

THIS WEEK

Thurs. 12.10.09	6 pm – Social and Service Christmas Party 7:30 pm – Adult Choir
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WEEK OF 12.13.09 AT FIRST CHURCH

Sun. 12.13.09	Third Sunday of Advent / Children’s Program 10 am – Worship and Sunday School 11:15 am – Second Hour: 1954 Society 5:30 pm – Christmas Celebration for Supper Groups
Tues. 12.15.09	7 pm – Council Meeting
Thurs. 12.17.09	7:30 pm – Adult Choir
Fri. 12.18.09	10 am – Annual Reports Due

WEEK OF 12.20.09 AT FIRST CHURCH

Sun. 12.20.09	Fourth Sunday of Advent / Festival of Lessons and Carols 10 am – Worship and “Christian Tree Shop” for the Children 11:15 am – Women’s Circle Cookie Walk 5:30 pm – Youth Group Christmas Gathering
Thurs. 12.24.09	Christmas Eve, Office Will Close at Noon 9 pm – Adult Choir 10 pm – Christmas Eve Service
Fri. 12.25.09	Merry Christmas! Building Closed through January 3, 2010

WEEK OF 12.27.09 AT FIRST CHURCH

Sun. 12.27.09	10 am – Worship
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WEEK OF 1.3.10 AT FIRST CHURCH

Sun. 1.3.10	Communion Sunday / Epiphany 10 am – Worship 11 am – Kirby Gernander
Mon. 1.4.10	Office Re-Opens 10 am – Newsletter Deadline
Tues. 1.5.10	7 pm – CGMO Working Group
Thurs. 1.7.10	7:30 pm – Adult Choir

2009 DONATIONS

Reminder from the Financial Clerk regarding donations: Please keep in mind that your donations for 2009 must be at the church office, or postmarked, no later than December 31, 2009 in order to count toward your 2009 giving. Any monies after Dec. 31st will be credited for church and tax purposes to 2010. Thank you all for your continued financial support of First Church.

1754 SOCIETY WORKSHOP

There will be a question and answer session after the church service in the Parlor on Sunday, December 13. Committee members will discuss the 1754 Society and how you can become a charter member of this planned giving opportunity to help First Church.

UPCOMING CHRISTMAS EVENTS

Please join us, this coming Sunday, December 13. The centerpiece of our worship will be our Children’s Program entitled “Simply Longing for a Pageant . . .”

On Christmas Sunday, December 20, we shall share our annual Festival of Lessons and Carols with lots of special music.

ANNUAL REPORTS

I’m asking for all annual reports, preferably by e-mail, by December 18th, even though it seems early. It gives me about one month’s time to get them done, as they have to be handed out to members by January 17th, two weeks prior to the Annual Meeting.

Thank you!

Kristine Lewko, Office Manger

YOUTH GROUP DATES

- Sunday, December 20, 5:30 – 8 pm; Youth Group Christmas Gathering
- Sunday, January 17, 5:30 – 8 pm; Youth Group
- Sunday, January 24 and January 31, Super Bowl Grinder Sale
- Sunday, February 7, Grinder Making

WOMEN’S CIRCLE COOKIE WALK

On Sunday, December 20th, the Women’s Circle will have their annual Cookie Walk in Fellowship Hall after church. Come and select all your favorite cookies to have for the holidays or to give as a gift! Money raised from this event will help pay for our retreat leaders. Any donations of baked cookies would be greatly appreciated.

COME and SING!

The Adult Choir invites you to sing with us for the Christmas Eve service this year. All you have to do is show up at 9:00 p.m. sharp on Christmas Eve for practice (service is at 10:00 p.m.). If you are high school through adult, you are more than welcome! So that I can have music prepared for you, please let me know if you plan to join us by calling me at the church (860-229-3709) and leave me a message by Tuesday, December 22.

Jim Gower, Director of Music Ministries

CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP

For some time now, we have been discussing our Christmas Eve worship. In recent years, attendance has dropped at both services (traditionally, 5:30 and 11:00 P.M.). And when the early service was no longer the venue for our annual Children’s Christmas Program (now scheduled for Sunday morning worship in Advent), the attraction of the 5:30 service for families with young children waned. So, to energize the quality and participation levels of our Christmas Eve worship experience, and with input from the congregational Christmas Eve Surveys, our professional staff, and our choir, the Diaconate and Worship Working Group decided to “try a new thing” this year and see how it works—one worship service instead of two and a brand new time for the one service—10:00 P.M. We contacted our neighboring UCC churches and found that they host services at 5:00, 7:00, and 11:00. So our new schedule offers a unique alternative worship time. Our hope is that all folks who attended either of our traditional services will attend this one service and thus boost the attendance, enthusiasm, and joy of our Christmas Eve worship experience. We appreciate our collective willingness to “try this new thing” and welcome our collective feedback as we plan for 2010. “O come, all ye faithful” to our 10:00 P.M. Christmas Eve Service of Carols, Candles, and Communion!

DONATIONS FOR SOUTH CHURCH’S CHRISTMAS DAY DINNER

South Church has asked us once again to be the “PIE” church. Pies are needed for their annual Christmas dinner where about 500 dinners are served at the church or delivered to shut-ins. So please drop your pies off at the church **by December 20th**.

Also, winter coats and gently used boots for men, women, and children are needed. Warm hats, mittens and gloves are also on their wish list. A Christmas tree is in the Narthex and we are hoping to adorn it with those hats, gloves and mittens.

Lastly, South Church could use gift cards from Price Rite or Stew Leonard’s. Both stores give gift card recipients a great deal on the food they purchase with these cards.

~The Missions and Outreach Working Group

FIRST CHURCH GALLERY OPENING

Please join us for a Gallery Opening on Sunday, January 3, from 11 am – noon. Please stop in and welcome our artist, Kirby Gernander, and enjoy her photos; many of New Britain.

A volunteer is needed to host the opening. Please contact Kristine, in the office, at 860-229-3709, if you are able to help

Crafts, Food, Music and Ho Ho Ho!

If you missed being at last Sunday’s Advent Workshop, you missed a jolly good time! 70 plus kids – both young and “old” enjoyed things to make, wonderful holiday music, delicious soup and sandwiches *and* a visit from the big guy in the red suit! Thank you to everyone who participated and made this festive event possible!

I am happy to report that we collected \$60 in our Trick or Treat for UNICEF boxes this Halloween season! And now you have another great opportunity to participate in a local mission project for Christmas. Hats, mittens, and gently worn winter coats are being collected in the Narthex and will be distributed by South Church to people in need right here in New Britain!

Need a Christmas gift for that person who has everything? Check out the Thai Crafts for sale during coffee hour this Sunday, December 13th!

Church School Schedule:

Sunday, December 13th, all children participating in the Christmas program *must arrive in the sanctuary by 8:30 that morning.*

Sunday, December 20th, children will be doing their holiday shopping at the Christian Tree Shop, with the coins they have been earning since September.

Sunday, December 27th, there will be NO church school workshops. The Toddler Room will be open for children thru age 3.

Sunday, January 3rd, there will be NO church school workshops. The Toddler Room will be open for children thru age 3.

Sunday, January 10th, we will resume regular church school workshops.

Wishing you a peaceful holiday season,

Sharon Chamberlain
Coordinator of Christian Education



CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to John Rathgeber for being appointed, by Governor Rell, as a member of the state’s early childhood education cabinet.

FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST

DECEMBER 9, 2009

NEW BRITAIN, CT

Dear Friends,

This Advent season provides us with important opportunities to reach out to those in need through our two special mission offerings.

First, on Christmas Sunday, December 20, we shall give and receive the United Church of Christ Christmas Fund Special Mission Offering, which this year will re-claim its traditional name—“The Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund.” This offering is an expression of joy and gratitude to, and for, those who serve the church. Gifts to the Christmas Fund provide pension and health premium supplementation to low-income retirees, emergency assistance to the families of clergy and lay employees, and Christmas “Thank You” Gift Checks to hundreds of annuitants. The 2008 Christmas Fund provided assistance to nearly 1,500 individuals and families. Amid a depressed economic climate that continues to drag on, our gifts are needed more than ever to help the growing number of retirees whose low income annuities make it difficult to meet increasing living costs. Requests for Ministerial Assistance provided by the Christmas Fund are greater than at any point in recent history.

And then, on Christmas Eve, December 24, at 10:00 P.M., we shall take our special Christmas Offering to benefit our local Salvation Army. The outreach mission and ministries of this organization are familiar to us all—homeless shelter, soup kitchen, food pantry, emergency counseling, outreach to senior citizens and nursing home residents, and holiday toy and food baskets. The Salvation Army is known for its faithful frugality; but in these especially hard economic times, they need our help more than ever.

In this season of generous giving, when we give thanks for the greatest gift ever given and ever received, please support these two special mission offerings with exuberant joy and deep gratitude.

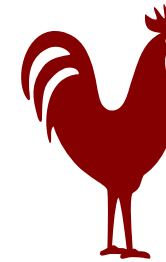
Happy Advent and Merry Christmas!

See you in church! Blessings always!

Jack

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OFFICE and GALLERY HOURS

Monday - Thursday 9:00 am – 3:00 pm

Friday 9:00 am – Noon

PROGRAM STAFF

The Rev. Jack Cook, Senior Minister

Sharon Chamberlain, Coordinator of Christian Education

James Gower, Director of Music Ministries

Sarah Flythe, Coordinator of Youth Programming

Please go to our website, www.firstnewbritain.org for staff contact information

Copies of sermons and additional newsletters are available in the information rack outside the church office.