

Word from the Pastor

Holiday Greetings!

As many of you know, my doctor has ordered me to exercise on an elliptical trainer for at least 40 minutes at a time three times each week. Whether or not I am in total compliance with that order will remain a closely held secret, but this morning, as I was dutifully complying with the mandate at the gym, I noticed that there are basically two kinds of people on the treadmills, exercise bikes and elliptical trainers. There are those who seem to be having a fun time, smiling while doing their exercise. And there is the vast majority of people who are somber and appear to be trying to either get through the exercise session or just trying to "get it over with."

During this holiday season, I can't help but notice that most everyone I meet or talk to seems to fall into the same two categories. There are those who are having lots of fun, while the majority of people seem to be struggling to get through the holidays intact and with some semblance of sanity! And I can understand why some are somber and struggling. Personal experience confirms what psychologists have been saying for years. The holidays are always accompanied by the additional pressure to get things decorated, to find the right gifts for everyone you love, the pressure to meet family, work, and community commitments, and even the pressure to appear to be happy during these times. On top of that, life's normal challenges don't take a vacation during the holiday. During these times, we think more about the fact that certain loved ones are not here physically to share the holidays with us. The economy continues to be uncertain. And we seem to become more sensitive to issues that were swept under the rug earlier in the year.

On one hand, it would be nice if God would ordain that during the holiday season our lives will be in perfect order and that all challenges and heartbreak will cease until after the new year. But in my simplistic mind that doesn't make any sense. The essence of Advent, Christmas and Epiphany is that God gives us eternal hope through the birth of a child. It is the hope that endures and that is present through hard times. The Christmas message is not that God takes away the bad things in life. Rather, the point is that there is hope. A hope that will bring forth confidence that we can overcome the challenges of this life. That things will get better. That no matter what is going on, God is there, God loves you, and that there is a whole family of fellow Christians who care about you and know what you are going through.

If we keep in mind the real reason for the season, we might all be part of that group of people who are genuinely smiling and enjoying the season. The smile is not there because we don't have any trials or tribulations. We all have to continue walking on the treadmill of life. But while we do that, there can be a smile on our faces because we know that we are not alone. We know that there is hope for ourselves, our friends and loved ones, and for the world.

In closing, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank you all for the special place you've have in the life and ministry of First Church. You've also have a very special place in my life. Your support, love and concern have reminded me each day of the hope we receive during this Christmas season. I'd like to pass on that hope to others, and so instead of including a small gift in our Christmas mailing, our family will be making a donation to the Heifer Project in honor of you, the members and friends of First Church. This year we'll be donating a flock of chicks, a flock of geese, and a sheep.

The flock of chicks is symbolic of the children and youth of our Church, and how they bring new life and hope to our church family. Over time, with love and care from all of you, they will become productive adults and will then lead and guide new flocks of chicks. The flock of geese represents the fact even though we fly off to our respective places in life, we always migrate back to our church family and without a GPS to tell us where to go, God always guides us. Finally, the sheep is an appropriate symbol of the members of our family. We're all different colors and sizes, but we are all kind of meek and shy, and each of us has some "wool" to offer! As sheep we admit that we aren't great at finding our way or protecting ourselves. So we rely on the Good Shepherd to lead us and to protect us.

May the true meaning of Christmas fill your hearts,

Mike



DECEMBER 2009

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Article Submission:
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Special points of interest:

- Christmas Eve
Candle Light
Service to be
held on
December 24th
at 7:30 PM
- Christmas Family
to be sponsored
- Mitten Tree co
sponsored with
Tower One Fire
Company!
- 20th Annual
Boar's Head
Festival



Inside this issue:

Coffee House	2
Mitten Tree	
Chuckle	
Boar's Head Fest	3
Nominating Com	
Christmas Fair	
Upcoming Events	4
Birthdays	
New Conference Room	5
December Calendar	6
Church Directory	7
Contact Information	

STEAM VENT- Final Coffee House of the Season



Pastor John & Allison DeSorbo



Dark Horse



Tom Sheeley



Mad River Crossing



Our Steam Vent Coffee House held on November 21st was a fabulous night of great music and wonderful Chinese Food, thanks to Mike's Mom...A BIG thank you to Mrs. Wu! Chinese food is always a big hit with our audience.

Our performers included Pastor John and Allison DeSorbo from Waterbury. They performed a mix of musical styles, from modern Christian to Johnny Cash. Pastor John is very talented on Keyboard and Guitar, but said he was a drummer, and the combination of their vocals was truly wonderful. Up next was Dark Horse, Brad on guitar and mandolin, Lisa on banjo and Dave on bass and a new member, Brian on guitar and vocals. Bluegrass...and some selections by the Grateful Dead were a great addition to the mix, and wonderfully received.

Tom Sheeley with is electric Guild was up next with a sort of Metal/Jazz fusion. Tom's fingers fly over the guitar...he is a truly gifted musician.

Mad River Crossing ended the evening with some old favorites. Cindy Rines on guitar and vocals; Lynn Whittaker, vocals; Brad DuBow on dobro, guitar and vocals; Gary Storrs on bass;

and Debbie Storrs whistle and vocals. John Karl was absent...due to a back injury. He didn't follow the band rules...which state no member can take part in any activity that can be harmful a week before a gig. It came into being when Brad fell off his horse on his head causing him to miss a gig. It is a good thing he has a hard head, and damage was minimal...and short lived!

Mexico Missions and Duct tape eradication...it's has been successful for us...but now we are looking at ways to make it just as rewarding for you.

In the spring we are going to change the format a little...because Friday nights are just too difficult to get the food prepared and get things set up, and beside us musical maniacs, regular folk want to go home and not come back out. We had a much bigger audience on Saturday...so I believe we will try the 2nd Saturday beginning in March.

There has been some discussion about doing some workshops, if any of you are interested...as I said, it's a work in progress. We are hoping to offer different instruments, different playing styles...etc with the

ultimate goal of getting on stage as it were.

Brad DuBow has agreed to help with marketing...and we will be meeting to hammer out details. If any of you have any ideas...please let them fly this way. We have great musicians and great sound...now we need to develop an audience! And that is what we are working towards.

And a special thanks to Fran and sometimes Steve, who videotaped, and got us a cable presence. AND let's not forget our slave boy...John, and all the folks who cooked and served the yummy meals! You guys and gals are amazing.

Together we can make a difference!



Group Jam at the End!

Mitten Tree

A Mitten Tree is being sponsored by Tower One Fire Company and First Church.

There is a collection box in the Gathering Room...and our little tree on the Alter will serve as a reminder.

Let your light shine on those in need. Donate a pair of mittens...a hat...a scarf perhaps? Deadline to donate is December 20th!



Three Point Sermon?

The pastor was completing a three-point temperance sermon.

With great emphasis he said, "If I had all the beer in the world, I'd take it and pour it into the river."

With even greater emphasis he said, "If I had all the wine in the world, I'd take it and pour it into the river."

And then finally, shaking his fist in the air and shouting, he said, "And if I had all the whiskey in the world, I'd take it and pour it into the river!" Sermon complete, he sat down.

The choir director stood very cautiously and announced, "For our closing hymn, let us stand and sing Hymn #365, Shall we gather at the River."

Gearing Up for Boar's Head

The 2010 Boar's Head Fest is coming together. The stage is up, and decorating has begun!

Coffee House favorites, Cece & Ruth will be joining us this year. Cece & Ruth bring you songs of love, songs of war & peace, of hearth & home, and of the people from the American West to the Celtic Isles. Milk maids and their young swains, cowboys, kings & paupers, sailors, witches, sea-sprites and begging monks inhabit these ballads.

With songs ranging from the silly to the sublime, performances include play & sing-along opportunities for the audience to join in. Cece & Ruth accompany their soaring harmonies on guitars, harmonica & pennywhistle, adding percussion on bodhran, castanets and more.

Performing in New England as a duo since 1997, their live Cd "Hearts in Harmony" has enjoyed wide radio play on folk stations in the US and abroad. Their 2nd Cd,

"Perennials" was released in Spring of 2006.

Both Ruth & Cece work full-time in the "real world", and pursue their music part-time with a passion ... accepting only those gigs where they can make audience connection, and singing only those songs that touch them deeply.

Ruth is a full-time teacher in Wethersfield, of English as a Second Language ... very appropriate, since her youth was spent wandering the globe. She's performed from the UK to Israel in concert halls (and busking on the streets) with her vintage Martin. In her wanderings from Mexico to Greece, she has collected a world of songs to share.

Cece started playing on her dad's well-worn Gibson during the folk revival of the 60's, and spent years in chorus & choirs where she honed her harmony skills. A full-time traffic manager who ships tradeshow exhibits around the USA &

the world, she says folk music is her magic carpet ride to exotic places, her time machine to other eras.

Each winter Cece & Ruth set aside time to learn new songs from their "wish list", develop arrangements, try out new instruments, and prepare surprises for their loyal fans for the coming season. They often bring special guests, silly hats, Hawaiian leis, singing frogs, bearded ladies & the occasional sound effects track.

Their blend of old favorites and new surprises have kept their fans coming back for more since 1997.



BABIES NEEDED!
We have **ONE**
We need **TWO** more.
Saturday at 7 and Sunday at 4!

We need 2 Woodsman
Do we have any volunteers?

39 DAYS until Boar's Head!



Cece & Ruth will be joining Pre-show line-up!

Boar's Head Festival TICKETS are available from Brenda, give her a call! 860-379-6511.

Gift Certificates will be available this year as well. Boar's Head Tickets make great Christmas gifts!

Advance ticket prices:

\$12 Adult
\$8 Senior/Student
\$3 Child 12 and under

Door Prices:

\$15 Adult
\$12 Senior/Student
\$5 Child 12 and under

Tickets will be available at Christmas Fair!

Notice from Nominating Committee

There will be openings on Church Boards and Committees for the 2009 Slate.

If anyone is interested in serving on a Board or Committee, please contact a member of the Nominating Committee.

Pam Allen Barbara Woodard
Ashley Jones Gail Roberts
Carol Miles Tricia Wu



Thanksgiving Dinner

A wonderful Thanksgiving Dinner sponsored and presented by the Youth Group and Board of Christian Education was a great event...and over 70 people were present to help eat the feast!

And a feast it was...complete with turkey, stuffing, mashed potatoes, butternut squash, green beans, juice coffee...AND yummy peacan, pumpkin and apple pies.

It was so nice to come together as the family of God and share a wonderful meal.

Many thanks to the preparers, servers, and cleaner-uppers!

Christmas Craft Fair

Saturday, December 5th
9AM ~ 3 PM



Crafts
Jewelry
Poinsettias
Rada Knives
Fish Painting
Beef Soup Jars
Chicken Soup Jars
Brownie/Cookie Mix Jars
Knitted & Crocheted Items
Boar's Head Festival Tickets
Christmas Trees & Wreathes
Baked Goods
Theme Basket Raffle
Luncheon ~ 11 until 2

Upcoming Events - Mark Your Calendars!

<i>Celebrate With Us...</i>		<i>Looking Forward</i>	
Sunday - 10 am Monday - 6 pm Tuesday - 6 pm Wednesday - 6:30 pm Wednesday - 7:30 pm Thursday - 6 pm	Worship Senior Choir RehearsalCherub Choir RehearsalFolk Group RehearsalAA / Alanon Meetings Laurel City Singers	December 5 9 am - 3 pm December 12 December 21 December 24 7:30 pm December 25 January 1 January 9 & 10	Church Fair Hannukah Winter Begins Christmas Eve Service Christmas Day New Years Day Boar's Head Festival
		<i>Board Meetings...</i>	
	November 30 7:00 pm December 08 6:30 pm December 15 7:00 pm December 28 7:00 pm	PM Board Board of Christian Ed. Deacons Cabinet (Monday)	

Birthdays / Anniversaries

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

02 – Amanda Storrs
02 – Diane Woodard
04 – George Sherman
06 – Antoinette Collins
12 – Robb Janak
16 – Natalie Majewski
18 – David Ryu
19 – Thomas Mazzei
19 – Becky Smyth
19 – Riley Storrs
24 – Sean Storrs
26 – Courtney Toomey
31 – Noreen Marchand
31 – Bob Steele

DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

♥ 13 - Jamie & Sabrina McAllister



We Can Help Others! Opportunities...

Salvation Army Food Bank needs your help...stocking the shelves. We have collection bins in the Narthex, and we will see that your donations are delivered. With the oncoming heating season and 10% unemployment, the need has become even greater. Please help us help our fellow man by bringing in a non-perishable food item for our bins.

Christmas Family...we are getting the name of a family who needs our help with Christmas. If you want to make a donation of an unwrapped gift...or made a financial donation...we'll shop for you.

Open Door Soup Kitchen...can always use your help this time of year through donations. First Church donated an annual gift of \$500 through the Boar's Head Festival...but personal donations are also good!

Senseless Acts of Kindness...you know what to do. Sometimes just a smile...an attentive ear...or a hug!



He Answered!

A man whispered, "God, speak to me" and a meadowlark sang. But, the man did not hear. So the man yelled, "God, speak to me" and the thunder rolled across the sky.

But, the man did not listen. The man looked around and said, "God let me see you." And a star shined brightly.

But the man did not see. And, the man shouted, "God show me a miracle." And, a life was born.

But, the man did not notice. So, the man cried out in despair, "Touch me God, and let me know you are here." Whereupon, God reached down and touched the man. But, the man brushed the butterfly away and walked on.



Don't miss out on a blessing because it isn't packaged the way that you expect...

Have A Happy Day!



New Conference Room...Ready for your event!

Our new Conference Room is now available for your event. Conference Room you say? Yes! Conference Room.

The space that was once occupied by Head Start has been all newly painted and carpeted, and is available for rental! If you know of

someone who could use a space like this for a meeting or other event....please see Debby Kane. The space is really quite large when all the toys are removed, and can hold quite a few folks.

Have a meeting and a meal...rent both Dining

Room and Kitchen as well. We'll give you a package deal!

We are also looking for alternative uses for that space, if you have any ideas...mention to Debby Kane or a member of the Property Maintenance Board!



December 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
 Artist: Karen Delton	Nov 30 PM Board 6:30 pm	1 Cherub Choir 6:00 pm	2 Folk Group 6:30 pm AA/Alanon 7:30 pm	3 Laurel City Singers 6:00 pm Small Choir 7:00 pm Main Choir	3	5 Christmas Craft Fair 9 am - 3 pm 
6 Worship 10 am Senior Choir 9:20 am Nominating Committee 11:15	7 Senior Choir 6:00 pm Pearl Harbor Day	8 Cherub Choir 6:00 pm Chris Ed 6:30	9 Folk Group 6:30 pm AA/Alanon 7:30 pm	10 Laurel City Singers 6:00 pm Small Choir 7:00 pm Main Choir	11	12  Hanukkah
13 Worship 10 am Cherub Choir 9:30 Nominating Committee 11:15	14 Senior Choir 6:00 pm	15 Cherub Choir 6:00 pm Deacons 7:00 pm	16 Folk Group 6:30 pm AA/Alanon 7:30 pm	17 Laurel City Singers 6:00 pm Small Choir/Brass 7:00 pm Main Choir	18	19
20 Worship 10 am Christmas Pageant during worship Nominating Committee 11:15	21 Senior Choir 6:00 pm  Winter Begins	22 Cherub Choir 6:00 pm	23 AA/Alanon 7:30 pm	24 Christmas Eve Candlelight Service 7:30 Sr. Choir Meets at 7:00 No LCS Rehearsal	25 Christmas 	26
27 Worship 10 am Senior Choir 9:20 am Nominating Committee 11:15	28 Senior Choir 6:00 pm Cabinet 7:00 pm	29 Laurel City Singers 6:00 pm Small Choir/Brass 7:00 pm Main Choir	30	31 	Jan 1 	Jan 2

DIRECTORY 2009

CHURCH OFFICE

Pastor Rev. Michael Wu 860 693-4803
Office 860 379-1778

OFFICERS: (meets **FOURTH Tuesday** of the month at 7:00 p.m.)

Moderator Susan B. McAllister 860 738-7758
Vice-Moderator Kim Janak 860 733-5200
Clerk Richard Mazzei 860 379-2900
Treasurer Deborah Kane 860 238-7263
Associate Treasurer Joan Eggering 860 379-8966
Financial Secretary Debbie Storrs 860 482-3491

DENOMINATIONAL REPRESENTATIVES:

Congregational (U.C.C) Gretel Eddy 860 379-8616
American Baptist (ABC) Tricia Wu 860 693-4803

BOARDS:

Christian Education (meets **SECOND Tuesday** of the month at 6:30 p.m.)

**Tanya Mongitore 860 738-2279 Rhonda LeKang 860 379-8709
**Denise Jones 860 379-6332 Dan Jones 860 379-6332
Cindy Roys 860 379-3707

Sunday School Superintendent: Vacant

Diaconate (meets **THIRD Tuesday** of the month at 7:00 p.m.)

*Laura McCaw 860 738-8262 Carlton Roberts 860 379-8997
Deb Majewski 860 379-4093 W 860 379-7525 Barbara Mazzei 860 379-2900
Gail Roberts 860 582-2885 Sharon Doyle 860 922-5319
Christine Steele 860 738-9333

Property Maintenance (meets **FIRST Tuesday** of the month 7:00 p.m.)

*Debby Kane 860 238-7263 Chuck McCaw 860 738-8262
Carlton Roberts 860 379-8997 David LeKang 860 379-8709
Chaz McCaw 860 738-8262 Thomas Mazzei 860 379-2900
Sexton: Sean Storrs 860 738-8647

COMMITTEES:

Auditing:

Peter Toomey 860 480-9337
Gail Roberts 860 582-2885
Robert Miles 860 379-8781

Finance Committee:

Debby Kane, Treasurer 860 238-7263
Joan Eggering, Assoc-Treasurer 860 379-8966
Debbie Storrs, Financial Secretary 860 482-3491

Nominating:

Carol Miles 860 379-8781
Ashley Jones 860 379-6332
Gail Roberts 860 582-2885
Tricia Wu 860 693-4803
Pamela Allen 860 379-8904
Barbara Woodard 860 379-1882

Website:

www.firstchurchofwinsted.org

*Chairperson ** Co-Chairs