Haven.

**EAST SHORE ADULT DAY CENTER** provides day care and transportation for older or disabled adults in the Shoreline area.

**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SERVICES OF GREATER NEW HAVEN** provides a 24-hour Hotline, counseling and advocacy, and a shelter for victims of domestic violence.

**HABITAT FOR HUMANITY** contributes toward the construction and/or renovation of homes for low income families in New Haven.

**FAIR HAVEN PARENTS MINISTRIES** gives support services to underprivileged with special concern for the needs of children.

**CATAPULT** – a Guilford organization to help addicted people stay drug-free and sober.

**CHURCH WORLD SERVICE** helps refugees who have fled their homeland, victims of natural disasters, and farmers who need support services.

**HEIFER PROJECT, INTERNATIONAL** provides livestock and agricultural assistance to needy families all over the world.

**U.C.C. BOARD FOR WORLD MINISTRIES** supports our UCC ministries around the world in Latin America, Africa, Asia, Europe and the Middle East.

**U.C.C. BOARD FOR HOMELAND MINISTRIES** supports church development, education in UCC colleges and social justice for minorities.

*To participate in **A GIVING ALTERNATIVE** simply fill out the form on the reverse side and mail to: A Giving Alternative, c/o First Congregational Church, 122 Broad St., Guilford, CT 06437. Enclose checks made payable to each organization you have selected. Call Gail Pappas, 453-0100, with questions. Those that are received in the Church Office by December 19<sup>th</sup> we expect to be able to send acknowledgement cards by Christmas.*

**CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICE**

★★★ 10:00 PM ★★★

**Food for Thought:**

“It makes more sense to believe something rather than nothing. Never question the truth of what you fail to understand; the world is full of wonder.”

P. Lobe in *A Common Place*

“We quickly enough feel and weigh what we suffer at the hands of others; but we mind not what others suffer from us. He that well and rightly considereth his own works will find little cause to judge harshly of another.” *Thomas a Kempis 14 century*

“A religion without mystery is like a wagon without wheels.”

*Amish Grace (2007) by D. Kraybill, S. Holt*

