

The Meeting House Times

The Congregational Church of Salisbury, United Church of Christ

December, 2008

Advent is a time of spiritual preparation for Christmas.

It begins four Sundays before Christmas and ends on Christmas Eve. This year the first Sunday of Advent is November 30th. During this season of busy-ness, we encourage you and your family to make an effort to set aside a little time each week to reflect upon the true meaning of the coming of Christ into the world - the "good news of great joy which shall be for ALL the people."



Family Night Out

Potluck Supper and Christmas Crafts

Friday, December 5th - 5:30

The Board of Religious Education will host our annual church family potluck supper to begin the season of Advent. Bring a large main dish or salad (either home-made or takeout) to share. Dessert and beverage will be provided.



After supper we will make some Christmas crafts. All materials will be provided. We will conclude our evening by 7:30 with a brief Advent candle-lighting service.

Join us for this time of fellowship and fun. Have a question? Need a ride? Call Barbara Collins (435-0051) or barb@leecollins.com

Global Crafts Continue On Sale

The opportunity to purchase wonderful Global Crafts will be open to the whole community on Saturday, December 6th from 10:00 to 4:00 during Salisbury's Hometown Holidays. We will expand from our small room to the Parish Hall where you may find things you missed before. We will also be selling after church on Sunday, December 7th - our last day for the season.



Please encourage your friends and neighbors to take advantage of the opportunity to purchase crafts from third world crafters.

An Opportunity for Christmas Giving



Add someone to your Christmas list this year who doesn't "already have everything." At the end of November the Christmas Giving Tree will be set up in the Parish Hall. The ornaments on the tree will list gifts for families in need.

On Sunday, December 7th and December 14th, members of the congregation who wish to participate should choose an ornament and purchase the gift indicated. **The wrapped gift, with the ornament attached, should be placed under the Giving Tree on or before Sunday, December 21st.**

Middle School Youth Fellowship to Meet Sunday, December 7th

All youth in sixth and seventh grade are encouraged to meet with us in the parish hall from 5:00 to 7:30. We will be making a craft project which will be taken to our homebound members when we go Christmas caroling on Sunday, December 21st.



Our gifts will be given to families in Amenia and Millerton and to mothers and their children living in a shelter for abused women. Your past generosity to people in these stressful situations has been overwhelming and greatly appreciated.

The CROP Walk 2008

Communities Responding to Overcome Hunger

So many of you helped the Salisbury Congregational Church achieve the position of the top fund raising church in the 2008 CROP Walk in this area. We raised \$3,743.83, with \$250.00 still to come in. This amount is \$1000 more than we realized last year.

Twenty five of our church members took envelopes, obtained sponsors, and participated in the walk. And many, many more of our members sponsored the walkers.



As some of our national leaders have said, "We are all in this together," and the CROP Walk is a symbol of this statement. We walked because they have to walk. And the following people, young and old, signed on from our church and walked: **Patricia Palmer, Carrie Babigian, Jennifer Good, Jack Ritchie, Lauren Hanlon, Shirley Rogers, Cynthia and Jim LaPier, Katie Heacox, Kate Pastore, Sam Pastore, Amelia O'Connor, Rachel Reed, Joslin Taber, Dick Taber, Monica Chin, Eric Chin, Joanne Taber, Elise LaFosse, Peter Moon, Rosamond Bell, Sue Ritchie, Heather Schaufele, and Nancy and Norm Sills.**

Thanks to you all! Sue Ritchie

Our annual Christmas concert will be held on Sunday, December 14th, at 2:30.

As usual, our Bell Choir will lead off with a selection of seasonal carols and songs to amaze and delight us. The major work will be Handel's "Messiah," Part I - the Christmas portion. **It will be performed as a "sing-in."** If you have sung it before, feel free to bring your score and join our choir for the afternoon.



The solo parts will be sung by Brooke Schooley, soprano; Janet Walker, alto; Cameron Smith, tenor; and Steven Dahlin, bass. Members of the Danbury Chamber Players, led by Larry Deming, will provide string accompaniment, and Christine Gevert will be on the organ bench. Albert Sly will conduct.

Plan to welcome the Christmas season with this performance of Handel's most famous composition.

Church School Christmas Pageant

Sunday, December 21st - 11:15

During Church School on that day the children will be costumed as shepherds, angels, kings, and animals, and the annual Christmas Pageant will take place in the parish hall after morning worship. This informal but endearing retelling of the Christmas story takes about fifteen minutes and may be the most-photographed event of the church year! Extra hands to help costume the cast and help backstage are always welcome.



There will be no classes or activities for children on Sunday, December 28th, but crib/toddler care will be available for the littlest ones. Church school classes will resume on January 4th.

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Our programs for children and youth are thriving this year, serving our faithful returning families and some new ones, as well. The list of people helping in the church school since September is quite impressive: **Judy Stewart, Joanne Taber, and Barbara Collins as teachers with Chris Curry and Sarah Rydingsword as their substitutes,** In the Nursery: **Stephanie and Holly Tierney, Eric Rydingsword, Lauren and Missy Hanlon, Claire and Noah Rashkoff, Kathy Mera and Desean Taber, Jane Elwood and Joslin Taber, Jan Randall and Donald Reed.** We are also grateful that Cynthia LaPier has joined Dick Taber in working with the youth group. Thanks to all for making this commitment of time, energy, and love to our children.

Barbara Collins. for the Board of Religious Education

Remember to save the weekend of January 10th and 11th for the celebration of Dick Taber's ministry and well wishes for his retirement.

A schedule of events will follow, involving Saturday evening, Sunday worship, and a Sunday afternoon community gathering.



Reminder: Scrapbook material due December 15th

Interim Search Committee Report

By the time this issue reaches you, the Committee hopes to have a full-time interim pastor in place to assume the duties when Dick retires on January 11, 2009. We have read a series of ministerial profiles, made many phone calls, interviewed five candidates, and will have arrived at a unanimous choice. All the candidates have had training and experience in the interim field, and we are confident that our interim pastor will be the best possible one for our congregation and situation.



And given the length of Dick's pastorate, all the experienced people - candidates and UCC conference ministers alike - have advised us to be prepared for a lengthy interim period, probably two years. The Committee will begin the search for a "settled" pastor when the time is right.

Lee Collins, for the Committee

Youth Fellowship New York Trip

It was Friday, this past November 14th. The Salisbury Youth Fellowship group met at the train station in Passaic at 4:00. We took the train into New York City and made the 30 minute walk to Marble Collegiate Church, the place we would be staying. After unpacking our bags and getting settled, we set off for the first part of our trip.



We walked 20 minutes to Times Square, one of the most famous places in New York City. When we got there we all gaped at the surrounding buildings. Advertisements as big as houses decorated the walls of the construction around us. After our little jaunt around Times Square we went back to the church and were locked outside until 11:00. When we were finally let in, we all went straight to bed.

At 7:15, Mr. Taber was already up and had stopped at Dunkin Donuts to get breakfast - bagels, muffins, and juice. After we all had our fill, we hung out in the room for a while, playing games and talking and laughing. When we finally left, we headed to one of the main focuses of

our trip, the soup kitchen. The term "soup kitchen" is somewhat inappropriate for what we actually visited. The people there did not in fact serve soup but served a full meal including bread, salad, and meatloaf. It was a first for all of us for none of us had ever been to a "soup kitchen" before.

When we left, we grabbed a quick bite to eat and hurried to the last stop on our New York City trip, a tour of NBC Studios. We all walked in anticipation to Rockefeller Plaza and waited patiently for Mr. Taber to get our tickets. When it was finally our turn, we went into a small movie theatre and watched a short film about the history of NBC. After that, we saw several of the TV studios including the one where they cast the show, Saturday Night Live! We were all disappointed when the tour was over, but we were all excited to be going home again. We took the long train ride home again and were reunited once again with our Connecticut homes.

Eric Chin

A Community Conversation About Addiction



On **Thursday, December 4th at 7:30**, the Board of Deacons will sponsor a conversation about addiction which will be open to the community. The program will begin with brief statements by:

Tim Walsh: Executive Director at Mountain Side Lodge, a drug and alcohol dependence treatment center

Rick Mastrocola: Certified Addictions Counselor

Eugene Chin, MD: Sharon Hospital Emergency Room

Patrick Sullivan: Journalist

After brief opening statements the floor will be open for questions and comments. Dick Taber will serve as moderator.

This program emerged out the concerns of the Board of Deacons for people in our community who are suffering from addiction and for their families. Many have remarked upon what appears to be a dramatic increase in the availability and use of hard drugs- especially heroin. We hope that this program will raise awareness, give possible solutions and offer support to those who are affected.



in December

- 4th Robert Haiko**
- 12th Hunter Kinzinger**
- 14th Sharon O'Connor, Duncan McKee**
- 15th Alice Gustafson**
- 16th Armen Babigian, Jean Olsen**
- 17th Bob Palmer**
- 18th Henry Blais**
- 19th Brad Haiko, George Herold**
- 25th Gavin Reed**
- 28th Donald Reed**
- 29th Tom Light**
- 30th Sal Accardo**
- 31st Lancy Downs**

+ Christian Symbols +

Holly

Holly is a popular decoration at Christmastime, not just for its beauty but also for its religious significance. Holly's thorny leaves and red berries symbolize Jesus' Passion and blood, reminding us of the fate awaiting the Christ child. According to old Christian legends, holly first sprang up under Christ's footsteps, and his cross was made from the wood of the holly.



Special dates

- o Second Sunday of Advent - December 7th
- o Third Sunday of Advent - December 14th
- o Fourth Sunday of Advent - December 21st
- o First day of winter - Sunday, December 21st
- o Christmas Eve - Wednesday, December 24th
- o Christmas Day - Thursday, December 25th
- o New Year's Eve - Wednesday, December 31st

Our December Calendar

Wednesday, the 3rd: Prayer Group - 10:15

Thursday, the 4th: Addiction Discussion program - 7:30

Friday, the 5th: Men's Bible Breakfast - 7:15
Bible Study - 9:00
Advent Potluck supper - 5:30

Sunday, the 7th:
Worship with Communion 10:00
Board of Trustees - 11:15
Youth Fellowship - 5:00

Friday, the 12th: Men's Bible Breakfast - 7:15
Bible Study - 9:00

Sunday, the 14th:
Worship and Church School - 10:00
Board of Christian Action - 11:15
Christmas Concert - 2:30

Monday, the 15th: Scrapbook material due

Wednesday, the 17th - Prayer Group - 10:15

Friday, the 19th: Men's Bible Breakfast - 7:15
Bible Study - 9:00

Sunday, the 21st:
Worship and Church School - 10:00
Church School pageant - 11:15
Giving Tree gifts due
Christmas Caroling bus - 5:00

Wednesday, the 24th: Christmas Eve service - 7:30

Thursday, the 25th: Christmas Day

Friday, the 26th: NO Bible study groups

Sunday, the 28th: Worship - 10:00

Monday, the 29th: Board of Deacons - 4:30

Please note: Church School classes will not meet on Sunday, December 28th. Crib/toddler care will be available for the littlest ones. **Church school classes will resume on January 4th.**

Christmas Caroling Bus Tour

Sunday, December 21st - 5:00

We will board a bus to take the message of God's love at Christmas to our members and friends who are not able to get out of their homes for holiday activities and to the residents of Noble Horizons. Singers and non-singers of all ages and abilities are urged to take part in this very significant aspect of our celebration of Christ's birth.



We will return to the parish hall at about 7:00 for our traditional giant sub sandwich. For those with very young children, arrangements can be made, so that they do not have to make all the stops. This is a great chance to be together with friends while bringing the joy of Christmas to the hearts of others. Students home for the holidays are especially welcome for a time of reunion.



At 7:30 on Wednesday evening, December 24th, we will gather for our traditional Service of Lessons and Carols.

The Christmas gospel and prophecies relating to the birth of the Messiah will be read by members of our church family. Between readings we will sing carols and listen to

musical offerings from our wonderful Senior Choir. The service ends with candlelight and joyful hugs. Plan to arrive early to hear the Bell Choir prelude.

During the service children are invited to bring wrapped new toys forward during the offertory for the benefit of local children served by Salisbury Family Services.

Also at the Christmas Eve service envelopes will be available for our annual offering for Neighbors in Need.

Through this offering the church expresses a common commitment to justice and compassion throughout the United States and Puerto Rico. Two-thirds of Neighbors in Need aid supports program initiatives and direct grants offered by the UCC's Justice and Witness Ministries. Small but essential grants are also made throughout the year to congregations and organizations engaged in community organizing, public policy advocacy, and direct service. Please give generously to support this important work.

Annual Stewardship Campaign

2009 will begin with a celebration of the ministry of Dick Taber and move into a time of transition with the assistance of an interim minister. To keep our church effective in its ministry, both to our members and to the wider community, we will all need to work together during this year of change. Financial support of the church is part of this work.



By now, all church members and friends should have received the annual stewardship letter and 2009 pledge card. The letter reminds us of the central place of the church in our community and in our individual lives - "a community within a community." The goal of this year's Every Member Canvass is to equal the amount pledged and received for 2008. We do hope that some in the congregation will be able to increase their contribution. Pledge cards may be mailed to the church or left in the collection box at Sunday worship.

We express our thanks to all who have made and will make a pledge toward sustaining and strengthening the Congregational Church of Salisbury as we look to the future.

Ward Belcher, Larry Blades, and Bob Newman,
for the Trustees



Yuletide

GAMES

Enjoy the Christmas season with these games, centered around the theme of Jesus, our greatest gift.

JESUS' BIRTH FROM A-Z

What you need:

- Paper
- Pencils or pens
- Bibles (optional)



What you do:

Instruct players to think of as many Christmas-related words as they can that start with each letter of the alphabet. Start with A and give everyone a minute to brainstorm words for each letter. For example, M words include manger, Mary and miracle. If you get stuck, look at the Nativity accounts in Matthew 1 and 2, and also Luke 2. Players get a point for each word not repeated by others.

PIN THE STAR ON THE MANGER

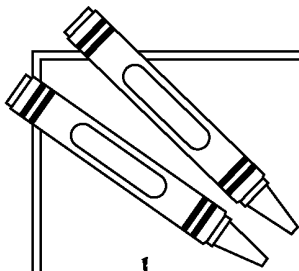
What you need:

- Butcher paper, poster board or plain wrapping paper
- Markers, paint or crayons
- Construction paper stars
- Tape
- Blindfold



What you do:

On large paper, draw a picture of a stable. Give each player a star cutout. Put a small + above the manger where the star led the shepherds and wise men to baby Jesus. Like in Pin the Tail on the Donkey, the blindfolded person who puts his or her star closest to the + wins.



Just for KIDS

The Story of Jesus' Birth

Jesus' birth is recorded in three New Testament chapters: Matthew 1 and 2, and Luke 2. Follow some important words about our Savior's birth by starting at a word beginning with the letter A and finishing with a word starting with the letter Z.



	angels	Bethlehem	car	dance	easel
cat	bear	child	donkey	egg	fast
holy	glory	flocks	Earth	feathers	gap
inn	jacket	grapes	peace	quiet	hat
Joseph	king	Lord	only	righteous	shepherds
kelp	loop	Mary	night	unique	tidings
last	maze	paper	wise men	virgin	water
open	nest	word	excitement	young	zillions saved by this baby called Jesus



Answer: angels, Bethlehem, child, donkey, Earth, flocks, glory, holy, inn, Joseph, king, Lord, Mary, night, only, peace, quiet, righteous, shepherds, tidings, unique, virgin, wise men, excitement, young, zillions (saved by this baby called Jesus)

A couple of days after Christmas, the Nativity scene was still up in the chancel of a San Francisco church. Walking by it, the pastor noticed that the baby Jesus was missing from the manger.

Shortly afterward, as the pastor walked outside the church, he saw a small boy pulling a new wagon. In the wagon bed was a doll that looked very much like the missing baby Jesus. The pastor greeted the boy and asked him about the doll.

"I got it in the church," the boy replied.

"Why did you take it from the church?"

"Well," the boy answered. "I prayed for a new wagon and told the Lord Jesus that if I got one, I would give him a ride. I got the wagon and took him for a ride, and now I'm bringing him back to church."