

The Spire

Congregational Church of Somersville
United Church of Christ

December, 2008



Advent Activities

There are a number of activities and events during this season and we hope you will opt to participate in, or be a witness to, many of them. More information on the following events, and other opportunities can be found on the pages that follow.

Wed., Dec. 3 – Advent Service – 7 PM

Sat., Dec. 6- Holiday Ham Supper with proceeds going to Cornerstone Foundation

Sun., Dec. 7 – 2nd Sunday of Advent; Communion;
Disassembling the Field of Flags

Tues., Dec. 9 – Ladies Aide Christmas Luncheon;
Cornerstone Soup Kitchen

Wed., Dec. 10 – Advent Service – 7 PM

Fri., Dec. 12 – Poinsettia orders due

Sat., Dec. 13 – Pageant Rehearsal & Trip to Overlook Farm – 9 AM

Sun., Dec. 14 – 3rd Sunday of Advent; Pageant 6:15 PM

Wed., Dec. 17 – Advent Service – 7 PM

Date to be announced – Caroling

Sun., Dec. 21 – 4th Sunday of Advent

Wed., Dec. 24 – Christmas Eve Service – 7 PM



ADVENT

From the Pastor's Desk ..

Dear Friends in Christ,

The four-week season of Advent begins the church year. The word “advent” comes from two Latin words, *ad* and *vene*, meaning “come to.” During Advent, we celebrate and anticipate the God who comes to us.

Each of you, I hope, has a story (or many stories) of God coming to you. Often God comes in the quiet moments of prayer and meditation. Frequently God comes in the words or actions of another. Commonly God comes to us through the reading of the scriptures and by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. God’s advent among us happens in many ways and is just as likely in times of deep anguish as in times of ecstatic joy. I pray that each of you has a testimony to offer or a witness to make about how God comes to you. Where, or how, has God come to you? What does God’s coming mean to you? For you?

These questions yield sacred Advent stories. We give thanks for them and lift them up in this season. Unfortunately, one of the things we don’t do very well in our tradition is share the stories of how, when and where God comes to us. I encourage you to tell one of your Advent stories this season to at least one other person.

Of course, Advent is more than recollecting how God has come to us personally. Many other things are happening all at once in this season, too. Advent lifts up the God who came in Christ. It celebrates our Savior who comes, still today, to each and every soul. And Advent also points to a future coming. The faith of the church is that Christ will come again. Advent affirms that whatever the future holds, God holds the future.

Spiritually speaking, our Advent task is to heed the call of John the Baptist: “Prepare the way of the Lord! Make the pathway straight!” In the frantic pre-Christmas days, that’s easier said than done. But I pray that you might observe a blessed and holy Advent. And may God come to you and yours in this season.

Faithfully yours,
Graham van Keuren



Thanks to ..

- .. all who volunteered to take on “service opportunities” during November.
- .. those who gave to the 2nd Mile Missions during November to benefit the Christmas Fund.
- .. everyone who contributed to the success of the Turkey supper.
- .. all who supported the Holiday Treasures Fair.
- .. those who helped assemble the Field of Flags.



Opportunities in December

	<u>Greeters</u>	<u>Ushers</u>	<u>Reader</u>	<u>Fellowship Hosts</u>
Dec. 7	Ed & Lois Sharpless		Lois Sharpless	Donna Pendleton
Dec. 14	Cohen family Charlotte Andrews		Ruth Bruch	
Dec. 21	Marj Butler Marge Morgan		Pat Pinney	Tom & Elaine Hancock
Dec. 28	Sharon Miller Linda McEwen & Michaela Doyon			Tom & Elaine Hancock

Christian Education (submitted by Rev. Van Keuren & Sue Comparetto)

Advent Preparation

Advent is a season of preparation. It is the time set aside in our church calendar when we prepare for the coming of God in Christ Jesus.

We will have special Advent services of preparation that are refreshing and rejuvenating in the midst of a frantic time. They last a half hour and other activities on those four Wednesdays are asked to begin at 7:30. Please worship with us in this special way!

Bible Study

A Bible Study group will meet December 3, 10 & 17 from 9:30-11 in the social room. All are welcome.

Christmas Pageant

Come join us at 6:15 PM on Sunday, December 14th for our annual Christmas pageant. Watch and listen as the children tell us the story of Jesus’ birth. All children are invited to participate. Rehearsals will take place during Sunday school and the dress rehearsal will be Sunday, December 14th at 4 PM. Mark your calendars!



A Christmas Pageant Rehearsal might also be held Saturday morning (12/13) at 9:00 AM, followed by a trip to Heifer International's Overlook Farm in Massachusetts (leaving at 11 AM) for their live Christmas Pageant featuring all their animals in the barn (weather permitting). All are invited to join us for an inspirational trip to get

you in the holiday mood and visit their lovely shop for handmade gifts from all over the world. Please bring some cookies to share. Sign up sheet is on The Christian Education board in the social hall or see any Christian Ed member -- Sue Comparetto, Erin Penhall, or Marj Butler by December 7.

Report of the Treasurer (submitted by Sydney Cohen)

People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care. Don't do anything from selfish ambition or from a cheap desire to boast, but be humble toward one another, always considering others better than yourselves. Philippians 2:3

	October 2008	YTD 2008	Budget 2008
Pledges	\$7,815.00	\$ 57,383.50	\$ 73,000.00
Income	\$ 12,800.58	\$108,827.02	\$ 105,925.00
Expenses	\$ 10,529.78	\$104,968.43	\$ 120,788.00

October Collections

Fundraisers- Harvest Supper- \$2,026.00

Monthly missions-

Neighbors in Need- \$ 105.00- Subtotal \$ 240.00

UNICEF - 43.00- to date

October was a good month for the church. The pledges were higher than budgeted; however, much is needed to reach our budget for the year. The income was higher then the expenses, partially due to pledges as well input from our endowment fund. On the expense side,

our annual Holiday Treasures Fair held November 22. We started out the morning slowly with only a few people coming in, but the day continued at a steady pace. \$1481 has been taken in on sales so far. We enjoyed seeing the familiar faces who come every year – and meeting some new friends who assured us they'd be back.

Supporting the Church and Community

Those women present at the November 11 meeting of the Ladies Aid voted to donate the balance of funds needed (\$1500) for tree thinning and removal on the Green and between the parsonage and Green. Our treasurer was instructed to pay the balance of our pledge of support to the church. We also voted to pay up to \$1500 toward our student pastor's expenses for his spring semester experience with us.



The Ladies Aid also finalized plans of its intention to provide a Thanksgiving dinner for two local families; meals will also be provided to two local families on Christmas.

Blacksmith Shoppe (submitted by Barbara Abbe)

Another successful year for the Blacksmith Shoppe in 2008. We continue with our faithful following who come shopping on so many Saturdays. The Ladies Aid wants to thank everyone who helped in any way including those who baked, gave monetary donations in lieu of baking, donated items, worked a shift on a Saturday and to Nick Wood who faithfully mowed the lawn. We appreciate anyone who came in to the shoppe. We continue to have many donations from folks outside of our church. We continually need donations, especially small furniture and other items. Baked goods are always in demand.

During the winter months any donations or questions should be directed to Marge Morgan or Joan Lange. Our profit for 2008 was \$4,455.21. The Shoppe will reopen on May 2, 2009.

Fundraising Suppers (submitted by Ruth Bruch)



Turkey Supper a Great Success

As you read last month, both sittings for our Turkey Supper filled up in 2 ½ days!! And, there were 85 individuals on a waiting list in case cancellations were called in. That is pretty amazing – that's just about another full sitting! We took in \$2142.00 and our expenses were \$292.54. Proceeds from this supper (\$1849.46) are to go toward tree

removal on the Green as voted at our October Cabinet meeting.

Holiday Ham Supper

On December 6 we will prepare a Holiday Ham Supper and the proceeds from this supper will benefit Cornerstone Foundation in Rockville. Menu includes baked ham, scalloped potatoes, salad, winter squash bake, fresh breads and rolls, Christmas cake and beverage. And, if Charlie Foxe is feeling up to it, he will tickle the ivories and provide some wonderful carols during dinner. Once again, reservations filled up in three days; a waiting list has been started in the event cancellations are called in; and take out orders will be available between 5:30-6 PM and 6:45-7 for anyone not able to reserve seats.

A New Menu in 2009

At a recent supper, a few folks suggested (perhaps kidding) that we do a lobster supper to which I said, "No way, but that I might consider baked stuffed shrimp." They thought that would be great! Graham and Brent spoke of that idea during the Turkey supper introduction and announcements and the response from attendees at both sittings was overwhelming. Obviously, we will charge a bit more for this meal and it will be dished up in the kitchen. We'll see how plans for this new idea come together. Supper dates for 2009 will be announced soon.

Voices Sought (submitted by Jason Stefanik)

The choir would love to have more voices especially since we're planning to sing a cantata this month. Please feel free to join us on Wednesday evenings at 7:30 PM for choir rehearsal; there is no audition. Singers are welcome on a regular basis, or if you prefer, simply join us through the holiday season.

Caroling

Help us brighten spirits and celebrate the Christmas holiday! Join with us as we sing Christmas carols to some church members and friends around town. A definite date and time will be announced in church.



"HERE WE COME A-CAROLING!"

This & That

- *A Fellowship hosts* is needed for December 14. Light refreshment (a beverage - coffee, punch, cider, etc - and a light snack will suffice). Please sign up in the social room if you are willing to take on this opportunity. Hosts will also be needed for 2009. It would be great if some “new” people offered to take on this opportunity.
- Boards are reminded to be sure the office gets a copy of *meeting minutes*; office staff will be responsible for posting a copy on the board in the social room.
- We’d still like to communicate via *email* with our church members and friends. If you have an email address, please share it with us at somcong@aol.com.
- The Spire is being posted on our new church website www.somersvilleucc.org and emailed to church members and friends.
- *Christmas cards* of our church sanctuary at Christmastime are still available for purchase. There are 18 cards per box at \$10. Boxes will be available during coffee fellowship or at the church office.
- Any individual or Board wanting to be on the *December Cabinet agenda* should notify Graham or Ruth by December 11.

Field of Flags



The Cabinet voted to disassemble the field of flags following worship on Pearl Harbor Day, December 7, unless significant snow is forecast prior to that date. Volunteers will be needed to help assist in this task.

Zimbabwe Christians vow prayer vigils until crisis ends
by Ecumenical News International

HARARE — Zimbabwean Christians have vowed to press on with weekly prayer vigils “until something happens” after efforts at forming a unity government to resolve the country’s economic and political crisis faltered.

About 300 worshippers, some of them carrying giant placards, gathered during the time of Sunday services on Nov. 16 in a parking lot adjacent

to the venue of failed talks to end tensions between long-ruling Robert Mugabe and his political rivals Morgan Tsvangirai and Arthur Mutambara.

“People are dying because our hospitals, social and physical infrastructure are collapsing,” said Elliot Mandaza, a spokesperson for the church groups told journalists.

“We are monitoring the situation. If there is progress we will gather again to give thanks. If there is no progress we will gather and continue to pray and petition political our leaders,” Mandaza said.

One of the placards urging an end to the stalemate in talks between the country’s three main political parties said, “Break The Impasse.” Another lamenting the collapsed health sector, read, “We ask to Live Not Die” while another, advocating unity, stated, “One Nation Under God.” Other placards demanded restoration of the inflation-ravaged economy and Zimbabweans’ dignity.

The prayers followed the failure of leaders from the 12 nations making up the Southern African Development Community to agree at a Nov. 10 meeting on a way of overcoming an impasse in implementing a power-sharing agreement for Zimbabwe, brokered in September by the then South African president Thabo Mbeki.

“There are bones everywhere,” said Pastor Never Muparutsa, leading the Christians from various denominations through a prayer for the restoration of the country’s once-vibrant economy. All major state hospitals have been shut down for lack of staff while pharmacies are empty.

“There are bones in our economy. There are bones in our health services sector,” said Muparutsa.

Tsvangirai’s Movement for Democratic Change party has said it will not join the proposed government with Mugabe and Mutambara, the leader of an MDC faction. It is insisting first on a constitutional amendment to provide for the newly-created post of prime minister to be assumed by Tsvangirai.

Coordinator of the prayer vigil Bishop Tudor Bismark of the New Life Covenant Church said, “We are praying for restoration of our economy and our dignity and we are appealing to God to intervene in our situation and restore Zimbabwe to its former status.”

(Note: Please keep in your prayers our brothers and sisters at our long-time mission partner, the Donkwe-Donkwe Church in Kezi, Zimbabwe.)

Tolland Association Meeting (submitted by Everett Baker & Charlie Foxe)

On Sunday, November 2, at 5 PM, members and visitors were welcomed to the Fall Meeting at Ellington Congregational Church. Delegates Everett Baker and Charles Foxe answered the roll call for Somersville Congregational Church and participated in the shortened business meeting. At 5:30 PM we joined all in partaking of a well-prepared, and served, dinner by the ladies of the church.

Following dinner, at 6:30 PM, we returned to the sanctuary for a program presented by Rev. Da Vita D. (Day) McCallister, Associate Conference Minister for Youth and Young Adult Ministries. Rev. McAllister presented, with inspiration and humor, the topic of "How can we communicate with our youth today?" This program was attended by many responsive youth and adults.

Highlights of her enlightening talk emphasized the differences of those people born before 1980 and those born after 1980. As an example, those born before 1980 were more concerned with National subjects, while those born after 1980 were more inclined toward international subjects. More than ever, today's students are subjected to terrorism in school systems. An emphasis on Christian Principals has been found to be effective in preparing youth to meet and act effectively towards terrorism that may occur in the classrooms or on the school grounds.

Another important phase in communication described by Rev. McAllister, was the effective use of networking by youth to meet others. Now it is possible to meet others without having personal contact. However, this method of meeting others may be effective when used wisely by adults who are aware of the possible dangers. Here again, adults must make an effort to make youth aware of the possible problems awaiting a person who enters a computer conversation without prior personal contact.

This was a very informative program for youth as well as adults. With effective planning between Rev. McAllister, church youth leaders, and the youth, an effective program can be held in all churches to learn to communicate in this age of electronics.

About our Members & Friends

Birthdays

Those having birthdays this month include:
Harold Eastwood, Marilyn Nichols, Alton Kenney, Janet Pack, Martha Baker, Hailey Renshaw, Holly Marek, Lauren Heagie, Mickey Moselsky, Leigh Pinney, Dave DeFusco, Anna DeFusco, Matthew McQuade, Linda Graham, Ewan Clague, Ruth Graham, Brent Damrow.



To all others having a special day in December, we wish you the best. Anyone wanting to share a celebration should contact Ruth in the office.

Congregational Church of Somersville

Vision Statement

We will be a faith-based church welcoming diversity, empowering the individual, growing in faith and doing God's work in the global community in unity and love.

Behavioral Covenant

- We will follow a process that includes unconditional listening and time to collect thought, enabling all individuals to comfortably express their opinions.
- Our actions and demeanor will support and empower all participants
- All opinions will be welcomed, reflectively considered and respected.
- Opinions will be expressed with humility, self-control, gentleness, and kindness.
- We will look for common ground as we search for consensus, and we will respect that consensus.
- We will affirm by our works and actions our common goal to serve God.

Poinsettias in the Sanctuary

Each year we offer you the opportunity to purchase poinsettias in honor of, or in memory of, loved ones that will be placed in the sanctuary for Christmas Sunday and Christmas Eve. Orders for plants should be placed through the Church office (7849-7741, faxed to 749-5132, emailed to somcong@aol.com or by returning this form to the office. The cost remains \$5 per plant; orders are to be placed by Friday, December 12.

Please indicate exactly how you would like the listing to read in the bulletin.

.....

I am ordering _____ poinsettia(s)

Given in loving memory of:



Given in honor of:

Given by _____

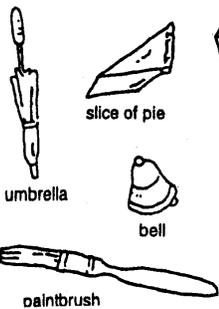
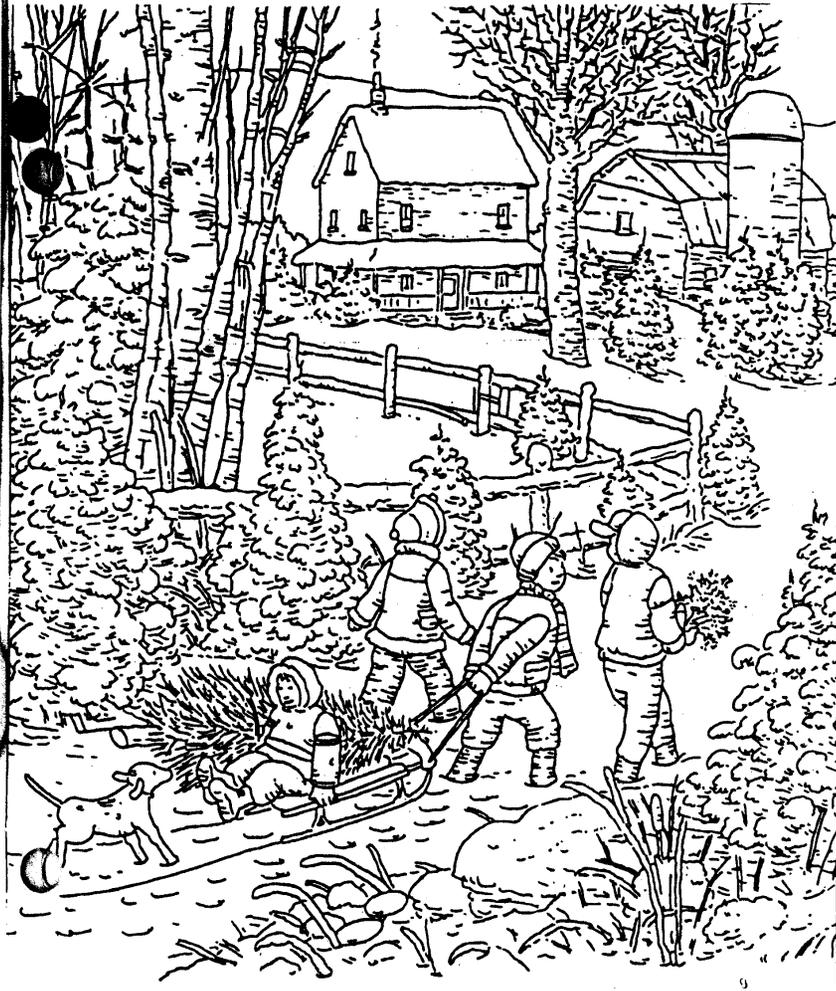
the Rev. Graham Van Keuren, Pastor
 Brent Damrow, Student Pastor
 Sydney Cohen, Treasurer
 Ruth Bruch, Office Administrator/Clerk

Tom & Elaine Hancock, Webministers

December 2008

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2 AA 6:15-8:30	3 Bible Study 9:30-11 Advent Service 7 PM Choir 7:30 PM	4 Nominating 7 PM	5 Supper Prep. 9 AM	6 Holiday Ham Supper
2nd Sunday of Advent Communion Disassemble Field of Flags	7	8 Ladies Aid 12 PM Cornerstone 4-6:30 AA 6:15-8:30 Finance 7 PM	9 Bible Study 9:30-11 Advent Service 7 PM Choir 7:30 PM	10 Cabinet Agenda Requests Due Missions 7 PM	11 Poinsettia Orders Due	12 Pageant Rehearsal Trip to Overlook Farm 11 AM
3rd Sunday of Advent Pageant Rehearsal 4 PM Pageant 6:15 PM	13	14	15 AA 6:15-8:30	16 Bible Study 9:30-11 Advent Service 7 PM Choir 7:30 PM	17	18
4th Sunday of Advent Cabinet	19	20 Blair Manor worship 10:30 AA 6:15-8:30	21 Christmas Eve Service 7 PM	22 <i>Christmas Day</i>	23 office closed	24
25	26	27	28	29	30 AA 6:15-8:30	31
Spire Deadline				Congregational Church of Somersville 22 Maple St., PO Box 1, Somersville, CT 06072 860-749-7741 (860-749-5132 (fax) somcong@aol.com (email) www.somersvilleuucc.org (website) Worship 10 AM Nursery Care Provided		

Hidden Pictures - Bringing Home the tree



paintbrush



umbrella



slice of pie



bell



kite



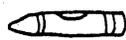
mallet



cup



eyeglasses



crayon



musical note



mitten



bicycle pump