

The First Congregational Church
(United Church of Christ)
Canton Center, Connecticut

December 7, 2008

10:00 AM

THE SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

CHIMES

INTERESTS OF THE FELLOWSHIP

PRELUDE: "Still Is the Night" -Williams/Martin

INTROIT: "Break Forth, O Beauteous Heavenly Light" -J.S. Bach

CALL TO WORSHIP: (**responsively**)

The day of God is coming; lift up your voices.

Cry out with the strength God provides.

We await God's coming day with anticipation.

We seek the peace and patience God provides.

Comfort, comfort my people, says our God.

Speak tenderly to my suffering people.

We will prepare the way for One who is coming.

We look forward to baptism in the Spirit.

God will feed us like a shepherd.

God will gather us in gentle, caring arms.

God's hand is upon us in blessing;

We are welcomed by God's steadfast love.

*HYMN **113** (*Pilgrim*) "Creator of the Stars of Night"

THE LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE: **PEACE**

Candle Lighters: The Hill Family

Readings

Unison Prayer:

O God, we thank you for this Prince of Peace. Show us how to spread the light of your peace in a world torn with conflict so that wounds may be healed; intolerance turned to community; the clenched fist may become an open hand. Show us the ways of peace, O God, through the Christ Child, the Prince of Peace. Amen.

HYMN (seated) "One Candle Is Lit"

Come quickly, shalom, teach us how to prepare

For a gift that compels us with justice to care.

Our spirits are restless till sin and war cease.

One candle is lit for the reign of God's peace.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

*HYMN **109** (*Pilgrim*) "Watchman, Tell Us of the Night"
Church School children may pass to the Parish Hall
when the congregation begins singing.

OFFERTORY: "A Gift of Alleluia" -Martin
Senior Choir

*DOXOLOGY (*Pilgrim #515*)

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION: (in **unison**)

While we are waiting and preparing for Christ to appear, we are seeking, O God, to act as faithful followers. May our offerings extend the promise of salvation to people whose lives are broken by neglect, abuse, bad choices, and sinful ways. May these gifts offer hope to all whose suffering and loss seem too heavy to bear. May our church be a listening, caring presence for all its members, and through us for all those we meet in our work and leisure. Amen.

A MOMENT OF SILENCE FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

followed by the PASTORAL PRAYER and

THE LORD'S PRAYER (in **unison**, using debts and debtors)

*HYMN **115** (*Pilgrim*) "On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry"

SCRIPTURE: Mark 1:1-18 (Pew Bibles, N.T. p. 32)

SERMON: "PREPARE THE WAY"

*COMMUNION HYMN **107** (*Pilgrim*) "Let All Mortal Flesh..."

SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER:

All who profess faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior are welcome to receive the Bread and the Cup. The deacons will administer communion to the congregation as seated. We partake of the elements after all have been served, as one body in Christ.

*HYMN **114** (*Pilgrim*) "Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates"

*BENEDICTION and *RESPONSE

*POSTLUDE: "O Come, Little Children" -trad. carol/arr. D. Bish

(*All who are able, please stand)

The Rev. Susan M. Prichard	Interim Minister
Sarah W. LeGeyt	Director of Christian Education & Youth
Mary Lou Keefe	Organist; Director of Music
Lydia Petersen and Dave Ayres	Duty Deacons
Dan Towle	Duty Trustee
Matt, Sarah, Sam, Emily and Kate LeGeyt	Greeters
Deb Brasfield and family	Coffee Hour Hosts

THE FLOWERS today are given in memory of Sam and Allie Richardson, Carolyn Merriam, Bruce Richardson and Bryant Merriam by Susan Lampros Merriam.

WE CORDIALLY WELCOME those who are visitors to this church and to this morning's worship service. Please sign the guest book in the vestibule. Or, fill in a Friendship Card found in the pews. Also found with the Friendship Cards are Pew Envelopes. Please feel free to use them for any donation.

NURSERY CARE is available in the lower level of the Parish House for infants through 2 years old.

LARGE PRINT COPIES of today's bulletin are available on the ushers' tables in the back of the church. Large print editions of the Chalice Hymnal are also available for use during worship.

PLEASE JOIN US in the Parish Hall after worship today for a time for refreshment and fellowship.

Please see bulletin insert for announcements

ANNOUNCEMENTS – SUNDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2008

ADVENT POTLUCK AND WORKSHOP with crafts and activities: is **TODAY**, after worship and coffee hour in the Parish Hall.

CONFIRMATION CLASS members share in the Advent Potluck today and then attend a class session until 1:30 PM.

ADVENT RESOURCE BOOKLETS for families are available on the information+ table in the Parish House. Please help yourself.

PICK UP CHRISTMAS WREATHS ordered from the Confirmation Class after worship **TODAY** in the Parish Hall.

CHERUB CHOIR today, 11:15 AM; **JUNIOR CHOIR** today, 11:30 AM, in the Music Room.

2009 OFFERING ENVELOPES are available in the Parish Hall. If you do not find yours there, please contact Jane Watson in the church office. Envelopes are available for anyone who wants to use them.

PAGEANT ENSEMBLE rehearses today after worship.

ORDER MEMORIAL POINSETTIA PLANTS today and next Sunday at the coffee hour to decorate our sanctuary for the Christmas services. Phone orders are welcome as well; please call Polly Rice 651-7813 or Ellen Potter 693-2391. The cost per plant is \$9.00. A check payment should be made to the church. If you have any questions, please call Ellen Potter 693-2391. The plants will decorate the worship services on December 21, and 24. Please leave your poinsettia until *after the 7:30 service* on December 24.

JUST A REMINDER ABOUT NAMETAGS: Please wear yours! It is a great help to match names and faces in our church family. Nametags are located in wooden trays in the Parish Hall. Of if you wish, you may store yours in the church vestibule.

COMING UP

PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY: Monday, 10:00 AM.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES: Monday, 6:30 PM.

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Announcements, December 7, 2008, continued

MUSIC COMMITTEE: Monday, 6:40 PM

SENIOR CHOIR: Monday, 7:00 PM.

BIBLE STUDY does not meet this week.

PRIME TIMERS meet Wednesday at 11:00 AM in the Parish Hall for a Christmas potluck luncheon that will be served at 11:30. The Canton High School Chamber Singers are scheduled to arrive at 11:15 AM for lunch and to present a musical program.

CHURCH COUNCIL: Wednesday, 7:00 PM.

BELL CHOIR: Thursday, 7:00 PM.

PAGEANT DRESS REHEARSAL SATURDAY, December 13, at 9:00 AM in the church.

MISSIONS COMMITTEE: Next Sunday, 9:00 AM.

PAGEANT PARTICIPANTS: Please arrive next Sunday at 9:15 AM for costuming in the labeled classrooms. Then, attend church with your family.

CONFIRMATION CLASS meets next Sunday, 11:45 AM – 1:15 PM. Please bring a bag lunch.

SYF: CHRISTMAS PARTY at the Smith's is next Sunday, 4:00 to 6:30 PM. Don't forget to RSVP.

PLEASE RETURN GIFTS for our holiday giving ("stars" and "trees") under the church's Christmas tree by next Sunday.

WARNING of a special meeting of the congregation to be held next Sunday, December 14, 2008, after worship, to vote on the 2009 Operating Budget proposed by the Board of Trustees.

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES will be held at **6:00 PM** and **7:30 PM** on Wednesday, December 24. The 6:00 PM service will be the shorter of the two, being more geared for families with young children. Both services, however, will conclude with the traditional candle light ceremony and the singing of "Silent Night."