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December Newsletter

Vol. 25 No. 11– December 1, 2011

Editor – Carol Harvey

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Festival of Nine

Lessons &

CAROLS

Sunday, December 4 at 4 pm

Featuring:

Senior Choir

Children's Choir

Bell Choir

Reception following in Chapin Hall



*Stir up our hearts, O Lord,
and prepare us for your coming!*

Dear friends,

The theme of our Advent worship this year comes from a traditional prayer for the Advent wreath ritual. “Stir up our hearts, O Lord, and prepare us for your coming!” During the weeks leading up to Christmas, together we ask God to do something new within us – to revive our hope, renew our compassion, restore our peace and reawaken our joy.

What stirring is already in our hearts in these days leading up to Christmas? Is there anxiety rising that we won't get everything done or that the right present won't be under the tree? Maybe grief is churning because a beloved one won't be sitting around the holiday table. Maybe financial woes and worries weigh down our hearts and spirits. Whatever it is, the Advent season invites us to pause and reflect on the miracle of love that is Jesus Christ.

Will you join me this year in praying this simple and profound prayer during these weeks as we await the birth of Jesus Christ? Let “Stir up our hearts, O Lord,” be on our lips when we rise in the morning and as we head off to sleep in the evening. Let “Prepare us for your coming” be our prayer as we make a meal or our work commute or our way through the mall. This year, let us pause, ponder, and pray for God to be at work in our hearts and in the heart of our community!

Peace in the promise of Emmanuel,

Donna



Advent and Christmas Worship Schedule

December 4 Second Sunday of Advent /Communion

Scripture: Mark 1:1-8

Meghan D. Young

Sermon: "Prepare the Way"

December 11 Third Sunday of Advent

Scripture: Psalm 126

The Rev. Donna K. Manocchio

Sermon: "Rejoice in the Lord!"

December 18 Fourth Sunday of Advent

8:30am Communion Service

10:00am Worship Service

Scripture: Luke 1:26-38

The Rev. Donna K. Manocchio

Sermon: "And the Angel Said..."

December 24 Christmas Eve Services

5:00pm Intergenerational Service

Meghan D. Young

Message: "Voices of Hope"

11:00pm Candlelight and Communion (*by intinction*)

Scriptures: Luke 2:1-20

The Rev. Donna K. Manocchio

Sermon: "Gloria!"

December 25 Christmas

8:30am Communion Service

The Rev. Donna K. Manocchio

10:00am Christmas Day Service

Meghan D. Young

Scripture: John 1:1-14

Sermon: "Beginning Again"

Communion Service Sunday, December 18, 2011

8:30 AM

Weil Chapel

Taste and See the Goodness of our God!

Join us for a half hour service with song and silence,
a short message and the sacrament of communion

From the Moderator...

I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus. [1 Corinthians 1:4]

When Michael and I were preparing to adopt a child, my parents tried to talk me out of it. There were many reasons to their argument—including their own anxiety about the spotlight that would be placed on us and our families. Let's face it; raising a child IS a public spectacle. But Michael and I persisted with our desire, placing our hope in the grace of that old saying, "Everyone loves a baby." We never imagined just how true that would be.

It continues to boggle my mind that God's grace was gifted to us in the form of a vulnerable new born baby: Jesus. It's true that our journey includes all of Christ's story--his birth, life, death and resurrection. But this month, let the spotlight shine on all of us as the birth of Jesus is retold. Let the world see us, Rocky Hill Congregational Church UCC, as a Christian community that loves as everyone loves a baby...with sensitivity, attention and care...unconditionally. And, may the anticipation, anxiety and celebration of the season renew our hearts.

God bless you,

Bob Inderbitzen

rinderbitzen@cox.net (cell 860-418-9171)

The Church Council met on November 15. Here's an update...

Heating System. The small group that has been investigating a replacement for the old (1979) steam boiler is nearing a recommendation. Information meetings will be held in January to share this planning with the congregation, including a second-hour after Sunday worship on January 8.

Sanctuary Accessibility. The Boards of Trustees and Diaconate continue to explore modifications to the sanctuary seating to help make the space more accessible to all. In the coming months, members of this planning team will investigate resources from our national denomination, visit other churches, and seek advice from businesses and organizations that specialize in accessibility standards. This work is ongoing.

The Council also heard reports and updates from Pastors Donna Manocchio and Meghan Young, Treasurer Dave Hall, Clerk Marsha Hoffman, Stewardship Committee Co-Chair Louise Butts, Personnel Committee Chair Steve Smith, and Inreach Committee member Jennifer Courtemanche.

Next Council Meeting: Tuesday, January 10.



Called & Challenged

On an overcast Saturday in October, the deacons met at The Barn Retreat in Simsbury. We came together from our separate lives to seek a common purpose and to explore our charge to nurture spiritual welfare. Donna and Meghan presented a varied program of prayers and discussion designed to help better know each other and ourselves.

During the afternoon session we practiced leading a congregation in prayer and offered compliments and encouragement to each other. Our format for input was “plus, plus, wish” two things that the speaker did well then a wish for his/her improvement.

To live as God has challenged us can be unsettling, maybe even messy, as recent sermons have described. One of the prayers at our retreat, written by Mark Berry, speaks to this:

*“Disturb us, Lord, when we are too well pleased with ourselves,
When our dreams have come true because we have dreamed too little,
When we arrived safely because we sailed too close to the shore.*

*Disturb us, Lord, when with the abundance of things we possess
We have lost our thirst for the waters of life;
Having fallen in love with life, we have ceased to dream of eternity
And in our efforts to build a new earth, we have allowed our vision
Of the new Heaven to dim.*

*Disturb us, Lord, to dare more boldly, to venture on wider seas
Where storms will show your mastery;
Where losing sight of land, we shall find the stars.
We ask you to push back the horizons of our hopes;
And to push into the future in strength, courage, hope, and love.”*

In faith,

Tom Fulda

Judy Graham

Steph Heneghan

Bill Hoffman

Don Pagnucco

Nancy Parsons

Joe Sheehan

Candy Smith

Elaine Somes

Gail Tine

Val Triblets

Lynn Webster

Christian Education

S.P.I.R.I.T. Corner Check-in:

Church School

November marked the start of the second unit of our Come Join the Circle curriculum. We are now fully immersed in Luke's Christmas story. We are hearing the story of Jesus' birth through the song of angel choirs, seeing it through the eyes of shepherds and animals, and touching it as the tiny child of promise in Anna and Simeon's arms. So far we have planted Narcissus bulbs, acted out the Christmas story, remembered it through tasty bread, made prayer chains, and played fun games that have all brought Luke's story to life. We remember that Luke's story of Christmas is one that happens in the present for us, and we are invited to respond in love, peace, joy, and hope.

As we continue preparing our hearts in Advent as we learn of Luke's Christmas story, we are looking forward to the ways our hearts can respond to the good news of the Christ Child. Don't forget to *learn along with us, by following along in the weekly bulletins.*

Youth Group

Youth Group is back in action. After feedback from families, we've slightly changed our schedule. We are continuing to meet as a combined youth group on the first Friday night of each month. However, starting this month, both 6th-8th graders and 9th-12th graders will meet for Lunch Bunch on all other Sundays. The two groups will share a meal together, and then split-off for their own group activities. We're looking forward to more fun fellowship events and challenging faith discussions in December!

Here's What's Happening This Month...

We continue to explore Luke's Christmas Story and explore our faith in youth group. But there are many ways to get involved this month. Be sure to check the calendar below, and join us as we prepare for the pageant and the extremely fun Jingle Bell Rock! See below for a full calendar:

SPECIAL EVENTS: *You do not want to miss these!*

Date	Event
Sunday, November 27	Advent Gathering: 5 PM – 7 PM Join us for a pot-luck dinner, crafts, and worship as we wait in anticipation during the season of Advent. <i>This is an ALL ages event for the entire church family and friends.</i>
Sunday, December 11	Pageant Kick-Off: Immediately Following Worship. Interested in being part of the pageant? Join us in the Chapel, for a brief 30 minute meeting, as we introduce the 2011 Epiphany Pageant and assign parts. ALL ages welcome. Mark your calendars, the Pageant is Sunday, January 8.
Sunday, December 17	Jingle Bell Rock: 9 AM – 12 PM A Children's Christmas Carol Workshop. <i>See flier for more information. RSVP requested.</i>
Sunday, December 18	Epiphany Pageant Rehearsal: 2 PM – 4 PM Come meet in the Sanctuary for the 1 st rehearsal.

S.P.I.R.I.T Church School Calendar: *What we're learning this month.*

Date	Scripture/Lesson
Sunday, December 4	2nd Sunday of Advent Communion Sunday, Family Worship <i>All are encouraged to join the Choir for Open Choir Sunday!</i>
Sunday, December 11	3rd Sunday of Advent Week 4: Luke's Christmas Story <i>We continue reflecting on the scripture found in Luke 2:1-40</i>
Sunday, December 18	4th Sunday of Advent Week 5: Luke's Christmas Story
Sunday, December 25	Christmas Day Family Worship. 8:30 AM and 10 AM Worship Services.

Youth Group Calendar: *December*

Date	Fellowship Gatherings
Friday, December 2	Youth Night In (6 th -12 th Grade) → 5 PM – 9 PM <i>Join us at the church for dinner, hot cocoa, holiday games, a movie, and cookie baking. As always, friends are welcome.</i>
Sunday, December 11	Lunch Bunch (6 th -8 th Grade) & High School Crew (9 th -12 th Grade) → 11:30 AM – 1 PM <i>Lunch, fellowship, and fun faith activities. Groups will meet separately.</i>
Sunday, December 18	Lunch Bunch (6 th -8 th Grade) & High School Crew (9 th -12 th Grade) → 11:30 AM – 1 PM <i>Lunch, fellowship, and fun faith activities. Groups will meet separately.</i>

Join the Fun – Get involved with S.P.I.R.I.T.

We are looking for **learning center guides** who have a particular interest in arts, baking, drama, story-telling, etc. We are also looking for **Shepherds**, who will accompany a class throughout the year to engage them in discussion as they ask question, seek, and make their faith real. Or join us for a Sunday as a **Safe Church Volunteer**. Come join the Circle, have some fun, and walk in faith with us! Sign-Up in Chapin Hall or contact Meghan Young (860-966-2432), meghan@rhccucc.org) for more information.

S.P.I.R.I.T. CHURCH SCHOOL: What We're Learning Now!

COME JOIN THE CIRCLE: Unit 2 – Luke's Christmas Story

Perhaps you've noticed, or rather your noses and taste buds have noticed, that cooking and baking is now a part of our new church school curriculum. Through the Food and People center, we learn about the scriptures through cultures and food. Recently we modified a bread recipe, and added some fruit, to make a better tasting Christmas Fruitcake. There were many requests for the recipe, so due to popular demand, here it is. *Many thanks to Rebecca Shen for the recipes!*

* * * * *

No-Knead Bread

- 3 cups all-purpose or bread flour, more for dusting
 - ¼ teaspoon instant yeast (do not use rapid rise).
 - 1¼ teaspoons salt
 - Parchment paper (suggested but not necessary)
 - Cornmeal or wheat bran (suggested but not necessary)
1. In a large bowl combine flour, yeast and salt. Add water, and stir until blended; dough will be shaggy and sticky. Cover bowl with plastic wrap. Let dough rest at least 12 hours, preferably about 18, at warm room temperature, about 70 degrees.
 2. Dough is ready when its surface is dotted with bubbles.
 3. Use just enough flour to keep dough from sticking to work surface or to your fingers.
 4. Then dust over the top of the dough with flour.
 5. Gently shape dough into a ball or whatever shape your prefer. (I use this recipe for sticky buns, pizza crust, woven garlic knots, and have placed it in a regular loaf pan. My advice, have fun!)
 6. At least a half-hour before dough is ready, heat oven to 450 degrees. Prepare what ever you are using to bake with. I use a cookie sheet with parchment dusted with cornmeal for regular bread.
 7. Bake 15 to 22 minutes, until loaf is beautifully browned. Cool on a rack.

Sticky Buns (Or "Better Tasting Christmas "Fruitcake").

Prepare the no knead bread dough the day or evening before.

- Have ready dried fruit
 - Bowl of Soft butter or margarine
 - Bowl of Cinnamon sugar.
 - A prepared baking dish. I use either a shallow casserole dish or glass pie plate.
1. Using a piece of dough no bigger than a ¼ cup or a half a Clementine place a few pieces of your preferred dried fruit.
 2. Pinch the dough together surrounding the fruit and enclosing it forming a ball.
 3. Roll the ball in butter making sure to cover the entire surface of the dough ball.
 4. Then roll in the cinnamon sugar.
 5. Place the ball in a prepared baking dish. Repeat the process until you have used all the dough ...
****The balls of dough are allowed to touch, and they should because this is what is now known as monkey bread.****
 6. I like to drizzle pure Vermont maple syrup over the whole dish just before baking ;-)
 7. Bake at 425 for 15-20 minutes.
 8. Enjoy!

A Prayer for Christmas

Gracious God, you come to be with us in this world of need. Help us to look for you in the faces of others and welcome you everywhere. *Amen.*

Check out the weekly bulletins to learn with us as we work our way through Luke's Christmas Story, learning to respond in love, hope, peace, and joy!

Jingle Bell Rock!

A Children's Christmas Carol Workshop



Come join us for a fun-filled morning of learning and singing everyone's favorite Christmas Carols, making crafts, and decorating tasty cookies.

Saturday, December 17th

9 AM – 12 PM

(Adult supervision provided.)

Open to ALL children in PreK - 5th Grade

Bring a non-perishable food item or new toy for those in need in our community.

RSVP Appreciated:

Sign-Up at the S.P.I.R.I.T. Corner Bulletin Board or email Meghan@rhccucc.org.

Questions or Interested in Volunteering for this event?

Please contact Meghan Young at 860-529-4167, ext 204 or email meghan@rhccucc.org



Christmas Caroling
Sunday, December 18, 2011

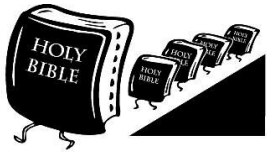
2:00 p.m. - Gather at the church
Returning to the church between 4:00 - 4:30 p.m.
for refreshments and fellowship.

Report from the Music Committee:



The Bell Choir has happily welcomed four new members to its group of ringers. Kathy Morgan, Kristi Solie-Fuller, Marj Sheathelm and Jan LaCava have joined the Choir. We are very excited that they have agreed to give of their talents & their time. They will be performing for the first time during Lessons & Carols on December 4, 2011, as part of the Bell Choir so keep your ears opened for our new ringers! The Bell Choir would like to extend their gratitude to Linda Tokarski & Michael Bower, who resigned from the Choir this year, for all their years of membership in the Choir. You will both be missed.

Gail Hall, Val Triblets, Chris Mosure, Tom Fulda (Diaconate representative), Will Kanute, Ruth Fitzgerald, Liz Reed-Swale, Deb Copes



Pastor's Bible Study

Pastor's Wednesday Bible Study

Meet in the Fiorilli Room every Wednesday at 12:30PM
Each week, we gather to read and explore the Scriptures to be used in an upcoming worship service. All are welcome. No experience necessary. Bring your favorite translation of the Bible or pick one up from the shelf. Brown bag lunch is optional.

Theology on Tap

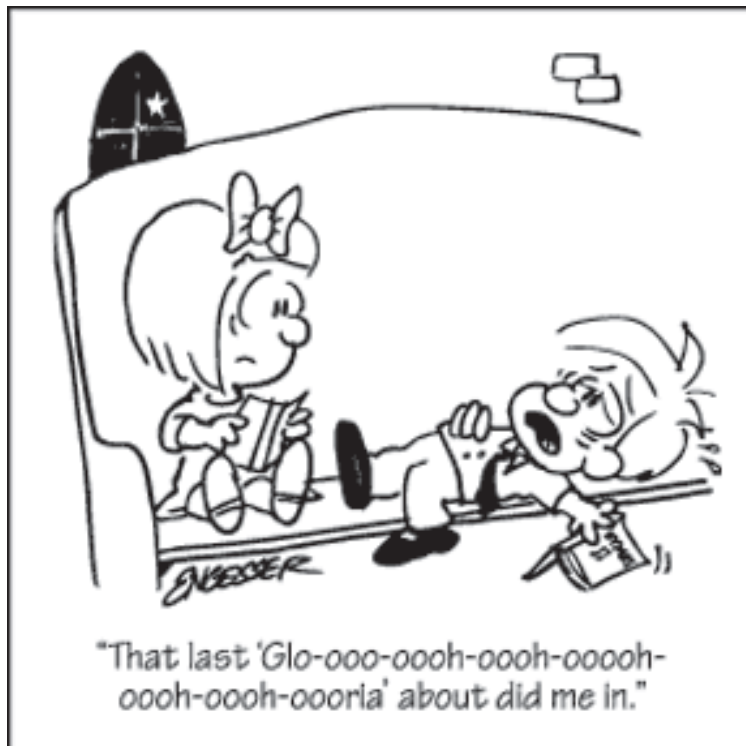
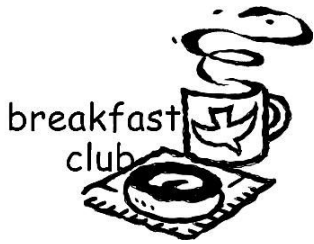
Thursday, December 8 at 7:00 PM AT Chuck's Steakhouse

Are you interested in sharing questions and experiences about God and God's presence in your life? If so, come and join with other church members and friends in the "back room" of the Chuck's Steakhouse. We discuss a different topic each month, so join us whenever you can. Bring a friend and see you at Chuck's! Contact Donna (donna@rhccucc.org or on FACEBOOK) if you have questions, want to suggest a topic, or can join us for a gathering.

Breakfast Club

Tuesday, December 13 at 8:30 AM

We meet at BOB'S COFFEE SHOP, 33 New Britain Avenue in Rocky Hill. Come join us for coffee, conversation, and community!





Stewardship

... appreciation and gratitude

As you are reading this message, take a moment to reflect on the many blessings you might have counted during the Thanksgiving season of gatherings and sharings... then take a leap forward in anticipation of what is ahead during the Christmas season - a time of slightly different kinds of gatherings and sharings.

Both of these special times come at the end of a calendar year but they are representative of many other seasonal gatherings and sharings that happen throughout the year. As you look at the church calendar of events in each monthly *Church Mouse* you know that RHCC, UCC is a very busy, active, caring, dedicated, worshipful congregation of families, members, friends – all ages.

Yes, this is a stewardship message and due to your expressions of gratitude and generosity during the past pledge campaign, many examples of a “church at work” and its ministries have happened throughout the year, for example:

- * ministerial leadership in planning and leading vital and engaging worship;
- * pastoral presence in times of joy and sorrow;
- * choirs and music that lead us into the presence of God;
- * making the Bible stories come alive for children and youth.

We are a congregation that is growing in faith, changing lives, experiencing and expanding the spirit of stewardship far beyond a once-a-year event. Your year-long sharing of time, talents, and treasures support and enable our *Vision* of a community of faith and compassion to grow and continue to be a witness that “*God is still speaking*” ...

For all of the above, the Stewardship Committee expresses appreciation and gratitude.



“And the Angel Said...”
Ecumenical Women’s Advent Retreat
A simple supper, contemplation,
conversation & creative expression.



Monday, December 5, 2011, 5:30 - 8:30 PM, \$15/person
Franciscan Urban Center at St. Patrick - St. Anthony Church
Registration forms available in Chapin Hall



**Rudy and Barbara
Burgess**
were married on
December 29, 1956



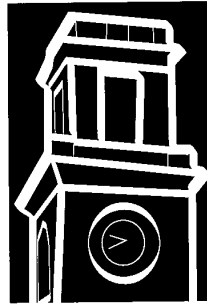
Grace Kathryn Hoffman
was baptized on
November 27, 2011



- | | | | |
|----|-----------------------|----|---------------------|
| 1 | Aaron Vann | 13 | Thelma Somes |
| | John Hoffman | 14 | Dave Hall |
| | Billie Charamut | 15 | Linda Grillo |
| 2 | Arthur Weil | | Chloe Bellizzi |
| | Anita Watson | 16 | Rebecca Alferi |
| | Joseph Kunzelman | | Eva Shen |
| | Tamara Connor | 17 | Alex Siembab |
| 3 | Liz Cardello | | Jacob Engel |
| | Jennifer Courtemanche | 19 | Midge Sword |
| 4 | John Hummel | | Carolyn Scheirey |
| 5 | Debbie Schreier | 20 | Julia Stewart |
| 6 | Bob Tangarone | | Nicholas Jokl |
| | Marty Rowe | 21 | Holly Peterson |
| 7 | Robert Mullins | | Christina Santiago |
| | Christina Jensen | 24 | Nancy Edwards |
| 8 | Lawrence Siembab | 25 | Jonathan Rutigliano |
| 9 | Kendres Lally | 26 | Janet Kunzelman |
| | Julie Fell | 27 | Donald Stedman |
| 11 | Gary Nicholson | | Nicholas Lizotte |
| | William Knight | 28 | Nathan Vann |
| 12 | Nathan Friday | 29 | Nicholas Cardello |
| 13 | Ralph Ahlberg | 30 | Krista Pender |
| | | | Karen Meszaros |



Jay Montana and Meghan Kelly
were married on
November 5, 2011



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
4 Family Worship 4:00pm Lesson/Carols Concert	5 5:30pm Yoga w/Lynn 7:00pm Women's AA 7:00pm Bowling 7:30pm Bell Choir	6 2:00pm Covenant Vlg 6:30pm Listening Session 7:00pm Board/ Committee Mtgs Cookie Walk Baking	7 9:00am Quilters 12:30pm Bible Study 7:30pm Adult Choir Cookie Walk Baking
11 Project Toy Drive Cookie Walk 11:15am Pageant Kickoff 11:30am Youth Group and High School Crew <i>(snow date for Lessons and Carols)</i>	12 Poinsettia Deadline 5:30pm Yoga w/Lynn 5:30pm Women's Advent Retreat - offsite 7:00pm Women's AA 7:00pm RHCCNS Mtg 7:00pm Bowling 7:30pm Bell Choir	13 8:30am Breakfast Club 10:30am Mapleview Svc 2:00pm The Lodge Svc	14 9:00am Quilters 12:30pm Bible Study 5:30pm Advent Class 7:30pm Adult Choir
18 8:30am Communion Service 11:30am Youth Group and High School Crew 2:00pm Pageant Rehearsal 2:00pm Christmas Caroling <i>(snow date for Cookie Walk)</i>	19 5:30pm Yoga w/Lynn 7:00pm Women's AA 7:00pm Bowling 7:30pm Bell Choir	20	21 9:00am Quilters 12:30pm Bible Study 6:00pm Community Mtg 7:30pm Adult Choir
25 CHRISTMAS DAY 8:30am Communion Service 10:00am Traditional Service	26 OFFICE CLOSED 5:30pm Yoga w/Lynn 7:00pm Women's AA 7:30pm Bell Choir	27	28 9:00am Quilters 12:30pm Bible Study 7:30pm Adult Choir

VOICE MAIL INSTRUCTIONS – If you call the church and the Voice Mail answers, you do not have to listen to the entire message. Anytime during the message you can have the call transferred directly to the person you are trying to reach by simply keying in the following numbers:

Donna Manocchio, Senior Pastor	202	Carol Harvey, Office Secretary	201
Meghan Young, Acting Director CE	204	Will Kanute, Dir. of Music	207
Acting Assoc. Pastor		Thomas Munger, Custodian	205



2011

THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 5:30pm TOPS 8:00pm Men's AA	2 5:00pm Youth Night	3 8:30am Yoga w/Lynn 9:30am Yoga w/Lynn 2:00pm Russo Memorial Svc
8 5:30pm TOPS 7:00pm Theology on Tap Cookie Walk Baking	9 Cookie Walk Baking	10 8:30am Yoga w/Lynn 9:30am Yoga w/Lynn 10:45am Cookie Walk Baking 5:00pm Advent Healing Svc 6:00pm Dinner/Movie
15 5:30pm TOPS 8:00pm Men's AA	16	17 8:30am Yoga w/Lynn 9:00am Jingle Bell Rock 2:00pm Pageant Rehearsal
22 5:30pm TOPS 8:00pm Men's AA	23	24 CHRISTMAS EVE 8:30am Yoga w/Lynn 9:30am Yoga w/Lynn 5:00pm Family Service 11:00pm Traditional Service
29 5:30pm TOPS 8:00pm Men's AA	30	31 NEW YEAR'S EVE 8:30am Yoga w/Lynn 9:30am Yoga w/Lynn

**“SCRIP-SURE”
Order Schedule**
Scrip delivery is
December 4

Scrip deadline is
January 8, 2012

ROCKY HILL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

United Church of Christ

805 Old Main Street – Rocky Hill, CT 06067

(860)529-4167 office • (860)257-9637 fax

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Visit us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/rhcucc

Office Hours 8am-2pm – Monday– Thursday / 8am-noon Friday

The Reverend Donna K. Manocchio, Senior Pastor

Meghan Young, Acting Associate Pastor and Christian Education Director

The Reverend Arthur C. Weil, Minister Emeritus

Will Kanute, Director of Music



Board of Missions

God Among Us

*“Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign:
The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son,
and will call him Immanuel.”—Isaiah 7:14*

Isaiah prophesied 700 years before Jesus’ birth that he would be born to us, and be among us. The name Immanuel literally meant “God with Us.” In those times, with the struggle and strife of the Jewish community, those words were powerful. That God would come to be among us was what people had hoped for. And even now, in the Christian community, the idea is equally as powerful. That God gave his only son to come and save the world. We often see this as a singular event, God’s physical presence on the earth, the ministry, the teachings, and Jesus’ death and resurrection. But here and now, is God Among Us? Some say God will return as a physical presence in the future. But again, here and now, is God Among Us? In the storms and struggles we have faced, in the injustices and wars, the hunger and the disease, the shocking events we see in the news, has God been a physical presence in this world?

I would argue yes, that God is Among us. In all the suffering in the world, in all the sadness, there is much comfort, too. And though we do not understand the reason that bad things happen in the world around us, we do know the reason that the good pours out in response. Compassion, empathy, and care, all come from those who know God is Among Us. Many have said that God is not in the storm, but in the quiet after the storm has passed. Here in our town, for example, the storms had passed, and among us, in the quiet aftermath, God’s people went to work, and fed one another, kept each other warm, and checked in on one another. And in the Gulf Coast, after Katrina, God’s people started the work of rebuilding that community, and still do today. You, as a community of faith, have given so much to those in need around you. You have Walked against Hunger, you have given to special UCC offerings to help our Neighbors around the world, you have collected items to help kids in need, and you have raised money to send missionaries to Biloxi. Just last month, you banded together and collected over 1200 grocery items to help our local food pantry, and two weeks later brought in turkeys and donations to help Foodshare feed hungry families throughout the Hartford area. God Among Us, indeed! One needs only to look in the mirror to see this work in action. When we realize that each one of us is God’s creation, that we Belong to God, and we joyfully do God’s work in the world, even in some small way, then it is easy to see the hand of God at work in the world. God is Among Us! Amen!

Best Gift Catalogs

A gift idea for the person who has everything! Best Gift Catalogs from Church World Service will be available in Chapin Hall and across from the office. A Best Gift helps bring genuine and lasting change to those who need it most. All the gifts are examples of how Church World Service works in partnership to assist people in the world's poorest countries to find effective ways of tackling poverty and injustice. Whatever gift you buy, your money will fund one of the program areas related to your gift: agriculture and livestock, emergency and disaster preparedness, care for vulnerable children, water and environment, or women's empowerment. For example, if you buy a goat, rabbits, or a beehive, your money will go to agriculture or livestock programs that can boost people's income. These gifts are tax-deductible, and a card is sent to the person you buy the gift in honor of.

Church World Service Blanket Cards

We are selling Church World Service Blanket Cards for Christmas. Cards are \$5.00 each and will be available in Chapin Hall on the following Sundays after during coffee hour: **December 4, 11 and 18**. Church World Service was able to rush blankets and CWS Kits to the people of Haiti within the first 24 hours thanks to pre-positioned supplies in neighboring Dominican Republic. Medical supplies, food, water and tents have also been provided as part of the CWS and ACT Alliance combined effort. Your purchase of these beautiful cards helps make that kind of swift response possible.

Project Toy Drive – Sunday, December 11

Help us give a gift of love to more than 2000 children in Connecticut whose moms will not be home for Christmas. Children of women incarcerated in Niantic miss their mothers. A lot. Especially at Christmas. Our goal is to send each child a gift with a tag that reads, "love, Mom." Gifts matched to the child's gender and age will be lovingly wrapped and mailed by volunteers from the community, as has been done each Christmas for the past 28 years, because of the generosity of people like you! Please bring unwrapped toys to service on Sunday, December 11, or leave them in the Narthex anytime before, and we will deliver them to the Hartford Seminary that afternoon for sorting and wrapping. Gifts can be for any child up to the age of 16.

Where did your money go in November?

\$5,375.00 – Our Church's Wider Mission

882.00 – Hartford Association UCC Annual Dues

500.00 – Interval House

500.00 – Volunteer Care Teams of Rocky Hill

700.00 – Families in Crisis

262.00 – Donated by you to the Mission:1 drive, was sent to Rocky Hill Food Pantry in the form of Scrip cards for Groceries, and Thanksgiving meals.

52.05 – proceeds from our fair booth went toward the Turkey and a Twenty Drive

Your Board for Missions are: David Bell - Treasurer, Michael Bower - Chair, Linda Calcagni, Bob Carberry, Cindy Hunt, Tom Kainamura, Stephanie Kelley, Meghan Kelly, Kari-McCaw-Blaise, Sarah Mosure, and Marge Murk – Secretary

From the Trustees

A committee working for the Trustees has nearly completed the design scope for a major upgrade of our heating system. The new system will entail a more efficient boiler using cheaper fuel and having modern controls. Other parts of the system will be upgraded to reflect a modern system. Also, existing large heat zones will be separated into smaller heat zones which will allow us to heat just the rooms in use. We expect to select a contractor in December.

Two information meetings will be held in January; so please mark your calendars now. At the sessions, you will hear project details, projected savings for the church and cost of the project. The two sessions are SUNDAY JANUARY 8 at 11:30 AM and WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 18 at noon.

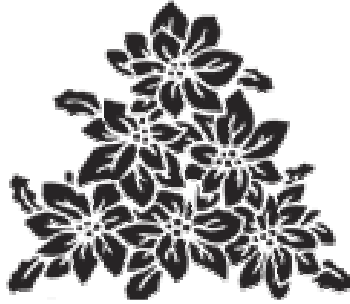
If you have any questions, please contact Dave Sageman, Neal Cox, Dick Webster or Tommy Munger.

Budget and Elections Meeting

Attention Boards and Committees:

Budget requests for the next program year, May 2012 – April 2013, should be submitted to Treasurer Dave Hall (treasurer@rhccucc.org) **before the end of January**. The Trustees and Council will be reviewing and finalizing the church budget in early February. The annual Budget and Elections Meeting is scheduled for Sunday, March 18. Thank you for your cooperation.

*Remember or Honor Loved Ones
With Christmas Poinsettias*



The Poinsettias will adorn the sanctuary for worship on
Christmas Sunday, December 18.

The cost is \$12.00 per plant.

Ordering deadline is Monday, December 12th

Please fill out the information below and mail to Joan Diaz (*see address below*)

Given by: _____

Daytime Telephone number: _____

Dedication ("in loving memory of...", "in honor of...", etc.):

Please select:

I will pick-up my plant after worship on Sunday, December 18.

Use my plant to decorate the church through Christmas.

The Deacons may give my plant to a Shut-in or homebound member.

Make your checks payable to Joan Diaz with "Poinsettia" in memo line and mail to:

15 Thistle Down, Cromwell CT 06416.

You may call Joan with questions at 860 613-2889.



Help Deliver Christmas Plants!

Your help is needed to help deliver Christmas Plants to our shut-ins and homebound members during the week before Christmas. The church school children have made homemade Christmas Cards to include with the deliveries. Our list consists of many people who live in the Rocky Hill, Wethersfield, Cromwell and Hartford areas. If you can deliver one or two of these plants sometime during the week of December 20, we would be most grateful for your assistance. Please contact Bob Inderbitzen at **860 418-9171** or email **rinderbitzen@cox.net**. Thank you!!

Listening Session

You are Invited to Join other Lay Leaders for a listening session with the
CT Conference Search Committee for the Conference Minister

Tuesday, December 6, 2011

Rocky Hill Congregational Church, United Church of Christ

805 Old Main Street

Rocky Hill, CT 06067

6:30 - 7:30 PM

What are the blessings, the challenges and the needs of our Conference?
What gifts and skills will our next Conference Minister need to possess?

Thank You!

Thank you to the members of the Advent worship planning team:
Kari McCaw-Blaise, Lynn, Emily, and William McKenna, Don
Pagnucco, Will Kanute and Pastors Meghan and Donna.



"Warm Heart Tree"

For the 37th year, the Warm Heart Tree has returned to the narthex and will be up through January 8th. We will once again be collecting donations of warm hats, gloves, packages of white athletic socks, and scarves to decorate the tree. Men's hats should be black, brown, or gray without decoration. Please place your donations directly on the tree. Donations can be hand-made, bought, or even a new re-gifted item (let someone benefit from 'Mom, what was Grandma thinking, I will NOT wear that!'). The donations will be distributed to some of

Connecticut's neediest. Some of the donations will be removed from the tree and delivered BEFORE Christmas.



Musical Notes

On December 11 at 11 am the Music Program will be sponsoring the 11th Annual Cookie Walk. Here's your chance to let someone else do the baking and still get delicious homemade baked goods. This is the major fund raiser for the music program and in past years we have sold out in less than an hour! Preorders will be accepted- please sign up in Chapin Hall. For those with nut allergies we do separate the cookies. We also offer gluten free selections.

If you can help by making a batch or two of **your** favorite cookies please sign up in Chapin Hall. Look for the Bright Pink signs! We are looking for a 100 different kinds of cookies or candy.

For further information on how to help please see Linda Tokarski after church or call her at 860-633-8413. The snow date will be December 18th.



Do You Have a Special Talent?
(Everyone Does!)

Juggling	Poetry Readings	Dancing
Magic Tricks	Ensembles	
Impressions	Skits	
Hula Hoop	Solos	Stand-Up Comedy
Zumba	Acrobatics	Sound Effects
		Yoga

The Music Committee is organizing an adult talent show, to be presented in January. The program will benefit local mission projects. If you would be willing to share your special talent, please speak with any member of the Music Committee.

Your Music Committee,
Will Kanute, Music Director

Deb Copes Ruth Fitzgerald Gail Hall Chris Mosure Liz Reed-Swale
Val Triplets Tom Fulda (Diaconate rep)

NEWS FROM THE FAIR COMMITTEE

We are happy to report that, despite Storm Alfred's appearance at this year's fair, we made over \$14,000.

The success of this year's fair is the direct result of the dedication of the congregation and the generous donations of their time, talents and goods. The booth chairs and their helpers showed enthusiasm and creativity in their displays. We extended an extravagant welcome to the community and gave them a fair to remember. So many "customers" come back each year and tell us how much they look forward to our fair – our church family should be proud.

We had over 85 volunteers on fair day and although we can't mention each one by name here, we would like to spotlight a few.

A special thank you to Carol Harvey and Tommy Munger, who helped us for weeks; getting whatever we needed to put on the event.

Our thanks to Senior Pastor Donna Manocchio and Acting Associate Pastor Meghan Young who worked all week cooking and baking, and then helping out on fair day wherever they saw a need. We are blessed to have them guiding us in our discipleship.

To Lynn & Dick Webster – we thank you for your tireless efforts in helping with the fair, setting up during the week, as well as heading up a great group of grillers in the Pumpkin Patch Café.

Nancy Flynn and Lois Steven – thank you for spending all day in the office, taking care of the financials.

We had the electronic wizardry of Steve Smith, working with Neal Cox, who expanded their booth this year with the sales of laptops and computers. Deb Copes and her team, which included a diligent and determined Linda Grillo, once again ran a very successful Silent Auction bringing in well over \$4,000. Judy Graham and Lynn McKenna had a beautiful holiday room set up. Elaine Somes and her staff opened the first Kitchen Shop, creating a beautiful high-end shop with an outlet, which got a lot of traffic throughout the day. Candy Smith and her band of little helpers ran a fun Toy Shop complete with homemade treats and penny candy!

Sue Starr and company ran the ever popular Tea Room - and despite worrying about the snow, many had to make sure they got their delicious soup and sandwiches before heading home. Hilaire Leavitt, fighting a cold all week, prepared two lovely Arts & Antiques rooms with a friendly staff. Jim Stevens, Don Pagnucco and Mary Dean brought a wide variety of wonderful treats and gifts to the Apple Barrel; cheese, fudge and books helped raise over \$1600. Phyllis Wilkey, Joan Diaz and their "retail assistants" Polly, Bea and Jessica had another successful jewelry boutique bringing in over \$1,100. We hope everyone got a chance to taste one of Dick Somes delicious soups in the Pumpkin Patch Café. His clam and corn chowders will be missed, as Dick is hanging up his ladle. We want to thank Dick for all his years of cooking and helping make the diner a success year after year.

The Roast Beef dinner had a twist this year, due to the weather we were unable to have the usual 5:30 meal, but Marsha Hoffman and her kitchen helpers made a last minute adjustment and provided take-out meals to many and even provided much needed food for the town shelter on Sunday. Thanks to the pie bakers as well, who worked so hard during the week to make so many pies that are sold in the Apple Barrel, as well as with the dinners.

Ruth Jensen and her team created the first Farmers Market at the fair. There was a wonderful presentation of home-made items, herbs, eggs etc. You felt you were outside at an open-market.

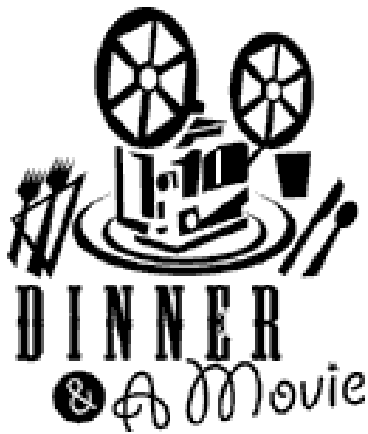
The quilt raffle was another big success – selling over \$1400 worth of tickets and providing the winner, Patricia Frank of Newington, a beautiful quilt! We so appreciate the hard work the quilters do.

Did you see the signs around town advertising the fair? Our thanks to Mark and Pat Hughes-Walworth, who donated the signs and then ran around town setting them up – promoting the fair right up until the opening.

The Fair Committee wishes to thank all those who attended the fair and especially those who worked to make it such a success.

May God bless you and your loved ones. We wish you a great Holiday season.

The RHCC Fair Committee



Hugh Grant returns!
Come for Dinner and a Movie
Saturday, December 10, 2011
at 6:00 pm in Chapin Hall.

The film showing is
“Love Actually”

This film follows the lives of eight very different couples in dealing with their love lives in various loosely and interrelated tales all set during a frantic month before Christmas. The characters are falling in love, falling out of love, some are with right people, some are with the wrong people, some are looking to have an affair, some are in the period of mourning; a capsule summary of reality. Love begins and love ends. They flirt a lot. They are all flirting with love. At all ages and social levels, love is the theme. Romantic love and brotherly love is the hotchpotch throughout the movie. Most of the movie is filmed in London, during Christmas and the characters all ended up at Heathrow airport a very uplifting note.



How about a little equal exchange for someone special?

"Around the world coffee and fellowship come together where we share community. A warm pot of coffee is often the centerpiece of fellowship hour and other gatherings." How about some Fair Trade coffee for someone special for the holidays this year? Fair Trade coffee would be a wonderful addition to a gift basket, a stocking stuffer or a great hostess gift! For sale downstairs in Chapin Hall after Sunday service."

During fellowship time in Chapin Hall, the Inreach Committee has available for purchase: Gourmet Coffee at \$6.25, Tea at \$3, Hot Cocoa Mix at \$5. For more information about the UCC Coffee Project: www.ucc.org/justice/coffee-project

Our Vision:

...to be a church of....

- Extravagant welcome
- Active engagement
 - Generous service
- Diverse worship experiences
 - Value children and youth
 - Joyful generosity
- Preserve traditions; build on foundations

December 2011: *The Gifts of Sharing Ideas*



As we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too. II Corinthians 1: 5

I awaited the arrival of the group with excitement - it seemed a little like the anticipation of gifts at Christmas time! I always enjoy accompanying the groups that come to visit the Salvadoran Lutheran Church. When a group comes, there are many gifts, like the friendships that grow into *hermandad*, a Spanish word that means "partnership", but that doesn't catch the whole sense. Think of partnership, brotherhood, and sisterhood all mixed up in the same pupusa, a traditional Salvadoran food. In the same way that the pupusa contains beans, cheese, and ground pork all mashed together into a corn tortilla, *hermandad* contains different cultures, lifestyles, languages, and backgrounds all mashed together in a common faith and hope.

A few weeks ago I was awaiting the arrival of some of the friends I had made in the Iglesia Misión Cristiana of Nicaragua. They were coming to meet with church leaders involved in similar mission projects. In both countries, as economic struggles rise, access to basic needs becomes more and more difficult, and the ability for families to provide their own food becomes more and more necessary. Churches in both countries have programs which aim to feed families in several communities by helping them grow their own food. The more each group shared with the other, the greater their excitement grew, and the more they helped solve their own challenges. At the end of the visit both groups had learned so much from each other. They committed to getting together again next year to advance and deepen their work, and *hermandad*.

We pray that *hermandad* grows in our congregations as well as the inspiration of sharing in God's love.

Nicholas Green serves in El Salvador as a long-term volunteer with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of El Salvador. He supports National Youth, with the Family and Gender Program of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of El Salvador, and also assists the Communications Program.

Hospice and Palliative Care

At Middlesex Hospice and Palliative Care, volunteers are an integral part of our interdisciplinary team, reaching out to patients and families as they cope with the challenges of terminal illness. Volunteers can choose to work in homecare, on the Weiss Hospice Unit or in bereavement support after completing 40 hours of classes and a 12-hour mentorship. Classroom training runs from early February to mid-April 2012, and is held primarily on Saturdays and evenings. The program is especially in need of male volunteers. To begin our fall application process, please contact Barbara Standke, Hospice Volunteer Coordinator, at (860) 358-6955 or Barbara.standke@midhosp.org, at your earliest convenience.



Save the Date!!

Saturday, January 21, 2012 in Chapin Hall at 5:30 PM

Tossed Salad and Rolls – Hot Vegetables – Meat Loaf, Mashed Potato and Gravy

Ham, Macaroni & Cheese – Variety of Desserts

Coffee, Tea, Hot Chocolate, Soda

Magician Entertainment

\$10.00 – 12 years and up / \$5.00 – 4 to 12 years; free under 4 years

Please Reserve Tickets: Joan Tennyson 860-529-8789

Tickets will be sold during Coffee Hours in January

Snow Date January 22, 2012

Sponsored by Inreach



Always Welcome! – Hunger never takes a holiday... Food Pantries need our help to meet the food demands...Please consider bringing a non-perishable food item, laundry detergent, or baby items to worship every time you come. The large basket in the front foyer of the church welcomes all

food donations. Pew Crew members have been taking your donations to the food pantry. Mark Williams sends a thank you note every month in gratitude for your generosity.

Hands Open Wide Food Bank (H.O.W.) – Every 3rd Saturday of the month. First come, first served! November 19 at 9:30am at Wethersfield Evangelical Free Church 511 Maple St. Wethersfield. Free Non-perishable food items given out. Must complete registration form at first visit.

Celebrate Recovery – Thursday nights at First Church in Wethersfield. The purpose of this ministry is to fellowship and celebrate God's healing power in our lives through the 8 Recovery Principles. This experience allows us to be changed. By working and applying these Biblical principles, we begin to grow spiritually. 6:00-6:45 Dinner (\$4.00 donation), 7:00-8:00 Large group meeting, 8:00-9:00 Safe, supportive gender-specific small groups, 9:00-9:30 Coffee and Dessert / Crosstalk Café. For more information call 860 529-1575 x210 or email care@firstchurch.org

Yoga classes offered in Chapin Hall

Yoga Offered by Core Power, LLC – Experience the dynamic flow and challenge of yoga which builds strength, balance and flexibility for an overall fit and healthy body. Classes are for all-levels with options for everyone! This class meets: Monday evenings from 5:30-6:30pm, and Saturday mornings in from 8:30-9:15am and 9:30-10:15 Contact Lynn MacDonald 860-550-4660 to register – Please bring water bottle, yoga mat, and a friend!!

ROCKY HILL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
805 Old Main Street, Rocky Hill CT 06067
Telephone # 860 529-4167

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
Rocky Hill, CT

Permit #7

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED
TIME VALUE MAIL

Mailed November 29, 2011

No matter who you are,
Or where you are on life's journey...
You're welcome here.



a thrill of **HOPE**

The Christmas Story in Word and Art

Wednesdays, November 30th & December 14th

5:30 -7:00 PM in Chapin Hall

Dinner & Advent Faith Formation

Join us for **A Thrill of Hope: The Christmas Story in Word and Art**. Through short video segments this faith formation program presents the familiar story of Christmas as told in the Gospels of Luke and Matthew. Each scripture passage is illustrated and interpreted in the stunning artwork of John August Swanson along with commentary by some of America's premier Biblical scholars. *Families are encouraged and welcome. Separate programming provided for children 5th grade and younger.*

Sign-Up in Chapin Hall or email Meghan@rhccucc.org.