



*The December 2008*

## *Landmark*

**The First Congregational Church  
United Church of Christ  
Guilford, Connecticut**

**An Open and Affirming  
Congregation**

*Vol. 55, Number 11*

### CHRISTMAS HOSPITALITY

Advent is the time when we begin our spiritual journey to the manger. It's a journey that is most often filled with nostalgia, hope and joy. However, the first Christmas was not quite as romantic as we've made it. The world was not very hospitable to Mary and her child—no warm bed or bath, a mad dash to Egypt to escape Herod's evil plans, and ultimately a cross. Except for the years in Nazareth, the Gospel tells of a homeless existence of a man relying on the temporary and tentative hospitality of friends and strangers.

Christmas, we like to believe, is a time to be at home, a time to open our homes to family and a time to welcome and be welcomed by friends and acquaintances. Yet the occasion for all this hospitality is a story about homelessness. Far too many people around the world have no home. The warm comfort of hearth and home is an exception rather than the rule. Many are refugees, many are soldiers, many are too poor, many are alone in nursing homes, and many are mentally ill and homeless. Some have homes that look merry enough on the outside but suffer from self hatred, domestic violence or grief. The tragic fact is that in so many ways this world is still as inhospitable as it was to Mary and Joseph.

But Christmas is about God's initiative and God's hospitality. John Calvin, the great French reformer of Geneva in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, reminds us: We see what a start God's son enjoyed, what a cradle received Him. Such was his manner of birth, for He had put on our flesh to the end that He might empty himself for our sake. So He was pushed into a stable and lodged in a manger, denied a place of hospitality among people, that Heaven may lie open to us, not only a place in which to lodge, but as an eternal home—a land and inheritance, that angels should receive us to dwell with Him.

God offers to us a home, a membership in a family, and a community that is eternal: "My dwelling place shall be with them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." (Ezek 37:27; see also Rev. 21:3). Deep within our souls, God's gracious acceptance and warm welcome naturally gives rise to the joyous and hearty singing of Christmas carols: "Joy to the World, the Lord is Come."

But there is more. God's hospitality also stands as a Christmas judgment upon us—that the world "mourns in lonely exile here." God's hospitality stands as a Christmas call to us—to search out and welcome our homeless sisters and brothers here and around the world in whom Christ still greets us. "Let every heart prepare Him (Christ) room." Also, let every heart prepare a welcome for those most in need. Make such sharing and giving a family Christmas tradition and give generous to our Mitten Tree, our Giving Tree, etc. Together we can welcome in very tangible ways those who have been cast aside as the Holy Family was so many years ago.

*In Christ's love,  
Kendrick*

**DECEMBER WORSHIP SCHEDULE****December 7: 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Advent/Communion**

– Kendrick preaching

8:30 AM Worship - Chapel

10:00 AM Worship/Nursery/Church School

11:15 AM Harvest Mini-Fair– FH

5:00 PM Contemporary Worship Service

6:00 PM Advent Family Supper – FH

**Wed., December 10: 7:00 PM Service of Prayer and Healing- Sanctuary****December 14: 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Advent - Susan preaching**

8:30 AM Worship- Chapel

10:00 AM Worship/Nursery Care/Church School

5:00 PM Service of Lessons and Carols – Sanctuary

6:30 PM Soup &amp; Bread Supper by PF- FH

**December 21: 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Advent/Christmas Festival Service – Kendrick preaching**

8:30 AM Worship – Chapel

10:00 AM Worship/Nursery Care/Spec. Program for Children PreK – Grade 4

**December 24: Christmas Eve****5:00 PM Christmas Pageant** – Sanctuary**10:00 PM Candlelight Communion Service-**  
*Susan preaching***December 28:**10:00 AM Single Worship Service – Sanctuary  
No Church School *Kendrick preaching***α****ALPHA CLUB DECEMBER MEETING**

The Alpha Club will meet on Tuesday, December 16<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM at the home of Carin Small, 52 Church Street, for a Christmas Memories Christmas Party. We will continue our tradition of collecting new, unwrapped toys, which will be donated to Christian Community Action in New Haven. All are welcome - For more information contact Cynthia Magee (453-5487)

**MINEAR LIBRARY**

The "Christian Century," the last American weekly reporting on religious events around the world, now comes to the Minear Library on a subscription basis. Reliable news (including the Middle East), book reviews, essays, interesting reading.

*Gladys Minear***BAPTISMS**

November, 16, 2008

Payton Alicesandra Root

Brody Gerald Root

children of Jessica and Jonathan Root

**DEATHS**

Constance Barnes Mermann

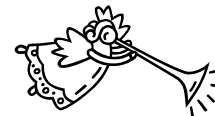
November 18, 1923 – September 7, 2008

Robert Freeman Fisher

June 10, 1925 – November 1, 2008

**DEACONESS OF THE MONTH**

**Deaconess for December** is Jeri Perkins (458-1849). 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. **CDs of Sunday services** are available to sign out in Spencer House kitchen.

**Thanks to Office Angels for November:**

Charlene Benton, Betty Brown, Liza Catino, Alice Dadourian; May Elinor Dudley, Dianne Hughes, Susan Leete, PattyAnn Meyer, Beth Milliron, Alice Mitchell, Ruth Neale, Polly Newton, Martha Rebuzzini, Kelly Updyke, Sandra Wiens

**CHRISTMAS IS COMING!**

The Guilford High School Orchestra, Concert Choir and Voices will again grace our sanctuary for their annual Holiday Concert on Friday, Dec. 5<sup>th</sup> 7:30 & 9:00 PM and on Saturday, Dec. 6<sup>th</sup> 7:00 & 8:30 PM.

I have tickets for all four performances exclusively for First Church members. Please call me at 453-0494 or email me at [l.catino@comcast.net](mailto:l.catino@comcast.net).

*Liza Catino*

### MELITA HOUSE UPDATE

#### Important Information

There have been many discussions and actions concerning Melita House over the past two months. It is important that all members and friends of First Church are kept informed of these important events.

In September and early October, both the Havyarimana family and the Carletons moved from the property and the main house became vacant as of October 15. At the October 14 Church Council meeting, Charlie West presented considerable information concerning Melita House and the options for the Church. These included three main options – become a landlord and rent, potentially become a developer and maximize the property potential, and sell the property. The Council discussed these options, weighing the benefits and liabilities of each. As volunteers, it was felt that being landlords or developers was not a beneficial use of our time, talent and treasure, so the consensus was to sell the property. In addition, our obligations to the Carletons, under the revised agreement approved at the February, 2008 Annual Meeting, will commence on January 15, 2009 in the amount of \$1000 per month for a total of 237 months. An Ad-Hoc Committee was appointed by Church Council to oversee and make recommendations to Church Council on the sale of Melita House, which include: Preparing the property for sale by authorizing cleanup and repair at a maximum cost of \$10,000; determine when and who should sell the property; and handle issues as they arise concerning the property. The Ad-Hoc Committee included Kim Beckett, Council Chair, Russ Campaigne, Architect, Joe Catino, Trustees, Charlie West, Melita House liaison, Stephen Dudley, Property Study Committee, and a representative of the Business Committee. In order to keep the Congregation informed, the above motion was added to the Special Congregational meeting to be held on November 9.

The Ad-Hoc Committee met, inspected the house, met with realtors, solicited proposals for listing the property, arranged for clean-out and clean up of the property preparing for sale, and selected a realtor. It was advised that the listing of the property should occur as soon as possible, prior to the holiday season. All this information was presented to the Special Meeting on November 9. At the Special Meeting, with over 100 members in attendance, the information was presented to the Congregation. It was agreed that the sale of the property was in the best interest of First Church; however, there was concern about the clarity of the motion and the process. The Special Meeting approved the motion. Church Council again discussed the matter at length at its meeting on November 11.

It was the general consensus that the immediate listing of the property, due to carrying costs and the real estate market, was the best course of action. *The Chair of Church Council was authorized to sign a listing agreement.* It was also agreed that an additional Special Congregational Meeting should be held to clarify the authorizations and insure that all information is available for discussion by the Congregation. After discussion of the possible dates and conflicts with other scheduled activities, it was voted to hold the Special Congregational Meeting on Sunday, November 30, at 11am.

On November 12, Kim Beckett, Church Council Chair, signed a listing agreement with Page- Taft Realty subject to the notation that final approval of the congregation is anticipated on November 30.

In hindsight, the call for the Special Meeting on November 9 could have better addressed the issues surrounding the sale of Melita House if we had known when it was written what we know now. The additional Special Meeting is to address those concerns. It is important to note that neither Church Council nor the Ad-Hoc Committee have received any comments advocating the retention of Melita House, now that the residential refugee ministry program has ended. All involved are trying to accomplish the perceived desire of the congregation.

Please review the Call to Special Meeting and join us on November 30 at 11AM.

### OFFICIAL CALL TO A SPECIAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING Sunday, November 30, 2008

To the members of the First Congregational Church of Guilford, Inc.:

A Special Meeting of the First Congregational Church of Guilford, Inc., has been called by Church Council and will be held on Sunday morning, November 30, 2008, at 11:00 a.m. in the Sanctuary, directly following the 10:00 a.m. service, to:

1. To authorize the sale of property at 245 Boston Street also known as Melita House,
2. To authorize Church Council to approve terms of the sale after recommendations from the Melita House Sale Committee,
3. To authorize the Chair of Church Council, on behalf of First Congregational Church of Guilford, Inc., to sign any and all documents related to the sale of the property under terms approved by Church Council.

Respectfully submitted,  
Dianne Hughes, Clerk

### STEWARDSHIP AND HISTORY

• During this year's Stewardship Campaign, we have tried to bring you some fun historical facts in our Sunday bulletins and some thought-provoking Landmark articles that reflect our long church history. Several of our members have also shared their personal testimonials as to what First Church has meant to them. This rich history of personal commitment is woven into the fabric of this congregation and makes us realize that we are never alone. We stand on the shoulders of all those who have come before – during good times and hardship – and we share the special treasure of fellowship that sustains us and makes this First Church congregation truly special. As you read through the recap below of our weekly bulletin articles, won't you reflect on what First Church means to you?

#### Did you know that .....

• Our First Congregational Church is among a small handful of the oldest congregations in continuous existence in the United States. Founded in 1643 by Guilford's first European settlers, we celebrated our 350<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1993. The Hartford Courant prides itself on being "America's oldest continuously published newspaper" founded in 1764. We beat that by over 120 years! We are 365 years young in 2008. Won't you please consider what First Church means to you over the next 365 days?

• The present church building is the congregation's third meeting house. The first was a small stone structure with a thatched roof located on the Guilford Green itself (its attic held the town's gunpowder). The second church building dating from 1713 – wooden and larger – was also located on the Green. Originally church members were called to church by a drum roll but in 1724 the town gave the church a bell. A steeple was added to house the bell. Though recast 4 times, that bell still welcomes us from above each Sunday. Our present church building, dedicated in 1830, was built in its present location at the head of the Green and cost \$6500. This required that the home of Dr. Lyman Beecher (father of Harriet Beecher Stowe, author of "Uncle Tom's Cabin") be moved by 35 pairs of oxen down to its present location at the Guilford Harbor.

• To help pay for the cost of our current First Congregational Church building in 1829, the pews on the main floor were sold to highest bidder. Presumably, the more expensive seats were near the front for families who could afford them. By 1850, all pews became the property of the church although they were then rented to families willing to pay for their reserved seats. "Pew rent" remained a basic source of church income until the 1920's. In 1925, First Church had a membership of 475 and an annual budget of \$4000. In the "Every Member Canvas", a team of 2 church

members – an older and a younger man, called on each household in the congregation. Within a few years, the women of the church also began to serve in this role. We've come a long way since then but the financial needs of our church still depend on all of us and our annual support.

• For the first 80 years in our congregation, men sat on one side and women on the other with Deacons at the front of the pulpit facing the congregation. At first, boys were seated up front near the Deacons to minimize disruptive behavior. Later, young people could sit in the gallery under the oversight of members appointed to help "tythingmen" keep order. Also present during services during the late 1600's were seven soldiers who sat near the door – each armed with an English gun. This was required by the early laws of the New Haven and Connecticut colonies to guard against sudden Indian attack. After our second, larger church was built in 1713, the segregation of the sexes extended to the gallery. Women who chose to sit in the gallery ascended the "Women's Stairs" in the southeast corner of the building while the men used the "Men's Stairs" in the southwest corner. With the changing times, some aspects of First Church life important in one era slowly faded to obscurity over the course of our long history. If you think you are especially sharp, you can take a guess at the definition and purpose for the "Amen Corner" and the "Commander". Hint: The Commander was not a person and the Amen Corner was also known as the "Amen Pews". The definitions for these archaic terms are:

○ Tythingmen – male church members whose role was to ensure proper decorum and behaviors were maintained during services. They held wooden rods with a feather at one end and a ball at the other that were used to tickle or prod those needing awakening or to keep order. They patrolled the aisles but especially kept watch on the boys in the balcony.

○ The Amen corner and Amen pews were up in the front of the sanctuary on both sides and faced the pulpit. Those sitting in these pews (probably deacons and prominent church members) were expected to exhibit suitable piety and appropriate Amen responses as an example for the congregation.

○ The commander – a large and heavy wooden mallet that was used in the 'raising of the meeting house'. It was an impressive sight for spectators on the ground to see strong men wield the commander while walking the upper frames of our church as it was being built.

• Music has occupied a special place in our First Church Congregation from our beginnings. In the early

years, a Deacon “pitched the psalm” which meant he used a pitch-pipe as accompaniment. In 1799, a bass viola was found to be acceptable because it rested on the floor with neck up – the reverse of the “ungodly fiddle”. Then in 1856 came the melodeon (now on loan to the Dudley Farm). It was placed, unknown to the congregation, in the gallery until played for the first time to the surprise of the congregation. A member, in memory of her mother, gave the first pipe organ to the church in 1868. In 1908, Miss Clarissa Sage gave the church a magnificent organ in memory of her nephew, Willie Sage Tuttle. The organ console was in the front section on the east side gallery under the pulpit with magnificent pipes on either side above the pulpit. The choir was in front under the west side gallery and they could communicate with the organist through a “speaking tube”. The choir and organ moved to the upper gallery in the rear of the sanctuary in 1964. Our current organ dates back to 1981 and was acquired through gifts of many church members. Won't you take a brief moment to think of what a treasure the music of First Church is to you?

- In 1920, First Church called on a young minister to lead our congregation who came to Guilford with his wife and baby. The Reverend David Beach ministered to our church for four years with a “hands-on” leadership style. This was his first parish and clearly made an impression. Regarding his tenure, Phil Dudley was quoted as saying that it was a “time for change and the man for change”. Rev. Beach was known to startle Puritanical parishioners by whistling merrily as he crossed the Green or by wearing wild, multi-colored overalls while shoveling snow on his front walk. One Sunday during a hymn, Leon Beckwith (the organist at the time), collapsed ill while at the organ console which was then located just below the pulpit. Pastor Beach hurried down from the pulpit, picked him up and hoisting him over his shoulder, carried the limp organist out to the narthex. After arranging for medical assistance for Mr. Beckwith, Pastor Beach returned quickly to the sanctuary and sat down at the organ and finished playing the hymn. He then hastened back to the pulpit to continue the service. Talk about multi-tasking! Oh, in case you were interested... Mr. Beckwith recovered just fine.

First Church of Guilford has supported a formal program of community service and missionary outreach since well before the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The forerunner to Pilgrim Fellowship was a group called Christian Endeavor, which was comprised only of adults at its inception. Church records from the early 1900's list program topics ranging from missionary work to temperance. Over the years, the youth of the church

began to replace their elders in this group. In 1936, at the behest Elizabeth Nettleton Theiss (one of the early youth leaders), Mr. Edmund Dudley donated the necessary funding to hire our first part-time youth leader. Thus began a financial commitment by our church to support community service and outreach programs focused upon the youth of our community. It also started an unbroken chain of notable youth leaders. Our church history recounts a vivid memory from the early years of this youth program when Herbert Neale, the Pilgrim Fellowship leader in 1941, tearfully informed his youth group of the bombing of Pearl Harbor during their weekly meeting. In 1977, Kendrick Norris became the leader of the Pilgrim Fellowship. In the 30 years since then, well over 1500 of our Guilford youth have participated in this program! When there are so many negative distractions for teenagers, what a valuable asset this has been to engage our children in constructive programs to teach life skills not found in school. It has enriched the youth of our community in as many ways as those communities they have served during their annual mission trips. Special thanks to Michael Dalton and all his advisors and youth leaders for continuing this long tradition of First Church outreach to those in need.

- In this year when our congregation initiates a dialog on race, we have a long and storied church history of bridging the racial divide throughout our 365 years. One of the more poignant and unexpected “bridges” occurred during the tenure of Pastor Thomas Ruggles in 1756. Due to failing health, the congregation arranged for an assistant (then called a colleague) for Pastor Ruggles. Luckily they found Amos Fowler right in North Guilford who had graduated from Yale Divinity just 3 years earlier. He located his house by the Green and there lived out his long ministry to First Church that would extend 43 years. A close neighbor had arranged for liberty of several slaves they owned but asked their pastor, Mr. Fowler, to help with this transition to freedom for one of their slaves named Moses. Moses came to live with the Fowlers but he was also able to work outside the home and keep the earnings. He was thrifty and saved much of his earnings. When Andrew, the son of the Fowlers, came of age and wanted to go to Yale, much like today his parents indicated that they did not have the necessary funds. And yes, you have already guessed the ending of this historical fact. In 1783, Andrew Fowler graduated Yale in large part due to the generosity of a black man on his way to freedom. Would any of us have been as forgiving and generous had we been in Moses' shoes?

***Investing in First Church—  
It's Our Turn Now!***

### ADULT FORUMS

December 14th, Historian Robert Harms will give us an in-depth look at the brutal operations of the **Atlantic slave trade** through an illustrated recounting of the voyage of the slave ship Diligent in 1731-1732.

Along the way, he will introduce the economic forces, political rivalries, and moral debates that animated the 18th century Atlantic world. Bob is the H. J. Heinz Professor of History and African Studies at Yale and the husband of Sandra Weins.

Our next Sunday morning **Bible Study** will be in January. Shannon Clarkson will be the leader for the month and will begin with a session on how the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible came to be. Paul Minear was one of the translators and Shannon was the chair of the Bible Translation and Utilization Committee of the National Council of Churches, which produced this new translation of the Bible in 1991.



### ANNUAL REPORT REMINDER: Its that time again!

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 1<sup>st</sup>. To insure the Book of Reports is ready by January 18 for all members and friends to review before the meeting, **please submit your reports to the Church Office by Monday, January 5<sup>th</sup>**. If you can submit them early, by all means do so!

Reports may be submitted in different ways. the easiest for me is to receive it as an attachment via email to [office@firstchurchguilford.org](mailto:office@firstchurchguilford.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

### FROM THE HARVEST FAIR COMMITTEE

It was a great day: the weather couldn’t have been more beautiful. It was a great time of fellowship and hard work; we raised over \$15,000 and we still have the Mini-Fair on Sunday, Dec. 7<sup>th</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!

### DRIED FLOWERS

Thanks to all who helped the Dried Flowers Room for this year’s Fair – whether you contributed flowers, dried, arranged, priced or sold them – your hard work is much appreciated. Betty Brown, Chair

### ATTIC TREASURES

Heartfelt thanks from the Attic Treasures Committee to 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

### BAKERY ROOM

Debbie Peluse and Karen Kalbfeld want to thank 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. We give 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.

### HARVEST MINI-FAIR SUNDAY, DEC. 7th 11:15 AM in Fellowship Hall

Looking for a few special gifts? Look no further than Fellowship Hall.! Handcrafts, wooden crafts, bird carvings, and knitted goods will be available for you to purchase. Also a new addition—“Re-Gift It” table 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!

Have you received well intended gifts or gift cards that missed the mark? If so then donate them to the Harvest Fair Mini Fair. Please leave **NEW ITEMS ONLY** (not lightly used and no books please) in Spencer House Kitchen. Contact Nancy Patton with questions 457-6947 or [nancypatton@comcast.net](mailto:nancypatton@comcast.net).

**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 November 30<sup>th</sup> and December 7<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 14.** Call Jeanie Cacopardo (453-6981) with any questions.



**CHRISTMAS "MITTEN" TREE**

Our traditional "mitten, gloves, hat and scarf tree" will include socks and underwear once again this year as Columbus House continues to have

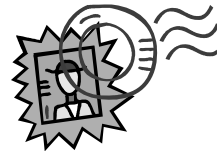
an urgent need for new socks and underwear - especially over-sized underwear - for the homeless population they serve. Consider supporting those in need through a purchase of: gloves, mittens (all sizes / ages), hats, scarves (all sizes / ages), adult-sized socks, adult-sized underwear, especially XL sizes

Place your mittens, gloves, hats and scarves 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 Columbus House. Socks and underwear will go to Columbus House.

As always, your generosity is greatly appreciated. Any questions, call Linda Cantley @ 458-2569. **Community and World Concerns**

**HELP SAVE CHURCH POSTAGE**

To save money on postage I will now put checks requested by members for reimbursement of church expenses into the appropriate committee mailboxes at Spencer House. Since we pay almost \$1 for every 2 checks I expect this to save the church a minimum of \$100/year. Checks are made out every Thursday, so checks will be distributed the Thursday after they are requested. If a check must be mailed, please note that on the check request form. Any questions please call me at 453-5517 or email me at [treasurer@firstchurchguilford.org](mailto:treasurer@firstchurchguilford.org).



*Thank you  
Debbie Peluse  
Church Treasurer*

**OFFICE CLEANUP**

This is a plea for a few hours of volunteer time to help clean up the financial office. This should be a one morning or afternoon job to help move some of the items and papers in the Financial office to make the office more usable and records more organized.

*Please call Debbie Peluse 453-5517*

**TRICK OR TREAT**

Sixteen boys and girls from First Church's Church School dressed as witches, bananas, beautiful damsels and scary monsters visited The Gables Assisted Living home. on Sunday evening Oct. 26. A ghost then pointed the way to the home of a teacher, Betsy Work, for a pizza party and scavenger hunt to complete the evening. Thanks to teachers: Wendy & Sara North, Jeri Perkins and Linda Gebauer for transporting and sharing the fun with the kids. A Christmas Caroling party will be held in December.

*Betsy Work*

**MIDDLE SCHOOL YOUTH GROUP**

Middle School Youth Group has been busy sharing their kindness with those in need. Last month they sent letters of cheer to their friends, the "Bravo Troop" in Iraq. This week they raised money toward veterinary bills and volunteered for chores at The Dan Cosgrove Animal Shelter in Branford. A tour of this fabulous facility given by the friendly staff was very rewarding. Our focus this month will be on The Guilford Food Bank and local people who are homebound. Watch for MSYG's festive artwork in the upcoming Advent bulletin covers!!!

## CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

### UNICEF Update:

As of November 15<sup>th</sup>, UNICEF, the Church School's service project, raised \$416.71. Together that money could provide: Nutrition for 17 hungry kids AND Provide a "School in a Box" kit so 80 kids will be able to continue in school during times of crisis AND Immunize 550 kids against the measles!

Thank you for your offering. How amazing that each of us doing a little can lead to a lot!



### Confirmation Schedule for December:

Confirmation I

December 7<sup>th</sup>: 1-2:30 meeting with Confirmands only  
Minear Library in Spencer House

Expectations: 4 worship reports, Discussion Units 2 & 3, CE Assist Form

Confirmation II

December 1<sup>st</sup>: 7-8:15 Griswold Hall

December 8<sup>th</sup>: 7-8:15 Griswold Hall

December 15<sup>th</sup>: 7-8:15 Griswold Hall

(vacation until January 5<sup>th</sup>—Merry Christmas!)

### Christmas Pageant:

All children of the church are invited to participate in our Annual Christmas Pageant! It is a wonderful chance to be part of worship and for children to learn about the Christmas story. Children (and any parent helpers) are invited to the "one and only" Pageant **Rehearsal on Saturday December 20<sup>th</sup>** from 9:30-11:00 AM, where we will give out parts and costumes. The pageant itself will take place at 5:00 PM on Christmas Eve.

In December we will be decorating trees for the visitation ministry. Learn more at Chapel, Dec. 7<sup>th</sup>

If you have any questions about the Church School program or would just like to say hello, please feel free to contact Lisa Horst in the CE Office (453-3324) [lisa@firstchurchguilford.org](mailto:lisa@firstchurchguilford.org).

The Board of Christian Education invites you to a

**"FAMILY ADVENT  
SUPPER"  
SUNDAY, DECEMBER  
7,  
6:00 to 7:00 PM  
FELLOWSHIP HALL**



Come to the "Contemporary Worship Service" which takes place at 5:00 PM in the Sanctuary and stay for the Pasta, Salad & Desserts. This is *not* a potluck, so put down the cookie-dough and come for a great evening of seasonal song and fun. *There will be a freewill offering to help cover our expenses.*

### CROP WALK RESULTS

The contributions received from the CROP Walk this year totaled almost \$18,000. First Congregational Church raised \$5332 and Pilgrim Fellowship collected \$3,399. Money is still coming in and more is welcome!! Total walkers this year: Guilford to Madison - 240, Madison to Guilford - 138. 14 groups participated including Pilgrim Fellowship, 2 Congregational churches, 1 Episcopal church, 1 Catholic church, Christ Chapel, Unitarian/Universalist Fellowship, Temple Beth Tikvah and the high school Interact Clubs from Guilford and Madison.

Special thanks to our First Church member who participated: Church coordinator: Karin McNamara; Fowler watering spot supplies: Beth Miliron and Suzanne McGriff; Route Guide: Charlie Peluse; Emergency Shuttles: David Knapp and Clyde Work; T-shirt sales: Mary Christiansen, Arrangements for Green: Merrilyn Garcia; Sign on Green: Cindy Magee. Hope to see you at next year's Walk on October 4, 2009.



### BREAKFAST WITH SANTA

The Pilgrim Fellowship will host its annual Breakfast with Santa in the Fellowship Hall on Saturday, December 6<sup>th</sup> from 9:00-11:30 AM. Get your child's photo taken with Santa. The cost is \$5 for adults, \$3 for children, and \$5 for each photo with Santa. All proceeds benefit the annual Mission Trip.

**MUSIC MINISTRIES**

Can you imagine Christmas without singing? Even the local pharmacies are already playing muzak versions of carols. Don't worry. Our Senior and Junior Choirs have been practicing music for Christmas since late October. Even at this late date, newcomers are always welcome to join our Senior Choir for rehearsals at 7:15 on Nov. 20, Dec. 4 & 11 in preparation for our carol service. You'll have some catching up to do, but your Christmas season will have added meaning when you've spent time with the traditional melodies and texts.

**The Service of Lessons and Carols** on Dec. 14<sup>th</sup> at 5:00pm, is a beautiful tradition at First Church featuring readings from Scripture, carols sung by all and special music offered by our Senior Choir, Junior Choir, instrumentalists, soloists, handbells and organ. Fellowship will continue downstairs with a **Soup & Bread Supper**. Arrive early, because the sanctuary is filled, and bring friends: this is a great outreach opportunity to introduce people to First Church at a time of the year when many people are in need of comfort and joy.

Other worship opportunities during Advent, in addition to our Sunday morning services, include the **Service of Prayer and Healing**, held on Dec. 10<sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm. 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.

In a very different way, our **Contemporary Worship Service** on Dec. 7 will usher in Christmas a little early. At 5:00pm the sanctuary will be rocking some traditional carols in some non-traditional ways, and our talented band will add some great contemporary songs proclaiming the message of Christ's birth. If you haven't heard the band play "Go Tell It on the Mountain", come just for that!

As we draw near to Christmas, First Church has several celebratory services. The **Christmas Festival Service** is at 10:00am on Sunday Dec. 21. This service turns the church from Advent's hope to Christmas joy through music and word. Christmas Eve begins with the children of the church enacting the **Christmas Pageant** at 5:00pm. Come back at 10:00pm for a **Candlelight Communion Service**, with the Senior Choir once again singing beautiful music as we gather around the manger seeking the Messiah. All are welcome!

*Bill*



**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. 8th.** 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 MINISTRIES:** *Meals on Wheels*--meals for Guilford residents who are homebound; *Friendly Visiting*--visits with those who are homebound or lonely; *Food Bank*--food for Guilford people in need; *Charlie's Closet* -- medical equipment for those in need.

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

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

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

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

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

**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.



**To participate in A GIVING ALTERNATIVE** send a check (or checks) made payable to each organization you have selected to: A Giving Alternative, c/o First Congregational Church, 122 Broad St., Guilford, CT 06437. Please have your check(s) arrive at the Church Office by Wednesday, Dec. 19<sup>th</sup> so we can make every effort to distribute your donations before Christmas. Thank you!



### PILGRIM FELLOWSHIP DECEMBER NEWS

Pilgrim Fellowship is preparing for our favorite Christmas activities, with the addition of one new one. On Dec. 21<sup>st</sup> the *First Annual PF Alumni Dinner Party* will take place, location TBA depending on how many RSVPs we receive back from the mailed invitations. If you know of others we have not reached yet, please let them know they are welcome. Contact the PF Director, Michael Dalton at [pf.firstchurchguilford.org](http://pf.firstchurchguilford.org). There is a link to this website from First Church's website: [firstchurchguilford.org](http://firstchurchguilford.org). The open invitation includes present PFers and Past PF advisors and directors. **PLEASE join us!**

#### PF Calendar for December:

Dec. 6: *Santa Pancake Breakfast* 9:00 to 11:30 AM Fellowship Hall

Dec. 14: *Soup & Bread Supper* 6:00 to 7:30 PM Fellowship Hall

Dec. 21: *Cookie Walk* 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM Fellowship Hall

Dec. 21: 1<sup>st</sup> y 6:00 to 9:00 PM Fellowship Hall or other venue, please check website close to date

