



The North Church

BEACON

The deadline for the next BEACON is at **9 a.m. Monday December 19, 2011**. Send entries to beacon@fccucc.org.

First Congregational Church
 United Church of Christ
 South Portland, Maine 04106
 Phone (207) 799-3361
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 E-mail: office@fccucc.org
<http://www.fccucc.org>

December 5, 2011

Worship

1

Pastor and Pew

2

S L & W

3

Youth

3-4

E G & F / Seniors

4

M&O / Administration

5

Friends At Home – encl.

Looking Ahead in Worship

December 11 – Third Sunday in Advent

We'll light the Candle of Love

8:30 a.m. – chapel worship

10:00 a.m. – sanctuary worship with the Children's Choir, Hilltop Ringers, and Meetinghouse Choir; Sunday school classes through 6th grade, and Worship Discovery for 7th-8th. Elsa Peters will give the message and fellowship time follows in Wright Pavilion.

5:30 p.m. – Christmas Vespers in the sanctuary.

December 18 – Fourth Sunday in Advent

We'll light the Candle of Joy

9:00 a.m. – Christmas Pageant; infant and toddler care.

Eskimo Men's Club annual cookie and candy sale

11:00 a.m. – sanctuary worship with the Meetinghouse Choir; John McCall will give the message.

December 24 – Christmas eve

5:00 p.m. – Family Service followed by Birthday Party for Jesus.

7:00 p.m. – Worship with special music and readings. ASL interpreted for the hearing impaired.

10:00 p.m. – Service of Lessons and Carols with the Meetinghouse Choir.

December 25 – Christmas Day

We'll light the Christ Candle

10:00 a.m. – sanctuary worship with infant and toddler care, and with plenty of Christmas carols. Elsa Peters will lead.

January 1 – New Year's Day

10:00 a.m. – sanctuary worship with communion, infant and toddler care. John McCall will lead.

Remember to bring non-perishable items for our food pantry. The need is greater than ever.



PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Those serving in the military and their loved ones; peace and peacemakers; those suffering from the economy and joblessness. World AIDS day on December 1.

Concerns:

Bob Foster, still at MMC and showing small signs of improvement; **Henry Leeman**; **Dick Hermann**, Pam's husband, home after cardiac surgery on Monday; Shirley Curry and her Family following the death of her younger brother, **John Nielsen** whose funeral was last Wednesday; **Jackie Butler** who broke her hip in a fall at home; **Pam Howard**, director of our Discovery Center preschool, who will have surgery tomorrow; **Mark and Denise Calkins**, and their sons Sam and Max, whose home was destroyed by fire last week; **Betty Martin**, a member of our choir, hospitalized after emergency surgery; **Marti Strunk**, Rory's mother, hospitalized recently with an uncertain prognosis.

Celebrations:

with **Martha "Molly" MacAuslan** on her November 27 baptism; with Michael and Laurie Shannon Simpson on the November 13 baptism of their daughter **Rose Madelyn Simpson**; Ed and Joan Carrier on the November 26 marriage Of their son **James Carrier and Joy Ajayi** in Mystic, CT.

Win Clark, former Pastor, dies in Georgia ...

The Rev. Winston Clark, Senior Minister of our congregation from 1966-1976, died December 2 in Newnan, Georgia, after a brief illness. He was 87 years old. He had recently retired from an active role as a volunteer with the local Habitat for Humanity chapter. Plans tentatively include burial at the Veteran's Cemetery in Augusta. Please contact the church office for current information as we receive it.

Sing a New Song

A few months ago, I found myself standing in a circle around a communion table with a circle of young clergy women as an old friend from seminary invited us to the feast. She asked us to tell the story of our salvation – and then, somehow we broke into song. As the bread and cup were passed from hand to hand, we sang familiar songs. There were chants from Taizé. There were songs that John Bell had taught some of us in workshops. There were songs our churches love. One song wove into the next. Every so often, a hymn entered into this medley but quickly disappeared when we realized we didn't know the words to the second verse. At least, we didn't know them by heart. Still, we sang song after song.

A few weeks earlier, I had been in Cherryfield, Maine with 16 members of our congregation on our first mission trip. As you may have heard in those memories shared on Mission Trip Sunday, we gathered for worship every night where the songs didn't flow quite as smoothly. We defaulted to the words on the pages of the hymnals we found upstairs. We sang familiar songs but the words didn't come as easily. We didn't have a collection of songs we all knew. We didn't sing from memory. We didn't have a song that naturally flowed out of our hearts.

During the season of Advent, I need a song. I need a song to articulate that sense of longing that we hear so clearly in the prophets. In the hope that God will tear open the heavens, in the possibility that God will comfort us, in the assurance that we can rebuild the ancient ruins with our God, we need a song. We need a song to sing that will capture our imaginations. We need a tune that will lift our hearts. We need a harmony that will meld our spirits. We need a song that we can just start singing – and others will join along – because there is something mysterious about singing together. There is something strange that happens when we lift our voices without worrying about the words or even if it will sound any good. It captures that hope that I seek as I wonder what will come this Christmas. If you're like me, if you too need a song, come **Monday nights at 7:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary this Advent.**

Come and
learn
a new song.



STEEPLE LIGHTING

The steeple is lighted the week of **December 11** in loving memory of **John Marino** by his wife Henrietta Marino.

The steeple is lighted the week of **December 18** in loving memory of our parents, **George and Mena Geer and Steve Geer**, our brother, by their family Daryl and Charles Geer and Deborah Atwill.

DECEMBER ALTAR MEMORIALS & CELEBRATIONS

The mission globe is lighted **December 11** in celebration of our children **Garrett and Shana** by Shaun and Sheryl Kieran.

HOLIDAY CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

December 19 – 23
8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.



December 26 - Closed



December 27 – 30
8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.



January 2 - Closed

Christmas is on a Sunday?!?!

It doesn't happen very often - but every so often, we find ourselves with the welcome wonder of celebrating December 25th on a Sunday morning.

On Christmas morning, most families with young children (and older adults) enjoy the relaxation of a leisurely morning under the light of the Christmas tree. It's not our tradition to stir you from that comfort to welcome you to worship on Christmas morning - but this year is a Sunday! So, we will gather worship in the Sanctuary at 10 a.m.

Confirmation 2012

If you are over the age of 13, you're welcome and encouraged to come along on the journey toward Confirmation. This year, once again, our Confirmation experience will be a **six-month program from January to June**. There are a few central ideas that are at the heart of our Confirmation experience. These include:

- We are all on a journey. This is an opportunity for youth to choose his/her own spiritual path.
- To engage in conversations about faith, we need to be mature enough to talk about hard things without being mean or disrespectful.
- We all need mentors. This should be an opportunity where youth seek to grow in an adult

We hope to welcome the familiar comfort of this morning in our worship, so don't worry about dressing up. **Come in your pajamas. Bring your favorite new gift for show and tell. Bring all of those extra Christmas cookies in your kitchen to share in coffee hour.**

On Christmas morning, we'll tell the story and sing carols. We'll find the comfort of being together as we celebrate that Christ has come again.

friendship with someone in the church.

- Our faith is reflected in our commitment to mission, service and action. This should be an opportunity to explore this experience.

A letter went out during the month of November to all youth over the age of 13 that our church database supplies. Our database sometimes fails, so please contact me if you're interested. Please remember that **there is a firm deadline of December 15, 2011** so that there is enough time to find all youth a mentor before the beginning of the Confirmation experience.

Elsa A. Peters
elsa@fccucc.org

Men's Retreat – March 10-11, 2012

The **2012 annual Men's Retreat** will be at the **Beachmere Inn, Ogunquit**, on **Saturday and Sunday, March 10-11**. Hold the date and watch for more information. Estimate cost is about \$100 including three meals and

overnight lodging. There will be plenty of time for conversation, fellowship, and free time. Contact menstretreat@fccucc.org.

Sunday School Sightings

Our Sunday school program is well on its way to another great year. Each class is nearly filled to capacity with energetic, bright and fun kids. The teachers are terrific! We are blessed to have capable high school students who assist the teachers. It proves to be fun for all.

Preschool is a fun place to visit with early introduction to our favorite Bible characters. **K, 1 and 2** is lively and the morning is such fun. They have made "Love Books" and a beautiful Living Action Tree. **Grades 3 and 4** have discussed in depth their own talents as well as talent possibilities. **Grades 5 and 6** have developed "The Wall of Worship and Wisdom". You are invited to visit the classrooms to view these many projects our children are working on.

Eskimo Cookie & Fudge Sale – Sunday, December 18

Sunday, December 18 the Eskimos will be selling fresh baked cookies of great variety and mouth watering fudge in **Guptill Hall after the 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. services.** Best

Hilltop Guild – Thursday December 8th

We will meet in the Wright Pavilion for dessert at **7:00 p.m.** Sally Strice, The Strolling Accordionist, will entertain us with a Christmas music program after which we will have our

The Living Well

Please join us for the **Women's Retreat** this year as we explore what it means to "live well". This retreat will be participant-lead and will focus on Wellness-physical, emotional, and spiritual. There will be large and small group discussions, experiential activities, and free time for reflection and rejuvenation. The retreat will be held **February 11-12, 2012** at the

We all meet as a large group for Chapel services the first Sunday of each month. We read scripture, sing, have interesting discussions, and pray together. The kids really enjoy this time together in the Chapel.

Christ Kid's Club meets the 4th Sunday of each month in the Community Room. We have studied Stewardship, and the Season of Advent beginning with learning about the Prophets. CKC voted for their offering to support Community Crisis Ministries. Please feel free to contact me at sundayschool@fccucc.org if you have comments or suggestions. Thank you.

Carolyn M. Foster
Sunday School Coordinator

quality in town just in time for Christmas at a price you cannot beat, and it gives your family cookie cooker a break.

Roger Addor
eskimos@fccucc.org

business meeting and wrap presents for our Christmas family. All women of the church are invited to join us for dessert, fellowship and fun.

Marie Jordan
hilltop@fccucc.org

Beachmere Inn in Ogunquit. The cost is \$120 and includes lodging, all meals, and retreat activities. A deposit of \$60 is due by December 15th. Registration forms may be found outside of Elsa's office.

Please contact Kristen Silvia 799-8580 or Jill Gorneau 799-4109 if you have any questions.



SENIOR ACTIVITIES

Wed., December 14 & Thurs., December 15 will be the **pick-up times for Christmas gifts by CCM recipients**, who will be assisted by Senior volunteers.

Friday, December 30 - join us for **breakfast at I-Hop at 9:00.**

Thursday, January 5 - we'd would love to have you come to our **SAGE meeting at 1:00.**

Wednesday, January 11 - movie, **Whales of August** will be shown in **Davidson Lounge at 1:30.**

Thursday, January 19 - **Soup Luncheon at noon in Wright Pavilion.** Bring your own place setting and enjoy soups and treats made by the SAGES. **Please RSVP by January 13.**

WOMEN'S SPIRITUALITY CIRCLE

The **Women's Spirituality Circle** will **not meet in December.** The next gathering will be on **Wednesday, January 18th, 7:00 p.m.** in the church library. As always, all women in the church are invited to join this caring and supportive fellowship.

Have you contributed to your Maine Conference "Per Capita Contribution" yet? The amount is \$15 per member. Please note "Per Capita" on your check in the memo line.

Thank you,
Cyndi
cda@fccucc.org

SPECIAL THANKS

Special thanks to the **Monday Morning Bridge Group** for their thoughtful and generous donation of \$150 towards Community Crisis Ministries.

Cyndi Alden
cda@fccucc.org

THE CHILDREN'S CLOSET

The Children's Closet is in desperate need of winter coats and boots, as well as gently used winter clothes in sizes 6 months to size 8. We have occasional need for clothes for bigger kids as well.

As you replace outgrown items, won't you please consider donating them to the Children's Closet? Every child – and especially their parents – will thank you.

When the Weather Outside is Frightful

Check the SMCC storm line (741-5900). If evening classes at the college are cancelled, so is the church team, committee, or Council. You can also find this on local TV and radio stations. Each team or committee will be responsible for rescheduling their meeting.

Starting this year, Worship cancellations will be listed on the three local news stations (Channels 6, 8 & 13) as well as on radio 560 – WGAN.

Though this doesn't include choir rehearsals, or fellowship groups, we always trust you to be safe and use your best judgment.

An Open Thank You from the Holly Daze Bazaar

We truly wish that we, Lynn, Karen and Janice, could thank every one of you individually, but since it includes the majority of our church members, we decided to do it in an open letter. We definitely had the best Bazaar ever. We made well over \$11,000. Compare that to last year's total of a little over \$8,000.

Thank you for the tastefully done advertisements, rooms that were all full & beautifully decorated with their wares. The individual chairs of these rooms went all out and the church members came through with lots of goodies, crafts, knit goods, jewelry, treasures & books. The wonderful aroma that came from our Greens room where the ladies made their beautiful wreaths. The luncheon was fabulous, as usual, and the

music added the final touch. They were wonderful. It should be noted that Lynn did almost all the decorations around the church that made it so beautiful. Thank you to Tom for all his extra work, to the men & women that came in to tote all the donations to the rooms to which they belonged. We had great help in setting up the tables & again taking them down & putting everything back in order for church on Sunday. Thanks to our friend that took 2 truckloads of stuff to the dump. We had him extra busy this year. I would like everyone to know that we have had many compliments on the Bazaar and that is thanks to everyone involved. Thank you sooo much. We are truly blessed.

Janice Files, Lynn Lanctot
& Karen Souza

Count Yourself Blessed ~

The spirit has moved many of us to count ourselves blessed and to give as it has been given to us. We're grateful for every commitment and encouraged by the responses so far. But we have a long way to go. Our enlistment won't be complete until every household has made a decision about your intentions to support our shared ministries in 2012.

Pledge cards are in the pews or by calling the church office at 799-3361. If it's more convenient for you try the online pledge form at: <http://fccucc.org/about/2012-pledge-form/>

~ In gratitude, Your Stewardship Committee – Bill Campbell, Betsy Keiter, Ted O'Meara, Jerry Reynolds, and John McCall

THE NORTH CHURCH BEACON
Published by the First Congregational Church,
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301 Cottage Road, South Portland, ME 04106

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First Congregational Church, UCC
301 Cottage Road, South Portland, ME 04106

2011 Christmas Vespers Service
Sunday, December 11
5:30 p.m.

Jesus, Our Guide and Teacher.

This is a candle light program of Advent and Christmas music held in our Sanctuary with the theme: Jesus, Our Guide and Teacher. The program will include solos, ensembles and some instrumental work. Join us one and all. Refreshments will follow.