



The December 2011

Landmark

The First Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
Guilford, Connecticut

An Open and Affirming Congregation

Vol. 57. Number 11

A BLESSED CHRISTMAS

A Truly Christmas Christmas Tree

On Sunday, December 11th, our church Christmas tree will be up and awaiting decoration. We adorn the branches with gifts of mittens, gloves, scarves and hats for those without these basic clothing items to keep warm in the winter. You will put your gifts of high protein and energy foods under the tree for those who would otherwise be hungry during the holiday season. Consider yourselves Magi of 2011 bringing gifts to the Christ Child who shares all with those most in need. Your generous gifts will be accepted from December 11th - 20th.

Bring a Neighbor or Friend to Church Sunday

In a world where many are seeking genuine community, deep life meaning and spiritual connection, First Church Guilford has a lot to offer. One of our church visions is to share what we enjoy and hold dear with others. A recent survey of de-churched folks found:

1. Most would prefer to attend church on Sunday morning.
2. Most feel guilty about not attending, have feelings of emptiness, but feel overwhelmed or intimidated at walking into a new place of worship.
3. 96% are at least somewhat likely to attend a church if invited by a friend.

On Sunday, December 11th we are encouraging you to invite a friend or neighbor to church. All our Christmas decorations will be put out. The music is especially grand. This is a time when many are in a growing positive mood and, even if they are going through a difficult patch. Isn't a First Church worship service the place to be? If you bring them through the door and sit with them, we will do the rest. We will have extra greeters and bread bakers for our guests that day, and coffee hour will be equally welcoming. And, as a bonus, our magnificent Service of Lessons and Carols will take place at 5:00pm followed by the Pilgrim Fellowship "Soup and Bread Supper." So that day, we have three times to offer: 8:30am in the Chapel, 10:00am and 5:00pm in the Sanctuary.

How to invite them? Share with them what you love about the church. Let them know that every week we begin worship with these words:

No matter who you are
or where you are on life's journey,
you are welcome here.

Let them know this is the root belief of our family life together. Let them know that we are not a creedal church that demands particular beliefs, but a covenantal church that joins itself together in mutually supportive pilgrimage. Let them know how we have something to offer that they are really looking for—soul inspiring music, an amazing church school, thoughtful sermons, dependable pastoral care from ministers and members, an astounding youth group, or prison and refugee ministries among many others. Invite someone to Christ's advent as experienced in the joy and warmth of our church family.

*In Christ's love,
Kendrick*

DECEMBER WORSHIP & PROGRAMS**Sunday, Dec. 4: Advent 2, Clare preaches**

8:30am Communion- Chapel

9:00am Bible Study – Church School Bldg Rm 9

10:00am Communion, *New members received*,
Nursery care, Church School'

11:30am Harvest Mini-Fair – Fellowship Hall

3:00pm Caroling and Advent Family Supper - FH

7:00pm Pilgrim Fellowship – Fellowship Hall

**Sunday, Dec. 11 Advent 3, “Bring a Neighbor
to Church” Kendrick preaches**

8:30am Worship - Chapel

9:00am Bible Study – Church School Bldg Rm 9

10:00am Worship, Nursery care, Church School

11:30am Adult Forum- Chapel

5:00pm Service of Lessons & Carols-Sanctuary

6:30pm Soup & Bread Supper – Fellowship Hall

Wednesday, Dec. 14 7:00pm Service of Prayer
and Healing- Sanctuary**Sunday, Dec. 18 Advent 4, Clare preaches**

8:30am Worship - Chapel

9:00am Bible Study – Church School Bldg Rm 9

10:00am Worship, Church School, Nursery care

11:30am Pilgrim Fellowship Cookie Walk- FH

Saturday, Dec. 24: Christmas Eve

5:00pm Christmas Pageant

10:00pm Candlelight Communion – *Kendrick
preaches***Sunday, Dec. 25: Clare preaches***No 8:30 AM Worship*10:00am Worship, *No Nursery or Church School***Sunday, Jan. 1 Rev. Carolyn Johns preaches***No 8:30 AM Worship*10:00am Worship, *No Nursery or Church School***PILGRIM FELLOWSHIP EVENTS****BREAKFAST WITH SANTA** – Saturday, Dec. 3rd9:00-11:30am PF will host its annual Breakfast
with Santa in Fellowship Hall. Get your child's
photo taken with Santa. Cost for breakfast: \$5 for
adults, \$3 for children under 12. Photos \$7 each.
All proceeds benefit the annual Mission Trip.**SOUP & BREAD SUPPER** – Dec. 11th 6 – 7:30pm\$8 admission for a variety of homemade soups,
bread, and dessert.**COOKIE WALK** – **Sunday, Dec. 18** after 10am
Worship – PF will sell cookies in Fellowship Hall.
Proceeds support the Spring Mission Trip.**IN MEMORIAM**

Carl F. Anderson, Jr.

September 24, 1924 – November 10, 2011

Dorothy Stroud Van Deusen

July 20, 1924 – November 10, 2011

Warren Frederick Jillson

December 4, 1918 -November 15, 2011

DEACONESS OF THE MONTH**Deaconess for December** is Carrie Federici (203-458-6726). Please notify her of births, adoptions, or anyone who may need a note of sympathy or encouragement. Mary Norris (203-457-9483) is 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 love and prayers, please call Mary. **CDs of Sunday services** are available to sign out in Spencer House kitchen and **sermon recordings** are available on the church website: www.firstchurchguilford.org.**THE MINEAR LIBRARY**When Zoe was born prematurely, she weighed 1 lb 7 oz and measured 11 inches in length. Her grandfather's way to deal with the multitude of feelings, thoughts and issues surrounding the new family was to write letters to Zoe throughout her first year. *Dear Zoe* by Max DePree is a beautiful story of triumph, healing and salvation. It's available on the mantel for sign-out.*Marjorie Colton, Librarian***α****ALPHA CLUB MEETING**Our Annual Christmas Party will be held on Tuesday, Dec. 13th at 7:00pm at the home of Carin Small, 52 Church Street. Members should bring an unwrapped toy for Christian Community Action and adult dark-colored socks for the homeless in New Haven. All are welcome!**Thanks to November Office Angels:***Cindy Caligan, Liza Catino, Susan Leete, Alice
Mitchell, Meg Rebuzzini and Jane Rowen**Thank you all for your help!!*

CHURCH COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

November 8, 2011

Joe Catino called the meeting to order at 7:03pm. Kendrick led us in prayer, and Joe led Covenant Time focused on the blessings and joy of interruptions in our lives and being open to God's grace therein.

Kendrick introduced Chuck Ramsey as the church's new "Public Relations" person. Chuck shared with Council his experience with newspapers and facilitating publicity for non-profit organizations. He encouraged us to inject our announcements with some pizzazz and also include photos wherever possible.

Joe updated Council on the status of the Member Loans that were granted to the church when we purchased 19 Church Street. The five year term of these loans expires on December 31, 2011. \$192,000 is the amount of these loans currently outstanding. Tom Grant said that he believes now is an excellent time to go to the Congregation to ask for additional loans. The Council supported this position, and Kendrick asked Tom to write an article for the December Landmark.

Bill Speed talked about upcoming music ministry happenings including Gladys Minear's Memorial Service on Friday December 9th at 2:00pm. For this service Tricia Snyder will be playing the organ, and Jim Gower will be here to conduct the choir. Lots of choir members, both current and past, will be present to offer music in the service. Bill plans on leading some caroling at a few of the local long term care facilities during the holiday season, particularly on December 4th. Experienced and non-experienced singers are encouraged to join in the fun.

We have a new grand piano that has been donated to the church by Bruce Sale's sister, Debra. She will be paying for the delivery, registration, and tuning of this 6'1" Yamaha piano. Our piano technician will be evaluating both grand pianos and will let us know which one is best for our use in our Sanctuary. Then the music committee will discuss the best use of the other grand piano, with input from the staff, the Deacons, and other people within the church that might be affected by this decision. One option is to use the other grand piano in the Chapel depending on how it will impact that space. One benefit of having a grand piano in the Chapel is that it can be used by Neighborhood Music School for smaller recitals. We are grateful for this incredibly generous gift of a new grand piano.

Joe handed out a current list of members of all our Boards and Committees. There are a number of vacancies on numerous committees, boards, and positions within the church. Joe encouraged people to think of people who might be good fits for some of these vacancies and provide those names directly to the Nominating Committee.

Joe presented on behalf of Nominating Committee a motion to accept Jennifer Willcox as a new Member-at-large along with Anne Godsey and Ellen Connell as new members of the Pilgrim Fellowship committee. Dianne Hughes seconded. Council approved unanimously.

Susan Leete presented a history of our income amounts from 2007 through 2011 Year-to-Date and also the 2012 projected income amount. Susan's handout illustrated that we are definitely behind our budgeted income for 2011 in almost all of our line items.

A church member has brought to the Board of Finance an idea for an additional income stream for the church which involves greeting cards. Susan Leete spoke highly of the quality of the cards and the company, "Send Out Cards," that now offers a special discount for non-profit organizations. Shannon shared that there is a similar program with iGive to which individuals can sign up and the church receives a check whenever those people who are signed up purchase from certain vendors such as L.L.Bean and Land's End. After motions and questions Council approved the greeting card program unanimously.

Debbie Peluse shared an update on some anticipated reduction of expenses along with some increases of expenses in 2011 resulting in a net decrease in anticipated expenses for 2011 of \$19,000. Importantly, despite lower anticipated expenses, there is still projected to be a year-end deficit due to the lagging income for 2011.

Joe provided a brief update on the portico restoration project which is almost complete. There are some questions about the direction of the drain of the gutters. Paragon came back to do some final touch up painting and paint clean up. The new cracks in the cement will be repaired by Paragon starting on Wednesday November 9, 2011 and may take more than a day.

Chris shared that clean up in the Moore Building continues. Curtains have been removed. Painting will be done. Oriental rugs have been donated – one is in the Minear Library and one will be used in Griswold Hall. The CE Board would like to have the dividers in Griswold Hall removed. No one on Council had any issues with those dividers being removed.

Kendrick said that the defibrillator has been installed next to the doors at the Church Street entrance. There was some discussion surrounding CPR training and the proper use of the defibrillator. Kendrick requested that Elizabeth Halvorsen draft a protocol for medical emergencies as a basis for future training of church members including Council and ushers.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:42 PM followed by the unison benediction.

*, Respectfully submitted,
Stuart Wilkie, Recording Secretary*

IS IT BETTER TO GIVE OR RECEIVE?

We have been blessed by the ability of our church to buy the 19 Church Street property for \$750,000. We have been blessed by the ability of our church to be able to fix the portico of our church building for \$150,000. We have been blessed by the ability of our church to be able to support a \$600,000 annual operating budget.

Some of this blessing has come about by certain members loaning the church money at a favorable midterm interest rate to be able to buy 19 Church St. These loans are coming due by the end of this year. Some of these same members have agreed to roll over these loans for another 5 years. Some members have forgiven these loans as gifts to the church, and a couple have asked to repaid.

In order to reduce the financing cost of our mortgage (about 5.75%) would anyone consider making a loan to our church to reduce this cost? The interest rate you would receive is 110% of an average of the semi-annual midterm and long term AFR rate. For 2011, this rate is 2.75%. You would receive above market interest rates on a short term basis and help the church at the same time.

Thus, you would give and receive at the same time! Please contact Tom Grant, Board of Trustees Chair, at tcgrant9215@gmail.com or 860-598-9419, or Joe Catino, Church Council Chair, at 203-453-0494 or j.catino@comcast.net.

Thanks.

*Tom Grant,
Chair, Board of Trustees*

THANK YOU FROM THE CONNECTICUT CONFERENCE

Dear Rev. Norris and members of First Church,

Thank you so much for your extravagant hospitality for the Connecticut Conference Annual Meeting. The space was wonderful and the participation of so many of your folks was greatly appreciated.

You answered the call to serve the wider church and with a limited amount of time offered a warm welcome and open doors for the Annual Meeting. The meeting was great and you and your congregation helped make it possible.

Sincerely in Christ,
The Rev. Charles L. Wildman
Interim Conference Minister

HARVEST FAIR THANKS

Debbie Peluse, Betsy Platia and Karen Kalbfeld thank all the people who baked and made candy for the Harvest Bakery booth. We had a wonderful variety of foods this year. We had more food than ever to sell to contribute to the proceeds for the Fair. We especially thank Peggy Benton for her continuing support each year by giving pickles and the dozens of loaves of her delicious Friendship Bread. We also greatly appreciate Barbara Bishop's 4 dozen jars of jam. Thanks also to the people who made calls to members to remind them to donate and to those who helped at church the day of the Fair.

A sincere Thank You to all who donated, sorted, refurbished and purchased jewelry. We pulled off another record breaking year! And here's to the fantastic crew: Pam, Marjorie, Kelly, Megan, Elise, Dianne, Nancy M., Esther, Nancy P., Emily, Mitchell, Janice, Rebecca and awesome PFers.

HISTORIAN'S MYSTERY

First Church history is stored and filed in cabinets in the Spencer House. At this time missing from our files are the document and picture folders of the EXTERIOR and INTERIOR of the church. This is church history that cannot be replaced. Maybe you borrowed them for a project and forgot to return them. Maybe you were part of a project that used them. Any information as to their whereabouts would be greatly appreciated. Please return to the Historians box in the Spencer House. For more information, please call Edith Nettleton at 203 453-9157 or Ruth Nettleton at 203 453-3867. Thank you.

HOLIDAY MUSIC

Free concert by the Branford Town Band 2:00pm Sunday, Dec. 4 at the Branford Evangelical Free Church, 231 Leetes Island Rd Branford, CT (off Exit 56 on I95). Holiday music will be performed by the group. Founded in 1949, it is made up of about 25 musicians from the shoreline who rehearse weekly September through June. Members are all ages from high school through retirees. Eva Ewing and Debbie Peluse both play in this group. Call Debbie Peluse [203-453-5517](tel:203-453-5517) with questions

HISTORIANS' CORNER
CHURCH THE FABRIC OF OUR LIVES
part 6

When joining the church ca.1920s, young people had lessons with the minister before meeting with the Board of Deacons. After approval each received a personal letter written in calligraphy by Deacon Charles Hubbard. Over the years these have been treasured and a few have been donated and preserved in our historic files.

Children's Sunday, on the second Sunday in June, was the time that babies were baptized in a group. On June 13, 1927, 21 babies received that sacrament. Edith Nettleton recalls picking daisies to decorate the church. The program featured the children reciting verses and singing songs. A similar service was held at Christmas where the very special "treat" was a box of hard candy given to each child. Every year Rev. Moe read the same Christmas story. During the service the organist, Mr. Leon Beckwith, played a piece about the Christmas star. By inserting a pencil to hold down a note, he made the star shine throughout the song.

The forerunner to PF was a group called Christian Endeavor which at inception was comprised of adults. Memorabilia at the turn of the century lists program topics from missionary works to temperance. In time young people replaced their elders as members. Elizabeth Nettleton Theiss, one of the first youth leaders, had a surprising decision to make one day. Mr. Edmund Dudley asked her what she felt the church could use if he donated the sum of \$1,000 annually for 3 years. Without hesitation, she stated it should be to hire a part time youth worker. Her suggestion became reality when Yale Divinity student, Charles Hastie, was contracted as our first student worker. Three years later this position was incorporated into the annual budget. For a time this was combined with that of choir director. Herbert Neale was very charismatic in both capacities. There are vivid memories of the P.F.meeting when he tearfully informed his group about the bombing of Pearl Harbor. These young men became part of our First Church family as they enjoyed weekend meals and occasional overnight stays in the homes of members. Although social events livened their meetings, dancing was not permitted

To be continued....

EUCHRE CARD NIGHT FOLDING

Since January, the Welcoming & Inclusion Committee has hosted a monthly card-playing night in Griswold Hall. After nearly a year, Euchre Card Night will unfortunately be ending. Attendance has recently dropped off to the point where we barely have enough for one table. W&I would like to thank all those who attended, and congratulate those who "won". In chronological order, they were: Kendrick Norris, Kay Honsberger, Geoff Fix, Monte Kroh, Sam Fix, Carrie Federici, Jackie Fix, and Ken Medvetz.

Now we are asking if there are any other fellowship-type activities you would like us to help organize on a monthly basis. If so, please contact Geoff Fix or any member of the Welcoming & Inclusion Committee.

LOOKING FOR GOOD?

Anne Kubitsky is inviting community members to write or draw a glimmer of gladness on a postcard and mail it to: What I'm Grateful For, PO Box 602, Old Lyme, CT 06371. The cards are posted on an online gallery lookforthegoodproject.org. If you send one by December 12th, it may be included in an exhibit at the Custom House Maritime Museum in New London, CT this January.

Donations are greatly appreciated. Checks payable to "New London Maritime Society" with the note "Anne Kubitsky" and sent to The Custom House Maritime Museum / 150 Bank Street / New London, CT 06320.

SendOutCards

A new exciting and innovative fundraising program comes to First Church. SendOutCards will print address, stuff, stamp and mail greeting cards for you. SOC has over 16,000 cards or upload your own images, personalize your message, add your own signature and handwriting font and even include a video! First Church will receive up to 30% for all of the greeting cards and gifts you send each month, while you save 50%--75% off store bought cards!

Go to www.sendoutcards.com/firstchurch and join now. You will brighten someone's day, save time & money and provide much needed financial support to First Church.

CHILDREN AND FAMILY MINISTRIES

The Children and Families programs at First Church have been bustling with energy and excitement. Residents of The Gables assisted living were thrilled to have our youth visit them in their Halloween costumes. This trick-or-treat event was actually the children giving hand-made crafts to the seniors which was the best treat of all! Speaking of crafts, take a peek in our church school classrooms and witness the creative talents of our children who are learning faith in experiential ways!

Confirmants and Mentors have been exploring what our own personal developing theology means by exploring our world's diverse faiths, the wisdom and encouragement of our own sacred texts and Jesus' radical world view on forgiveness and inclusion. The conversations have been fascinating and our journey together a rewarding one. Watch for a permission slip for our Nighthatch visit to St. John the Divine, NYC on March 23/24.

See the next column for Advent Supper and Caroling event on December 4th.



The annual **Christmas Pageant** will hold its one and only **rehearsal on Saturday, Dec. 17, 9:30-11 am** in the Sanctuary. Reading/speaking participants will have to be here that day to be included in the wonderful festivities of our pageant - shared as the worship for our early Christmas Eve service. Helpers are needed to organize costumes and help with set up and take-down of props/scenery on Christmas Eve. Please contact Chris at [203-453-3324](tel:203-453-3324), or chris@firstchurchguilford.org. Blessings to all for Peace, Comfort and Joy throughout this Advent Season and throughout your whole year long –

Chris
Acting Director of Children and Family Ministries

CAROLING AND THE ADVENT SUPPER Sunday, December 4, 2011, 3 pm Come one, Come All...

We will gather on Sunday Dec. 4th in Fellowship Hall at 3 pm and quickly organize into groups to go out caroling and bring the cheer of the season to members of our Church family who are unable to attend worship services.

Church School children and their families will travel to The Gables Assisted Living where we will sing for the residents there. Songbooks will be available.

Then... we all return to Fellowship Hall by 5 pm for a hearty pasta meal, salad and desserts! We ask that all those whose last names start with A-L bring desserts and those with M-Z bring drinks to share! We will hear the Cherub Choir sing and a short intergenerational activity will conclude our evening. Participate in the joy of the season by filling your lives with the presence of God in our shared community giving the gift of ourselves and our song to others! Joy to the World!! Won't you join us? Questions? Call Chris Solimene at the CE Office: 203-453-3324

ANNUAL REPORT REMINDER:

Annual Reports need to be submitted by each of the Boards and Committees for inclusion in the Book of Reports prepared for our Annual Meeting on Sunday, February 5th. To ensure the Book of Reports is ready for all **to review** before the meeting, **please submit your reports to the Church Office by Monday, Jan. 9th**. If you can submit them early, by all means do so!

The easiest is to receive it as an attachment via email to office@firstchurchguilford.org. Or you may submit a hard copy that is "copy-ready." Of course, if you do not have access to a computer, I am happy to key in your report - just submit it as early as possible, please. Use last year's Book of Reports for reference. Call Penelope 203-453-5249 with questions. *Thank you!*



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 from December 11 – 18 and are then distributed by the Deaconesses to those who are home-bound, reside in nursing homes, or anyone who is in need of cheer.

The poinsettias will be ordered for \$12.00 per plant. **The deadline for ordering flowers is Monday, Dec. 5th.** 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 203-453-5249.

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

Total cost \$ _____

The poinsettias are given in loving memory of:

By:

THE GIVING ALTERNATIVE

With Christmas approaching, it is time to think about celebrating the occasion with **The Giving Alternative**. Instead of giving your friends and loved ones something they may not need or even want, why not make gifts in their names to a worthy charitable organization? Acknowledgement cards can be mailed to you or directly to the recipient.

Here is a list of charities that that **The Giving Alternative** has worked with in the past. You may also designate any other organization of your choice.

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

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

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

THE COVE provides programs for helping children and families work through unresolved grief due to the death of someone significant in their lives.

GUILFORD FOOD BANK provides food for Guilford people in need.

GUILFORD FUEL FUND helps Guilford families in need to heat their homes.

GUILFORD INTERFAITH MINISTRIES offers three separate services: **Meals on Wheels** for Guilford Residents who are homebound, **Friendly Visiting** for those who are homebound or lonely, and **Charlie's Closet**, which provides medical equipment for those in need.

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

AN ORGANIZATION OF YOUR CHOICE

To participate in THE GIVING ALTERNATIVE, please complete the form on the next page and send a check made payable *to each organization* you have selected to: The Giving Alternative, c/o First Congregational Church, 122 Broad Street, Guilford, CT 06437. There are additional forms in the Church Office.

Please have your form/checks arrive at the church at least a week before the holiday so that we can distribute the checks and send out the cards on time.

First Congregational Church The Giving Alternative 2011

Your Name _____

Telephone Number _____

Your Address _____

Town _____ State _____ Zip _____

Please check one:

Send Acknowledgement cards to me to enclose with my holiday card.

Send acknowledgement cards to the recipients. I have listed the addresses below.

Organization Name	Amount	Gift in name of (recipient)	Recipient's address (for acknowledgement)

Please enclose a separate check **payable to each organization.**

Mail to: The Giving Alternative, c/o First Congregational Church, 122 Broad Street, Guilford, CT 06437.

Please have your checks arrive at the church at least a week before the relevant holiday so that we can distribute the checks and send out the acknowledgement cards on time.

Please contact Robert Harms, 203-453-4871, robert.harms@yale.edu if you have any questions.