



The newsletter of The First Congregational Church
Canton Center, Connecticut

The CHURCHMOUSE

January 2008

FROM THE PASTOR

WELCOMING THE NEW YEAR

A brand new year is now laid out before us. How well it goes for us will, in large part, be predicated upon our attitude. Do we take a deep breath and say, "Here we go again with more of the same?" Or do we welcome 2008 as a fresh new start, giving thanks to God and trusting that whatever will be in the New Year, God will be, too.

Certainly we do not know what 2008 will bring, but we can be pretty sure that there will be some surprises in store for all of us, which is the theme that runs through a prayer written by James O. Gilliom. It is titled, *For Life's Surprises ...*

Thank you, O God, for surprises.
How boring life would be
if everything were prepared, predestined, predictable.
Instead, each day holds its surprises for us.
What will the weather be?
What will the news be?
How will I do? How will my health hold up?



As no pairs of sunrise and sunset are exactly the same,
So it is with no two days of our being.

Many things that happen to us are beyond our control:
the traits we inherit, the actions of others, the accidents of nature.
And especially for those of us who like to be in control,
it is often confusing and confounding.

How are we to believe in order and justice in such an unpredictable world?
How are we to be held responsible when so much is beyond our ability to
determine?

And still, we would not trade
our daily uncertainty for a lifetime of fatalistic certainty,
our own questions for someone else's answers,
our sometimes chaotic freedom for always neat order.

So help us, O God, to live with this mixed blessing we have;
accepting with joy good surprises from where we least expect them,
living with bad surprises, knowing even they may not be the last,
and causing some surprises of our own
for the common good and Your continuing creation. Amen.

Larry W. Smith

CALENDAR OF CHURCH EVENTS

- Dec. 31 Monday, No vocal choirs.
- Jan. 1 Tuesday, **Happy New Year!** The Church Office will be closed.
- Jan. 3 Thursday, 7:00 P.M. **Bell Choir.**
- Jan. 6 Sunday, 8:30 A.M. **Teachers' Meeting.**
 Sunday, 10:00 A.M. Worship and Church School (begin in class)
 Sunday, 11:15 A.M. **Junior Choir.**
 Sunday, 11:15 A.M. **SPECIAL MEETING OF THE CONGREGATION** to vote on
 the 2008 Operating Budget and also to vote on the Capital Campaign.
- Jan. 7 Monday, 6:40 P.M. **Music Committee.**
 Monday, 7:00 P.M. **Christian Education Committee.**
 Monday, 7:00 P.M. **Senior Choir.**
 Monday, **Honor Court** will be hosted by our church in
 Hartford. Donations of fruit, cookies and
 sandwiches may be left at the church.
- Jan. 8 Tuesday, 7:30 P.M. **Diaconate.**
- Jan. 9 Wednesday, Noon, **Prime Timers** meet in the Parish Hall.
 Wednesday, 7:00-8:15 P.M. **Confirmation Class.**
- Jan. 10 Thursday, 7:00 P.M. **Bell Choir.**
- Jan. 13 Sunday, 10:00 A.M. Worship/Church School (*begin in
 church*).
 Sunday, 11:15 A.M. **SYF Mission Trip Parents Meeting.**
 Sunday, 11:15 A.M. **Junior Choir.**
 Sunday, **DEADLINE FOR ANNUAL REPORTS** to be turned in to the office.
- Jan. 14 Monday, 6:00 P.M. **Board of Trustees.**
 Monday, 7:00 P.M. **Senior Choir.**
- Jan. 15 Tuesday, 7:00 P.M. **Missionary & Stewardship.**
- Jan. 16 Wednesday, 7:00 P.M. **Church Council.**
- Jan. 17 Thursday, 7:00 P.M. **Bell Choir.**
- Jan. 20 Sunday, 10:00 A.M. Worship/Church School (begin in class).
 Sunday, 11:15 A.M. **Junior Choir.**
- Jan. 21 Monday, Church Office is closed for **Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.**
 Monday, 7:00 P.M. **Senior Choir.**
- Jan. 23 Wednesday, 7:00-8:15 P.M. **Confirmation Class.**
- Jan. 24 Thursday, 7:00 P.M. **Bell Choir.**
- Jan. 27 Sunday, 10:00 A.M. Worship/Church School (*begin in church*)
 Sunday, 11:15 A.M. **Junior Choir.**
- Jan. 31 Wednesday, 7:00 P.M. **Bell Choir.**

January 2008						
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**MARK YOUR CALENDARS! Wednesday, February 27, 2008 is
 ANNUAL MEETING** of the congregation.