

*North Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
Woodbury, Connecticut*



December 2013 Newsletter



With a Blessing

by Rev. Dr. Bonnie Bardot

Imagine if any of these things happened to you or to your family members or friends:

You are a 57 year old woman, married for a very long time, with no children. Your teen-aged cousin has just told you that she is going to have a baby. For a moment you dare to wish for a child, but of course, you are too old. Then, much to your amazement, you discover that you are going to have a baby too. **How do you respond?**

You are a middle-aged couple and you have run an inn for many years. Tonight your town is bustling with travelers returning to their home towns for a country-wide census. Your inn is filled to overflowing; weary travelers are sleeping in halls and stairways. The tavern is noisy. There is no room to fit another person, but two more travelers are at the door – a young couple, and the woman is about to have a baby. They have nowhere else to go.

How do you respond?

You are a teenager, sent out to the hillside to tend your family's sheep. You should be watching over the newborn lambs but it is very late and you are very sleepy. A vision appears in the night. Is it real or is it a dream? A voice from the heavens tells you a Savior has been born, and you are to return to town and look for a baby in a manger. **How do you respond?**

Taken out of context, these situations seem unreal, impossible. Yet in the context of the Christmas Story each situation is an essential part of God's plan – to send a Savior into an unsuspecting world.

We are modern people with all the concerns of a busy life. And the words of the story are spoken to us: *"Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people; for to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord."*

How do we respond?

With all the blessings of this holy season,

Bonnie



The Diaconate

by Judi Lewis

Ah, it's December, the magical month! The sanctuary is aglow with holiday trimmings. Everyone is busily preparing for the festivities of Christmas, and looking forward to singing their favorite carols.

There is nothing more joyous than the music sung by all during the Christmas season. The Choir has been rehearsing for their greatly anticipated Christmas Music Program, which will be held this year on Sunday, December 15, during our morning worship service. The Connecticut Choral Society will be performing their Christmas Concerts again this year in our sanctuary on Saturday, December 21.

Customarily we have lay readers assisting Pastor Bonnie at the pulpit each Sunday. In December, our morning worship will start with the lighting of the Advent Candles by families who have volunteered to do so. We are still looking for families who might like to be part of this tradition. You can call Sue Wood at 203-263-5325 or the church office if you and your family would like to be an Advent Wreath Candle lighter.

Christmas Eve services on Tuesday, December 24, will be at 5:30 p.m. and at 11:00 p.m.

The Children's Christmas Pageant will be held during the worship service on Sunday, December 22. All children, including Confirmands, wishing to participate are to contact Lorna Eckman. Remember, it would not be Christmas without a Christmas Pageant, and we can use every and all who wish to volunteer.

Christmas Blessings to you all...



For Our Homebound

As the holidays approach, please plan a visit or a note to some of our homebound. You may never know how much this kind gesture will mean.

For names and contact information, please contact Sue Wood at 203-263-5325.



Search Committee

By Scott Anderson

Holiday time is often a time when we take time to reflect on the blessings in our lives: family, friends, health, and of course our family of faith at North Church. The Search Committee wants to thank all of you for your support, patience and prayers as we continue our journey to find a new settled minister. Your Search Committee is aware of both the trust the congregation has placed in us and the responsibility that goes with that trust. We will be working through the holiday season to complete this important work. May God bless all of us in this most joyous season of the year.



Board of Trustees

by Wayne Anderson

Subject: 13th Month Appeal

It will be difficult but not impossible to meet our goal of **\$140,000** projected for Pledges and Offerings for 2013. There has been exceptional support for North Church this year, considering that we are also funding the Parsonage Restoration. However, and it seems there always is a "But," this year's budget also includes **\$6,000 for our 13th Month Appeal**. This is what we, as a Congregation, approved last February at the Annual Meeting. Without members contributing one additional month's pledge, we will once again end the year with a deficit. The good news is that almost **\$2,000** has already been received towards the 13th Month Appeal, so only **\$4,000** is needed to have enough cash flow to meet all our obligations.

It is an exciting time to be a member of the North Church Family. More people are attending services now and participation in various programs is gratifying. The work team for the Parsonage is still going strong with 19 men and women involved. All this speaks well for North Church, the type of members we are, and that we stand behind our commitments. That is why it imperative for every member to fulfill their pledge obligation and add another month for the 13th Month Appeal. Please, your help is needed now. Thank you.



Women's Fellowship

December Luncheon:

On Thursday, December 19, Women's Fellowship will host the "Good Time Harmony Club." The group consists of four members of the Valley Chordsmen who have been singing together for many years. John Wick of Woodbury is the most recent member singing bass, with Gabe Riccio of West Granby singing baritone and Bill Langellotti of Oakville singing tenor. The lead singer is Tony Grosso from Waterbury, who recently celebrated his 94th birthday. They have a Good Time singing traditional songs from across all the decades of the last 100 years.

The program is preceded by a sandwich luncheon at noon. ***Due to limited seating, reservations are required.*** Please call Marge Hubbard at 203-263-5920 to reserve your seat. Please be sure to bring your own sandwich. The fellowship asks for a \$1.00 donation for tea, coffee and dessert, which is provided. **We hope to see you there!**

The Ladies of the Evening will be having a **"Christmas Party"** on Tuesday, December 17, at 6 p.m. at the home of Beverly Carlone, 618 Upper Grassy Hill Road, Woodbury. All ladies and friends of North Church are invited to attend an evening filled with wonderful fellowship and a buffet of holiday appetizers and desserts. Please sign up at the Ladies of the Evening bulletin board located across from the Hospitality/Flower sign-up table. Need a ride? - please call Beverly at 203-263-0728.

The Ladies of the Evening will be hosting **"It's a Small World"** on Tuesday, December 10, from 2-8 p.m. Please join us for a holiday shopping event with unique gifts from around the world.

All purchased items will help support the Nambale School in Kenya, artisans from third world countries through the SERRV organization, beautiful silk scarves support women from Laos, and hand stitched gifts from the Widow's Friend assist the women of Bangladesh. Please join us for this unique shopping experience while enjoying fellowship and refreshments.

North Church

- 12/1 Communion Sunday
First Sunday of Advent
Time for Special Prayer
Luke 1:26-38
When Mary Said "Yes"
- 12/8 Celebration of Worship
Second Sunday of Advent
Verses from Luke 2
When the Innkeepers Said "Yes"
CHRISTMAS TEA FOLLOWING SERVICE
- 12/15 Celebration of Worship
Third Sunday of Advent
Music of Christmas
- 12/22 Celebration of Worship—Christmas Pageant
(with help from the Confirmation Class)
Fourth Sunday of Advent
- 12/29 Celebration of Worship
Luke 2:22-32
Now I Can Die in Peace

Committee Meetings

Women's Fellowship	12/5	10:00 a.m.
Diaconate Meeting (no mtg. in Dec.)	1/2/14	7:00 p.m.

Music Rehearsals

Chancel Choir, Sun. 8:30 a.m.



Christmas Eve at North Church Tuesday, December 24

- 5:30 p.m. Early Christmas Eve Service with
Children's Story of the Christmas Bell
- 11:00 p.m. Traditional Christmas Eve Service with
Chancel Choir

December Calendar

Other Meetings

Monday 12/2, 9, 16, 23 & 30 (*no meeting 12/30)

Dr. Westerberg 12:00 p.m.

MBS 7:00 p.m.

Wdbry/Bthlm Parents Connection 7:30 p.m.

*Boy Scouts 7:30 p.m.

Tuesday 12/3, 10, 17, 24 & 31 :

NA 7:30 p.m.

Tuesday 12/3 :

Women's Bible Study 7:00 p.m.

Kathrine Rutledge's Home

41 Owl Ridge, Woodbury

Tuesday 12/10 :

Outreach "It's A Small World" 2– 8:00 p.m.

Wednesday 12/11:

Knitting 10:00 a.m.

Thursday 12/19:

Women's Fellowship Luncheon 12:00 p.m.

Friday 12/13 & 27:

AA 8:00 p.m.

Saturday 12/14 & 28:

Young Peoples AA 7:30 p.m.



Outreach Committee

Loaves and Fishes:

A festive afternoon on New Year's Eve, Dec. 31, will be in order at "Loaves and Fishes" soup kitchen in New Milford. From 3-6 p.m. on this last Tuesday of the month, members of the Outreach Committee and volunteers of North Church will again provide a hearty meal and bag lunch to those in great need in the Greater New Milford area.

To experience these few hours of putting your "Hands to work - Hearts to God" will never be more rewarding! Please join us in celebrating what good things are yet to come in this New Year and give HOPE to those who need it most. Please sign up on the bulletin board or call the church office to say you will help. Thank you.

New to North Church—FOOD OFFERING

Beginning on Sunday, Nov. 24, and each LAST SUNDAY of the month moving forward, a "Food Offering" along with the regular offering will take place during the church service. The confirmation youth will collect food items in large baskets to be donated monthly to the CSCW to help in the effort to keep their shelves stocked. There will continue to be baskets by the Washington St. entrance for those who would like to drop off their donations during the week or any other Sunday during the month.

Woodbury Christmas Festival

On Saturday, Dec. 7, from 1 - 5 p.m., the Outreach Committee will be hosting a "warming center" in the church parlor with hot chocolate and Christmas cookies to all the Woodbury Christmas Festival goers. Our hope is to welcome the public coming through our lovely sanctuary and facility with an invitation to come back for a Christmas Eve service or a holiday concert.



We would be grateful for volunteers to help host or bake. Thanks and stop by, won't you?

The night before the start of the annual Woodbury Christmas festival is the traditional a cappella holiday choral concert. Please join us on Friday, Dec. 6, at North Church, at 7:30 p.m. Featured will be the 16 member Connecticut Choral Society Chamber Singers, directed by our own multi-talented Bonnie Stephens. Joining in this holiday musical celebration will be the Valley Chordsmen Barbershop chorus.

There are no tickets, but a free will offering will be collected.



Sunday School

by Lorna Eckman

"WHERE THERE IS GREAT LOVE THERE ARE ALWAYS MIRACLES"

This month we will celebrate the miracle of the birth of Christ, the true meaning of Christmas. The children will again bring this to life in the Christmas pageant. We will be practicing December 8 and 15, and the pageant will be on December 22. Sunday school classes will resume on January 5.

I want to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. God bless.



UCC NEW ENGLAND WOMEN'S CELEBRATION IX

Theme: "Together We Can" - Scripture: Psalm 133:1
March 28-30, 2014 • Holiday Inn-by-the-Bay*
Portland, Maine

Worship • Keynote Speakers • Music • Workshops & Forums • Bible Study • Marketplace *Connections* (workshop for youth age 14 yrs and up) and more!

Online Registration is now available.

Check our website: uccwomenscelebration.org

*also using Westin Portland Harborview (formerly the Eastland Hotel) and Williston Immanuel United Church.



Music Notes

By John Wick

The Chancel Choir loves the winter holiday season! The special Christmas music program will be during Sunday service, December 15. Those who would like to sing with us, please let one of us know and be part of this experience. (The music will be familiar; we will have one rehearsal at 8:00 a.m. that morning. Your voice will be welcome.) We also love the 11:00 p.m. Christmas Eve service and hope you will be part of that, either with us in the loft or of course in the congregation.

Our church is the place where we come to understand, once again, why we celebrate at this holy season. The birth of Christ is at the center of our faith tradition. Our music helps to make it an enchanting experience. Join us.



The Connecticut Choral Society was founded at North Church 33 years ago. In addition to concerts in Western Connecticut, they have performed numerous times at Carnegie Hall in New York and throughout the world. This 70 member auditioned chorus performs at North Church each December with a special holiday concert. Some years they had to turn patrons away because all seats were occupied.

Last year they scheduled two concerts here to accommodate the demand. This year they will do the same - Saturday, December 21, at 3 p.m. and at 7 p.m. An additional concert will be at First Congregational Church in Danbury, December 22, at 4 p.m.

Tickets are available now for both Woodbury concerts at Woodbury Drug and on line at ctchoralsociety.org. All tickets are \$25; \$15 for youths. Here is a wonderful way to celebrate the season right here at North Church. Come, and invite your friends.

Jamie Monckton, Bonnie Stephens and Hal Wylie are active members.



Parsonage Project

By Pete D'Amato

We are very near completion of the Parsonage renovation project! All of the painting and most of the trim has been completed, the kitchen cabinets are installed, bathroom floors are tiled and fixtures in place, and all of the lighting fixtures have been installed. There are just a few items on the to-do list to finish up, then the flooring contractor can come in for the last step before we go for a final inspection and certificate of occupancy.

Thanks very much to all who have given their time and financial and/or material donations – we couldn't have done it without you. A special thanks to the Outreach Committee for providing so many lunch breaks to keep us going! If you have any questions, or would like to take a tour of the parsonage, please contact me at pet-ed25@earthlink.net.

On behalf of the "**Ladies of the Evening**", we would like to thank all who supported the **Quilt Raffle** by purchasing \$482 worth of tickets! The Parlor Fund continues to benefit by your support of these small but important fundraising efforts.

Bakes sales, dinner dances, themed gift basket raffles, quilt raffles...we couldn't do any of this without the time, talent and treasure of so many like you. Congratulations to the lucky Amish quilt winner, **SUZANNE ANDERSON!**

Parish Administrator: Kathie Logan

Office Hours: Mon./Tues. 9:00 a.m. — 1:00 p.m.

Thurs./Fri. 9:00 a.m. — 3:00 p.m.

Phone: (203) 263-2410 Fax: (203) 263-2488

Email: nchurchct@snet.net

Website: www.northchurchwoodbury.org

Newsletter submissions can be put in the Parish Administrator slot or emailed to the Church Office

by the 15th of each month.

North Congregational Church
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