



The newsletter of The First Congregational Church  
Canton Center, Connecticut

## The CHURCHMOUSE

### January 2009

#### FROM THE INTERIM MINISTER

Dear Friends,

Christmas is over, the Christ Child has been born, but the story isn't over. In fact, it has barely begun. The Magi are coming. The Holy family has to flee to Egypt ahead of Herod's wrath. They are like many families, even in our modern world, who must flee ahead of soldiers and insurgents. Even the Son of God got displaced because of a tyrant.

We like to believe that the scenes in Bethlehem were idyllic—right out of a Hallmark made for TV movie. There would be no manure or bugs in the stable; that *Nestor, the donkey; the Little Drummer Boy; and* other holiday stories were more truth than fiction. We want to believe that Baby Jesus was never really in danger. But that's not how the story goes.

I particularly like Ann Weems' poem, *The Refugees*.

*“Into the wild and painful cold of the starless winter night  
came the refugees,  
slowly making their way to the border.  
The man, stooped from age or anxiety,  
hurried his small family through the wind.  
Bearded and dark, his skin rough and cracked from the cold,  
his frame looming large in spite of slumped shoulder;  
He looked like a man who could take care of whatever  
came at them from the dark.  
Unless, of course, there were too many of them.  
One man he could handle...two, even...,  
but a border patrol...  
they wouldn't have a chance.  
His eyes, black and alert,  
darted from side to side, then over his shoulder,  
then back again forward.  
Had they been seen?  
Had they been heard?  
Every rustle of wind, every sigh from the child,  
Sent terror through his chest.  
Was this the way?*



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*Even the stars had been unkind—  
 had hidden themselves in the ink of night  
 so that the man could not read their way.  
 Only the wind...was it enough?  
 Only the wind and his innate sense of direction...  
 What kind of cruel judgment would that be,  
 To wander in circles through the night?  
 Or to safely make their way to the border  
 only to find the authorities waiting for them?  
 He glanced at the young woman, his bride.  
 No more than a child herself,  
 she nuzzled their new born, kissing his neck.  
 She looked up, caught his eye, and smiled.  
 Oh, how the homelessness has taken its toll on her!  
 Her eyes were red, her young faced lined,  
 Her lovely hair matted from inattention,  
 her clothes stained from milk and baby,  
 her hands chapped from the raw wind of winter.  
 She'd hardly had time to recover from childbirth  
 when word had come that they were hunted,  
 and they fled with only a little bread,  
 the remaining wine,  
 and a very small portion of cheese.  
 Suddenly, the child began to make small noises.  
 The man drew his breath in sharply;  
 the woman quietly put the child to breast.  
 Fear...long dread-filled moments...  
 Huddled, the family stood still in long silence.  
 At last the man breathed deeply again,  
 reassured they had not been heard.  
 And into the night continued  
 Mary and Joseph and the Babe.”*



(Kneeling in Bethlehem, Ann Weems, 1985)

Jesus is the Reason for the Season,  
*Sue*

P.S.

The New Year 2009 has begun. It is a time ripe with promise and hope of good things to come. New Year's resolutions, so earnestly made, might still be kept. Newly elected leaders are taking their places in the halls of power (good luck, Tim). Let us continue to pray for all who love God and love peace to become peacemakers and policymakers in the name of the Prince of Peace.

## CALENDAR OF CHURCH EVENTS

Jan.	1	Thursday,		Church Office is closed. Happy New Year!
Jan.	4	Sunday,	8:30 AM,	<b>Teachers' Meeting.</b>
		Sunday,	10:00 AM,	Worship and Church School (begin in class).
		Sunday,	11:15 AM,	<b>Junior Choir.</b>
		Sunday,	11:45 AM,	<b>Confirmation Class.</b>
Jan.	5	Monday,	7:00 PM,	<b>Senior Choir.</b>
		Monday,	7:00 PM,	<b>Christian Education Committee.</b>
Jan.	6	Tuesday,	7:00 PM,	<b>Diaconate.</b>
Jan.	7	Wednesday,	9:30 AM,	Staff Meeting.
Jan.	8	Thursday,	7:00 PM,	<b>Bell Choir.</b>
Jan.	11	Sunday,	9:00 AM,	<b>Missions Committee.</b>
		Sunday,	10:00 AM,	Worship and Church School ( <i>begin in church</i> ).
		Sunday,	11:15 AM,	<b>Junior Choir.</b>
		Sunday,	11:30 AM,	<b>JYF Pizza and Movie.</b>
		Sunday,		<b>Annual Reports due.</b>
Jan.	12	Monday,	10:00 AM,	<b>Prayer Shawl Ministry.</b>
		Monday,	6:30 PM,	<b>Board of Trustees.</b>
		Monday,	6:40 PM,	<b>Music Committee.</b>
		Monday,	7:00 PM,	<b>Senior Choir.</b>
Jan.	14	Wednesday,	Noon,	<b>Prime Timers</b> meet in the
		Wednesday,	7:00 PM,	Parish Hall.
		Wednesday,	7:00 PM,	<b>Church Council.</b>
Jan.	15	Thursday,	7:00 PM,	<b>Bell Choir.</b>
Jan.	18	Sunday,	10:00 AM,	Worship and Church School (begin in class).
		Sunday,	11:00 AM	<b>JYF Grinder Sale</b> begins at coffee hour.
		Sunday,	11:15 AM,	<b>Junior Choir.</b>
		Sunday,		<b>Deadline</b> for the February <i>Churchmouse</i> .
Jan.	19	Monday,		Church Office closed. Martin Luther King Day.
		Monday,	7:00 PM,	<b>Senior Choir.</b>
Jan.	22	Thursday,	7:00 PM,	<b>Bell Choir.</b>
Jan.	25	Sunday,	10:00 AM	Worship and Church School ( <i>begin in church</i> ).
		Sunday,	11:15 AM,	<b>Special Meeting of the Congregation - Budget</b>
		Sunday,	11:00AM,	<b>SYF Bake Sale</b> at coffee hour.
		Sunday,	11:15 AM,	<b>Junior Choir.</b>
Jan.	26	Monday,	6:30 PM,	<b>Confirmation Class.</b>
Jan.	29	Thursday,	7:00 PM,	<b>Bell Choir.</b>

January 2009						
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