
The GOOD News

December

The Newsletter of the First Congregational Church of Haddam 2009

Dec. 6
2nd Sunday of Advent
Worship 10:00 am
Malachi 3:1-4
Luke 1:68-79
Philippians 1:3-11
Luke 3:1-6

Dec. 13
3rd Sunday of Advent
Worship 10:00 am
Pageant
Zephaniah 3:14-20
Isaiah 12:2-6
Philippians 4:4-7
Luke 3:7-18

Dec. 21
4th Sunday of Advent
Worship 10:00 am
Micah 5:2-5a
Psalm 80:1-7
Hebrews 10:5-10
Luke 1:39-45

Dec. 27
1st Sunday of Christmas
Worship 10:00 am
1 Samuel 2:18-20, 26
Psalm 148
Colossians 3:12-17
Luke 2:41-52

Jan. 3, 2009
Epiphany
Worship 10:00 am
Jeremiah 31:7-14
Psalm 147:12-20
Ephesians 1:3-14
John 1:10-18

CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

The annual Christmas Pageant will take place on Sunday, Dec. 13, 2009 at 10:00 a.m. There will be a party following the pageant. For more details see Christian Ed. page 8.

REV. MICHAEL MALONE'S INSTALLATION AS PASTOR OF FCCH

Sunday, Dec. 13 at 3:00 pm Michael Malone will be installed as pastor of First Congregational Church of Haddam at 3:00 pm in the Sanctuary. Officiating at the Service of Installation will be Rev. Mike Penn-Strah. A reception celebrating this event will be held afterwards in the Fellowship Hall.



Dec. 24, 4:30 Family Service
Dec. 24, 10:00 Candlelight Service

STEWARDSHIP

As of this writing we have 44 commitments for 2010. We had hoped to have all in by, the very latest, December 31, 2009 so there is still time. Again, thank you to all who have returned their commitment cards. If you have not as yet done so, commitment cards are available in the vestibule of the church. Simply fill one out and place it in the offering plate or mail it to the church office to the attention of the "Collector".

MISSION TRIP

Dec. 5 Senior High youth and the Confirmation class will be helping at

Amazing Grace food pantry (139 Main St. Ext.) in Middletown between 11:00 and 2:00. Youth should bring a bag lunch; parents will drop off and pick up their youngsters.

CHRISTMAS OPEN HOUSE AT THE MALONES

Pastor Michael and Laurie will be hosting a Christmas Open House on Sunday, Dec. 20th, from 3-5 PM at their home on Hidden Lake. All are invited to come for holiday refreshments and fellowship. Location: 20 Lakeview Rd., Higganum, just off Hidden Lake Rd. and West Shore. For directions call 860-554-5312.

Longest Night:

A Service of Healing at Christmas

We will be joining other area churches in this beautiful service with readings, songs, and candles on Sunday, Dec. 20th at 7 PM at the United Methodist Church in Higganum.

NEW CONGREGATION PHOTO DIRECTORY

There is a new family photo, online directory created by our webmaster, Walt Zilahy. If you would like your picture added to this directory, Walt will be taking photos after worship on the second Sunday of the month. Log on to our website and enjoy the photos already there, and give a big thanks to Walt for all his work on this.

ANNUAL MEETING

The date of this year's annual meeting is Sunday, Jan. 24 after worship.

DEADLINE FOR ANNUAL REPORTS!

The deadline to submit your annual committee, officer, department, etc. reports to the office is December 10 as a WORD DOC. Reports must be in members' hands by Sunday, January 10, two weeks before the Annual Meeting.

A CHRISTMAS NOTE FROM THE PASTOR

Just like clockwork, Christmas is upon us again. For most of us it is time to shop, go to office parties, clean up the house, send out cards, stand in line at the Post Office, bake holiday cookies, decorate, and make some last minute purchases. In between all of these tasks we must perform all of our regular duties. Christmas time is primetime for Type A personalities and others who thrive on chaos.

In the midst of the holiday commotion, I hope we can all slow down enough to remember the true meaning of Christmas: That Jesus came as God's gift to the world, a world in darkness, showering our planet with love. For those of us who have found the Christ child, both in a manger and on the cross, we have truly received grace beyond measure. For most, however, Christmas is nothing more than a fable or a crass sign of western commercialism.

The four weeks before Christmas are the season of Advent, a time for waiting. It is hard to wait for something when we do not know exactly what it is we are waiting for. How does one wait while running around in disarray trying to keep up with all of the demands that come with the season?

Each of us should carve out an evening each week during Advent to slow down and rest. Pretend that the Christ child has been born this day in your particular house, requiring you to simply stay home and keep him warm. When friends, relatives, or coworkers ask what you are doing, tell them you are waiting for the arrival of a special gift that was not ordered on Amazon and is not delivered by UPS and does not come down the chimney. Tell them that the gift you are waiting for comes to the hearts of men and women who are patiently waiting. Tell them it comes by going on a journey to the manger.

Once we have met Jesus in the manger, and have filled our hearts with comfort and joy, we must go out and bring that comfort and joy to others who are in need. *We are entrusted to tell the story to those who do not know it, and to live the story for those who need it.* All of us can tell the story, the story of finding the child in swaddling clothes, the child of Mary and Joseph who were visited by shepherds and Magi, and serenaded by angels. But we must also live it.

So take one night each week to rest, relax, reflect, and to pray. When Christmas comes you will be ready to receive again the greatest gift ever given.

Merry Christmas, Pastor Michael



HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

The following children and youth will be celebrating a birthday this month:

Emma Larkin	Dec. 4
Armand Lamoureux	Dec. 6
Jordon Dole	Dec. 13
Nate Wilkos	Dec. 13
Sally Blodgett	Dec. 15
Willow Wells	Dec. 21
Jordan Lamoureux	Dec. 26

CHURCH FAMILY NEWS

Congratulations to John and Liz Anderson at the birth of their fifth grandchild Geoffrey Wayne "Kohei" Anderson! Please continue to pray for the Trevor Edmondson family, Scott, John McCormick, Carrie, Carol, Michael Zimmerman, Ella Christianson, Matt Looney, Elaine Soneson, the Berry family, Rhonda Gardner, Andrew Purdy, Beth and her son James, Rev. Davida Crabtree, Rev. M. J. Hinchliff, Rena, Robyn Sparks, Peg Widegren and Jackie Anderson. On December 20, Kate Hausner will be baptized. Her parents are Suzanne and Eric Hausner.

CANDLE LIGHTING CEREMONY

Every year since 1997 on the second Sunday in December The Compassionate Friends (TCF) hold a Worldwide Candle Lighting in memory of all children who have died too soon.

The event is held at 7:00 p.m. for one hour in every time zone to create a 24-hour wave of light that encircles the globe to honor and remember all children who have died. As candles go out in one time zone, they are lit in the next zone, to create a virtual 24-hour memorial--candles to encircle the globe. The Worldwide Candle Lighting is a way of giving bereaved families around the world the chance to share their loss and remember their child...so that their light may always shine! This year the event is being held on December 13.

About The Compassionate Friends: The Compassionate Friends is a national nonprofit, self-help support organization that offers friendship, understanding, and hope to bereaved parents, grandparents and siblings. Their mission is to assist families toward the positive resolution of grief following the death of a child of any age and to provide information to help others be supportive. There is no religious affiliation and there are no membership dues or fees. The Compassionate Friends works on the premise that as seasoned grievers reach out to the newly bereaved, energy that has been directed inward begins to flow outward and both are helped to heal.

CLEAN-UP CREW SUCCEEDS ONE MORE FALL!!!!

A hearty crew which included **Art Christianson, Greg Nicholas, Mark Soneson, John Anderson, Rick Bouchard, Alison Halligan, Scott Halligan, Mitchell Halligan, Russ Pekrul, Ginny Evensen, Scott Thompson, Laurie Malone, Michael Malone and Mike Battistoni.** Special thanks to Mark and Mike for the use of their trucks/trailers to haul leaves. All worked very hard to clean up our church campus on Nov. 7. Be sure to give them a thank you when you see them. The place is looking really good!!!



When you are hospitalized, you or your family members should notify the church as soon as possible. Upon admission to the hospital, you will be asked if you desire to have your religious affiliation as part of your medical record, and for permission to make your name available to clergy. Please state both your denomination and church name.

FCCH RECEIVES NEW MEMBERS!

Welcome New Members!

The First Congregational Church of Haddam would like to welcome the newest members of our church family. Suzanne Hausner and Laurie Malone became part of our family on November 1st.

Suzanne has lived in Haddam with her husband, Eric, for the last three years. She is a stay-at-home mom for her two girls, Hannah Grace, who is 2 years and 8 months old, and Kate Chamberlain, who is 8 months old. This busy mom likes to garden, read, hike, walk and spend time at the Connecticut River or at the beach.

We also welcome Laurie Malone into our church family. Laurie, who grew up in Portland, CT, is step-mom to Carly (27) and Kellen (24) and grandmom to Dylan (5). She has "a passion for mission, outreach, and ministry." She & Michael own two Bernese Mountain dogs. Laurie is helping the diaconate to organize flowers for Sunday service.

Please take time to introduce yourself to Suzanne and Laurie. We are very happy to have them be part of our family.

EMERGENCY CANCELLATION NOTICE

With winter nearly upon us, it's wise to review the church's policy on church activity cancellations. If the weather is bad, you can check for cancellation notices of FCC-Haddam events by watching WFSB TV (CBS, channel 3) in Hartford or by tuning in WTIC (1080 AM) on your radio.

**UCC NEW ENGLAND WOMEN'S
CELEBRATION VIII:
TOGETHER BUILDING BRIDGES**

"...a time to break down and a time to build up"

MARCH 12-14, 2010
BURLINGTON, VT

www.uccwomenscelebration.org

A weekend of spiritual renewal, building intergenerational bridges,
community building, fellowship, workshops, speakers

Contact Pam DiDio from the state Board of CT Women of the UCC at
pamd@ctuss.org or phone 860-761-7101 for more information and
about bus transportation

COMMITTEES

Christian Service

The Oktoberfest dinner was delicious and successful. We raised \$710.00 that will be combined with the proceeds from the Christmas in July project and sent as a donation to Simply Smiles to further the work being done in Mexico with the Zapotec Indians. THANK YOU for all your help.

The CROP WALK raised about \$2622 which Church World Service will use to feed the hungry. A portion of this money will go the Haddam Public Health food pantry, Amazing Grace food pantry, and Helping Hands in Killingworth.

The 14 Thanksgiving baskets have been delivered to Haddam Public Health to be given to families in Haddam for the holidays. The boxes were covered by the Christian Service Committee, decorated by the children of the Sunday School and filled by you the congregation. Thank you all for helping this project be successful.

The Haddam Fuel bank, an emergency project of Haddam Public Health has a balance near 0. At this holiday season, a donation to this project will help families stay warm in the winter.

If you have been contributing food items for Amazing Grace food pantry throughout the year and would like a receipt for tax purposes Christian Service committee will sign a voucher acknowledging your contribution.

HELP MAKE A CHRISTMAS MIRACLE: We have been invited to participate in a the CHRISTMAS GIVING PROGRAM at St. Vincent de Paul Place. Gift certificates for Stop and Shop and 1 pound boxes of chocolates are being collected to be distributed at a Holiday Party on December 17, 2009 for the guests of the soup kitchen and the food pantry. In addition, they are asking for soap, deodorant, shampoo, tooth paste, tooth brushes, floss, razors and shaving cream in standard sizes. These will be distributed on Christmas week and throughout the year. These items can be brought to church between November 29 and December 13. Here is a chance again to help others locally.

Stewardship

“From Jesus’ fullness we have all received grace upon grace”
(John 1-16)

Consecration Sunday was a thoughtful ceremony with Rev. Malone blessing the bounty of our commitments. Our Collector reported that we collected 33 (about half of last year’s total) commitments. That was not surprising as service was not as full as it could’ve been.

Since then and as of Sunday, November 8th (and this will change again) we now have a total of 43 commitments. Still not as hoped but here’s the good news...we have been blessed with the generosity of those who have entered their commitments and our total to that date is \$98,463.00. There is no way, other than to say a heartfelt thank you and God Bless to those who have already committed for 2010.

For those you have not done so we ask that you consider not postponing. Please contemplate your annual gift though prayer and submit your card in the collection plate. For the benefit of our Prudential Committee, whose volunteers shape our budget, we ask that you submit your commitment no later than December 31, 2009 if it is at all within your ability to do so. This will diminish the tremendous effort in crunching the numbers and being ready for our annual meeting.

Our monthly green envelope collection has shown again and again the caring and generosity of our members. Since we began this process, as a way to fund areas that were not afforded in our 2009 budget and areas that our members desire us to support, we have collected over \$5,000. Of course we are talking with our Council, our Prudential Committee, and our Treasurer to see that funds are distributed to those categories that you have given your support to.

As reported last month, our Stewardship brunch was a great success and a notice placed in the bulletin last week noted our donation of foods from that brunch to St. Vincent DePaul. We received a warm and sincere thank you letter from them.

If you ever have any questions about Stewardship or where your dollars are going please do not hesitate to ask our committee and of course our Prudential Committee. As most of you know a good deal of our resources go to pay salaries and benefits as well as day to day operation expenses of our facilities and then repair and maintenance. A good example that helps to explain is simply looking at your own households and where the money goes. Again, please help us set the record this year. Commitments may be placed in the collection plate on any Sunday or you may mail yours to the church office to the attention of the Collector. Thank you and God Bless!

Respectfully,
Scott Thompson, Chair Stewardship Committee

Diaconate

Deacons of the Month Please check the bulletin for our new program started last month. Two deacon’s phone numbers will be listed as well as Pastor Michael’s to ensure there is someone available in case of an emergency.

Caring Connection Meeting If you are interested in helping prepare a meal, or delivering a meal please let Kristin Battistoni (Kristin.battistoni@att.net) know. This program is available to all members of the congregation, if you would like a meal delivered or if you know someone who could use a meal, please talk to Pastor Michael or Kristin.

Visitation If you would like to receive a visit from the pastor or know of someone who is in need, please contact the church office or sign up in the church vestibule. If you are signing up a friend, please make sure they are aware they will be receiving a visit before you sign them up.

New Directory Our new directory is up and running! The link is available on our church website. If you do not have a password please log on and sign up. You cannot access the directory without a password. We can change your picture if you do not like the one provided. In case you need it, our website is www.haddamcongregation.org.

Large Print Bulletins Did you forget your glasses? Large print bulletins as well as large print bibles are available. If you would like large copies of hymns, please let us know. Ask a deacon for a copy if you are interested.

Lights If you are the last one in church please make sure all the lights are off completely. Some lights are on a dimmer and need to be "clicked" off.

Thank you to everyone that helped move furniture so the carpets and cushions could be cleaned. The church looks great! If you notice a spot on the cushions or carpet, please notify a deacon so the spot can be cleaned.

Flowers! Thank you to Laurie Malone who has offered to help organize Sunday flowers. Let's make her job easier and sign up to bring flowers. The sign up is in the vestibule.

Contact List In the Fellowship Hall on the Deacon bulletin board is our contact list. If you would like to contact any member for any reason please let us know how we can help you.

Print and Tear form off at line above.

CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS

It's that time of year again when we remember loved ones with poinsettias for the Christmas altar. If you would like to remember someone with a poinsettia, please print and then fill out the form below and mail it with your check made out to First Congregational Church of Haddam with a note which says "poinsettia" in the memo line. Please be sure to include the name of your loved one.

YOUR NAME _____

NAME OF PERSON(S) TO BE REMEMBERED/CELEBRATED _____

There are 4 prices/sizes available:

6.5 inch @ \$6.50;

7.5 inch @ \$11.50;

8.5 inch @ \$15.50;

and 10 inch @ \$24.50.

_____ POINSETTIAS @ _____ MY CHECK FOR _____ IS ENCLOSED.
(number) (price) (total)

Mail your form & check to First Congregational Church of Haddam, PO Box 215, Haddam CT 06438 Attn: poinsettias
BEFORE DEC. 8

Choose from the following:

Donation for Shut In _____; Pick-up at church _____; I will deliver to a shut-in _____;

General Flower Donation _____

TREASURER'S REPORT January through October 2009

Through October we are still running close to budget for both Income and Expenses. Detailed Financial Statements are regularly reviewed by the Prudential committee and Church Council and are available to any member on request.

Respectfully submitted, Alan E. Ortner, Treasurer

Income & Expenses – Budget vs. Actual January through October 2009

	Jan - Oct 09	Budget	\$ Over Budget	% of Budget
Ordinary Income/Expense				
Income				
Pledges	87,649.16	85,122.99	2,526.17	103.0%
Loose Offerings	4,953.80	5,164.99	-211.19	95.9%
Other Income	0.00	1,000.00	-1,000.00	0.0%
Endowment Distributions	45,117.00	45,117.00	0.00	100.0%
Advances from Endowment Fund	20,000.00	25,000.00	-5,000.00	80.0%
Rent of Facilities	5,518.18	4,977.94	540.24	110.9%
Special Gifts	1,248.80			
Total Income	164,486.94	166,382.92	-1,895.98	98.9%
Expense				
Expenses-Operating	51,280.50	48,337.28	2,943.22	106.1%
Salaries	115,898.07	113,792.16	2,105.91	101.9%
Total Expense	167,178.57	162,129.44	5,049.13	103.1%
Net Ordinary Income	-2,691.63	4,253.48	-6,945.11	-63.3%
Other Income/Expense				
Other Expense				
Flow Thru Accounts	-7,106.51			
Prior Year Expenses	2,348.50	2,348.50	0.00	100.0%
Total Other Expense	-4,758.01	2,348.50	-7,106.51	-202.6%
Net Other Income	4,758.01	-2,348.50	7,106.51	-202.6%
Net Income	2,066.38	1,904.98	161.40	108.5%

Balance Sheet July 31, 2009

	<u>Oct 31, 09</u>
ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Checking/Savings	
Checking	5,544.50
Citizens Bank Restricted Saving	8,383.27
Total Checking/Savings	<u>13,927.86</u>
Other Current Assets	
Petty Cash	116.25
Total Other Current Assets	<u>116.25</u>
Total Current Assets	14,044.11
Fixed Assets	
Capital Repairs to Lewis House	40,314.48
Total Fixed Assets	<u>40,314.48</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>54,358.59</u>
LIABILITIES & EQUITY	
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	
Other Current Liabilities	
Payroll Liabilities	1,041.60
Restricted Funds (in Savings)	
Capital Repair Fund	
Capital Repair Loan - Endowment	25,000.00
Capital Repair/Contingency Fund	19,089.36
Total Capital Repair Fund	<u>44,089.36</u>
Deaconate	
FCCH Family Assistance Fund	62.00
Flower Fund	426.18
Food Pantry	394.94
Special Bulletins	8.99
Special Memorials	2,338.08
Total Deaconate	<u>3,230.19</u>
Music	
Music Memorials	858.20
Special Organ Work	500.00
William Bauer	150.00
Total Music	<u>1,508.20</u>
Prayer Shawl Group	50.00
Religious Education	
Todd Kinney Memorial Youth Fund	2,320.00
Total Religious Education	<u>2,320.00</u>
Total Restricted Funds (in Savings)	<u>51,197.75</u>
Total Other Current Liabilities	<u>52,239.44</u>
Total Current Liabilities	<u>52,239.44</u>
Total Liabilities	52,239.44
Equity	
Retained Earnings	52.77
Net Income	2,066.38
Total Equity	<u>2,119.15</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	<u>54,358.59</u>



Children’s Christmas Program

On Sunday, December 13th at 10:00 a.m., come enjoy the children’s Christmas program, *A CHRISTMAS CAROL*. Thank you to Liz Anderson for directing the production and to all the children who are participating in this special service.

A Christmas gift collection will be taken as part of morning’s service. Gifts will then be distributed by Youth and Family Services to families in our community. There is a wish list posted on the Christian Education bulletin board in Fellowship Hall.

Christmas Pageant Rehearsal schedule

Sunday, November 22	During Sunday school (speaking parts only)
Sunday, November 29	During Sunday school (speaking parts only)
Sunday, December 6	During Sunday school & 11:15 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. (all children)
Saturday, December 12	9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. (all children)



Youth Choir

Thank you to our youth choir for lending their voices to the Children’s Christmas pageant service. Singers are Natalie Blodgett, Sally Blodgett, Blair Craffey, Katherine Dole, Claire Kelly, Grace Kelly, and Abigail Manley. **The last remaining rehearsal will be Dec. 6th at 9:00 a.m.**

Christmas Party

Please join the CE Committee at the annual Christmas party immediately following the Christmas Pageant Service on December 13th. There will be lots of food and crafts for all ages!



Hat and Mitten Tree

November 29th – December 27th

The Sunday school will continue to collect new hats, mittens, and scarves for the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program in Middletown. You may either place items in the basket in the vestibule or on the tree down in Fellowship Hall.



Middle School Youth Group

Christmas Party with Yankee Swap! December 13th at Killingworth Congregational from 4:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.

NOTE: There will be no Sunday School or nursery care on December 27th.

Coming Events

Teacher’s Meeting	Jan. 3	Mary & Martha Rotation
Souper Bowl of Caring	Feb. 7	
Mardi Gras Brunch	Feb. 14	