



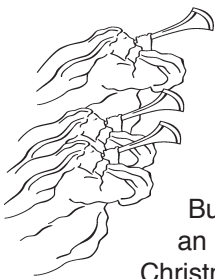
NEWSLETTER

Of The United Church of Rowayton

December 2010/January 2011

Vol. 41, No. 6

From the Pastor



Once upon a time, there was a man who looked upon Christmas as a lot of humbug. He wasn't a Scrooge. He was a very kind and decent person, generous to his family, upright in all his dealings with others.

But he didn't believe all that stuff about an incarnation which churches proclaim at Christmas. And he was too honest to pretend that he did. "I am truly sorry to distress you," he told his wife, who was a faithful churchgoer, "but I simply cannot understand this claim that God became human. It doesn't make any sense to me." On Christmas Eve, his wife and children went to church for the traditional Christmas Eve service. He refused to go. "I'd feel like a hypocrite," he explained. "I'd much rather stay at home. But I'll wait up for you." Shortly after his family drove away in the car, snow began to fall. He went to his family room window and watched the flurries getting heavier and heavier. "If we must have a Christmas," he reflected, "it's nice to have a white one." He went back to his chair by the fireside and began to read his newspaper. A few minutes later, he was startled by a thudding sound. It was quickly followed by another, then another. He thought that someone must be throwing snow balls at his living room window. When he went to the front door to investigate, he found a flock of birds huddled miserably in the snow. They had been caught in the storm, and in a desperate search for shelter had tried to fly through his window. I can't let those poor creatures lie there and freeze, he thought. But how can I help them? Then he remembered the barn where the children's pony was stabled. It would provide a warm shelter. He quickly put on his coat and boots and tramped through the deepening snow to the barn. He opened the doors wide and turned on the light. But the birds didn't come in. Food will bring them in, he thought. So he hurried

back to the house for bread crumbs, which he sprinkled on the snow to make a trail into the barn. To his dismay, the birds ignored the bread crumbs and continued to flop around helplessly in the snow. He tried shooing them into the barn by walking around and waving his arms. They scattered in every direction - except into the warm, lighted barn. "They think I'm a strange and terrifying creature," he said to himself, "and I can't seem to think of any way to let them know they can trust me. If only I could be a bird myself for a few minutes, perhaps I could lead them to safety. If I could just talk bird talk - speak bird language - they would listen to me, because they would understand me. Maybe if I put on my daughter's 'Big-Bird' costume, I would look like a bird and they would trust me because I would look like them." "If I could just become a bird for a few minutes...if I could just walk like a bird...if I could just talk like a bird...if I could just look like a bird...they would trust me and I could save them." Just at that moment, the church bells began to ring. He stood silently for a while, listening to the bells pealing the glad tidings of Christmas. Then he sank to his knees in the snow. "Now I understand," he whispered. "Now I know why you had to come to earth. Now I know why you became one of us."

This year Judi and I will celebrate our 25th Christmas here in Rowayton. We are looking forward to carrying on the traditions which have become so endearing to us and our family. Open your heart to all the Advent and Christmas experiences we offer so that the true spiritual meaning of this Holy Season will guide your life and give you the hope, peace, joy and love you need to move into the New Year. See you in Church!

With Love,

Advent Worship - 10:15am



November 28 - First Sunday of Advent Intergenerational Worship

Message: Ready and Waiting

Scripture: Matthew 24:36-44

Advent Candle: Jim, Ellen &
Allison Mulhearn



December 5 - Second Sunday of Advent Communion Sunday

Message: Vision of Peace

Scripture: Isaiah 11:1-10

Advent Candles: Tim, Lara, Lindsay &
Charlotte Walsh



December 12 - Third Sunday of Advent Our Living Nativity

Advent Candles: Andrew, Kristen &
William Schadt



December 19 - Fourth Sunday of Advent

Message: God With Us

Scripture: Matthew 1:18-25

Advent Candles: Garrett, Jenny, Annika &
John Friedrichsen



Christmas Eve Worship

4:00pm - Family Worship with
Traditional Readings and Carols

11:00pm - Candlelight Christmas

Eve Service - Scripture: Luke 2:1-20

Living Nativity December 12th

*Come to the manger! Kneel amid the
magi, shepherds, angels. Experience
Mary and Joseph's joy at the birth of a
son. Be filled with music of the Christmas
season. Don't miss the chance to
experience this joyous season.*



Worship Following Christmas

Dec. 26 Message: Cosmic Praise

Scripture: Psalm 148

Jan. 2 Communion

Message: Epiphany Celebration

Scripture: John 1:(1-9), 10-18

Jan. 9 Message: Possibilities Unfolding

Scripture: Matthew 3:13-17

Jan. 16 Message: All That We Are

Scripture: Isaiah 49:1-7

Jan. 23 Message: Called Together

Scripture: Matthew 4:12-23

Jan. 30 Intergenerational Worship

Message: The Vision Beautiful

Scripture: Matthew 5:1-12

Altar Committee Christmas

Memorial Flowers

The Altar Committee reminds Church members that you may contribute to the fund for Christmas flowers and decorations by calling the Church office at 866-1415 or sending an email to kris@ucrowayton.org. Please bring or mail contributions to the Church by Thursday, December 9th. Your loved ones' names will be included in the Christmas Eve Orders of Worship.



Early Morning Advent Worship

During the season of Advent you are invited to four early Wednesday morning worship services in the Sanctuary. These services will begin at 6:30am and will be a half hour long. Led by Pastor John Livingston, services will consist of scripture readings, prayers and silent meditation. These services will be held on December 1, 8, 15, 22.

Annual Nativity Pageant

Rowayton's 46th Annual Nativity Pageant will be

held on Saturday, De-

ceMBER 18th at 6:00pm

under the great light

at Rowayton School.

Pastor John Livingston

will be one of the narra-

tors. Volunteer carolers

are invited to go to the

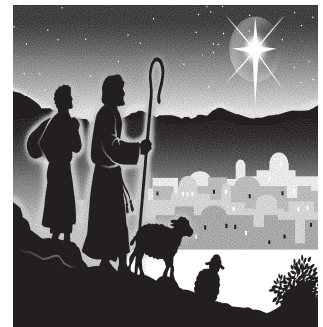
school at 5:00pm. Don't

miss this presentation of

the Christmas story.

Rain date: Sunday,

December 19th.



Associate Pastor's Study

Recently, the Board of Christian Education had a brief conversation about whether or not to continue with our Advent Pizza Party tradition. After all, it costs money and it is time consuming and energy expending during a very busy time of the year! I had a feeling what the outcome of the conversation would be, but with the help of Roxanne Gall, one of our esteemed members of the Board, we put it out there online as to what everybody on BOCE thought we should do. Happily, it was unanimous in the positive! The Advent Pizza Party tradition is alive, well and scheduled for Sunday evening December 5th at 5:00pm, immediately followed by the Christmas Tree Lighting and Caroling.

Tradition is one of those lovely things that churches can do well. In the midst of our 21st Century cyber-tech fascination, it is nice to know that we have simple traditions that add to the cohesion of our Family of Faith. If you would like to help decorate, serve pizza and juice, make cookies or offer a fun activity (card making, face painting, ornament creating) for the Advent Pizza party, the BOCE would love it! Just let me, or one of our Board members, know what you have in mind. BOCE is an equal opportunity recruiter of people who want to get involved.

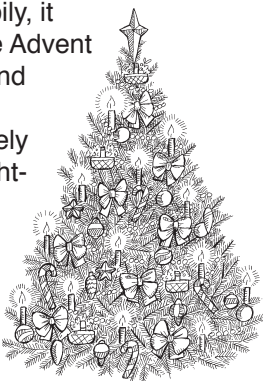
Please DO come to this Advent family tradition and bring a friend, a neighbor, a relative to join in on the fun. No one is too young or old to participate and the more the merrier! Santa will be here to meet all the kids, so please do join us! This is one of our best Church traditions and we extravagantly welcome the entire Community.

Good Advent, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year with love,

Carla

Dates to Remember:

- Dec. 5 - 9:00am BOCE Meeting,
Church School for Pre K-4th Grade
(5th Grade & up Communion)
5:00pm Advent Pizza Party
and Christmas Tree Lighting
- Dec. 12 Nativity worship - No Church School
- Dec. 19 Regular Church School
- Dec. 26 Intergenerational Worship –
No Church School
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- Jan. 2 Regular Church School for PreK-4thGrade
(5th Grade & up Communion)
- Jan. 9 9:00am BOCE Meeting
Regular Church School
- Jan. 16 Regular Church School
- Jan. 23 Regular Church School
- Jan. 30 Intergenerational Worship –
No Church School

PLEASE REMEMBER – Sunday morning at 9:00
is Bible Study! All are welcome!

Welcome New Members

On November 8th we welcomed with great joy the following new members into our Family of Faith:



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|--|---------------------|
| Julien Buisson | 203-858-7041 |
| 13 Knollwood Road, Norwalk, 06854 | |
| Kelley & Nick Chapman | 203-855-9540 |
| Ella, Owen | |
| 20 Shorefront Park, Norwalk, 06854 | |
| Kaitlin Donnelly | 203-921-9312 |
| 54 Mulberry Street, Stamford, 06907 | |
| Alex Perlin Fosdick | 508-277-8801 |
| Mackenzie | |
| 62 Delafield Island Road, Darien, 06820 | |
| Bob Green | 203-855-1310 |
| 56 Wilson Avenue, Rowayton, 06853 | |
| Greg Jacobson | 203-210-7915 |
| Emma, Wyatt | |
| 267 Thayer Pond Road | |
| | Wilton, 06897 |
| Tobe & Shirley Johnson | |
| John | |
| 5 Pheasant Lane, Norwalk, 06854 | |
| Lisa Keyworth | 203-853-0245 |
| 87 Soundview Avenue, Norwalk, 06854 | |
| Allison Mulhearn | 203-505-5956 |
| 7 Starlight Drive, Norwalk, 06851 | |
| Billy & Julie Nightingale | 203-855-8476 |
| Hannah, Cole, Larson | |
| 17 South Beach Drive, Rowayton, 06853 | |
| Ann Startup | 203-642-3593 |
| 212 Rowayton Ave., #112, Rowayton, 06853 | |
| Hugh Stommel | 203-853-9861 |
| 99 Rowayton Woods Drive, Norwalk, 06854 | |
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Deadline for February/March Newsletter Tuesday, January 11, 2011

Send information to Kris Jenkins
kris@ucrowayton.org

Announcing Pastoral Relations Committee

Last June, Pastors Carla Dietz Carroll and John Livingston expressed their desire for a Pastoral Relations Committee (PRC). Over the summer, I consulted with the United Church of Christ and other churches, and I participated in a Connecticut Conference workshop to learn about PRCs. I learned about the incredible demands that congregations place on their pastors and the responsibility that a congregation should have toward its pastor to give support and to share the burden. I learned that a church should create a PRC when it is like The United Church of Rowayton, that is, when it is strong and healthy, not when it is in the midst of some crisis. I learned that most churches have these committees, and I quickly came to the conclusion that a Pastoral Relations Committee would be of great benefit to our pastors and to the life and health of our Church.

Early this autumn, I went to the Board of Deacons and the Executive Council and proposed that we create a Pastoral Relations Committee for each Pastor. The PRCs would be Appointed Committees that would report to the Board of Deacons (As opposed to a Standing Committee. A Board is permitted to create an Appointed Committee. A new Standing Committee would require us to amend our Constitution and By-laws). Both Deacons and Council supported this proposal. I want to take this opportunity to describe a Pastoral Relations Committee.

A PRC is a closed committee comprised of a small group of Church members who meet and provide support for the pastors and who provide a channel of communication between the pastors and the congregation. The PRC helps the pastors and congregation share their ideas, hopes and dreams. It lets the pastor know what the people in the church are thinking. It gives a framework for managing conflict and negotiating differences when they arise in the church. It serves as a confidential, caring and trusted advisory group, and it advocates for the pastor's leadership in the church. The PRC acts in stewardship of the relationship that exists between the pastor and the congregation. As such, the PRC serves to improve the overall well-being of the church and strengthen the spiritual life and mission of its people. It works as Paul taught [Galatians 6:2]: to share one another's burden. Also, a Pastoral Relations Committee has a major role to play during transition periods, when one pastor steps down and another is Called.

The Members of a PRC are chosen by the Pastor; they are not elected by the Membership. The committee works in confidence. In fact, detailed minutes are not taken. The topics that are discussed are shared with the congregation in the Annual Report, but none of the details of those topics are given.

As you probably know, one of the functions of our Board of Deacons has been to advise our pastors. This Board cannot function as a Pastoral Relations Committee, however, because it has its own, full agenda and cannot give total attention to the pastors. Furthermore, like all Boards, its meetings are open to everyone. To be effective, a PRC must be closed so that its members can talk with absolute trust and confidentiality. Similarly, our Personnel Committee meets with Clergy and Staff, but it is obligated to share at least some of what is discussed with our Senior Pastor and our Business Manager.

I think it is also important to understand what a Pastoral Relations Committee is not. It is not a grievance committee, although it does not shy away from facing problems. It neither holds the pastor above approach ("our pastor, right or wrong"), nor places its pastor on a pedestal, having unrealistic and idealized expectations of that person. The goal is to accept the pastor as a person who has unique strengths and, like all of us, some weaknesses, and to work together with the pastor in a trusting and honest climate to fulfill the ministry.

I am very excited about this Committee. It is a hallmark of stewardship in action. It provides a forum in which members of the congregation can care for their church in profoundly important ways.

I wanted to share this information in order to give you time to ask me, Carla or John any questions that you might have. And if you have joined us from another church that has a Pastoral Relations Committee, we would be very interested in hearing about it. Finally, beyond the creation of an extensive manual that describes how a Pastoral Relations Committee works, no steps have been taken other than what I have shared with you. The plan is to have Carla and John identify and invite UCR Members to sit on these Committees in the winter and then to begin meeting.

Bill Peltz
Lay Leader/ Moderator

Board of Christian Outreach



White Doves are Flying In!

Our Board of Christian Outreach is asking our help to get together and select a Dove listing the gift wishes of children in need during the holiday season. On each Dove suggested gift items are listed for a child. Doves will be available on Sundays November 28th and December

5th. All gifts should be new and UNWRAPPED and marked with the child's name, age and family number, e.g., Mike, 12-year-old boy, Dove #23. Please include gift wrap and ribbon with your gifts. Christmas cookies and candy canes are also always appreciated.

All packages should be put in a **LARGE PAPER LAWN/LEAF BAG** and tied at the top. Please mark the Dove number on the outside of the bag. Make this a joyful activity in the true spirit of Christmas for those in need. Doves are due back no later than December 12th.

For more information or if you are unable to pick up a Dove on the above dates please call Patti Palmer at 203-227-9843 or email at palminct@optonline.net

We Are Making a Difference!

Recently, Pastor John Livingston said he had learned that our Church gives more support to Christian Community Action in Norwalk than any other local Church. That's quite an accolade! The CCA helps the desperately needy in many different ways, from giving furniture to helping with family finances.

One morning, when I was dropping off food that had been collected at Church, a woman standing in line stopped me to thank me. She said she had had a hip replacement and lost her job while she was recovering. Then her husband came down with cancer and lost his job. As a result, they lost everything. So here was a successful woman standing in line at the CCA food bank, picking up food she could no longer afford to buy. Times are very difficult, 15.1% of the Norwalk population lives below the Federal poverty line, and the demand on the Food Bank increased 40% in the last year.

I have joined the CCA Board and serve as a liaison between CCA and our Church. I want to let you know about CCA's "Work of Heart" annual fundraiser on Friday, November 19, in Norwalk. For more information go to CCA's website at ccanorwalk.org

Bill Peltz, Lay Leader/Moderator

From the Nominating Committee

In our spiritual journey at The United Church of Rowayton, we are blessed to be a part of an active Christian family. We are a diverse, multi-talented community of people who work together to expand our ministries and accomplish God's work within our Church and beyond. There is an essential common denominator among us: We are a Family of Faith united in the joy of belonging.



For the upcoming year, our Church's Nominating Committee is looking for people to serve on Church Boards and Committees. This year we are hoping newer members who have not yet served on Boards and Committees in the past will step forward. Anyone interested in volunteering should talk with someone listed on the Nominating Committee listed below:

John Massey	866-6347 Chair
Lois Froelich	866-2958
Ginny Green	855-1310
Sarah Starkweather	656-3793
Tim & Lara Walsh	866-7067
Justin Zerega	838-5051

Detailed information on each of our Boards and Committees is on our website: www.ucrowayton.org on the **Who We Are** page.

UCNS Nursery School Registration

Registration for the 2011-2012 school year at United Church Nursery School is underway. UCNS offers several programs including Pre-K (Fives), Fours, Threes and Twos Classes. Children must have turned the appropriate age for the program they are applying for by December 31, 2011. Pre-K applicants must have also completed a Fours Program. Priority will be given to members of The United Church of Rowayton, and siblings of children who have previously attended UCNS. UCNS is open to all children regardless of race, religion or creed. If you would like to register your child, please call Paula Keller, Director, at 853-3554 or visit our website www.unitedchurchnurseryschool.com.

preschool registration



Connecticut Conference Report

Report from your lay delegate to the State UCC Conference.

On Saturday October 23 Carla and I attended the Fall Conference in Middletown. These conferences are always enlightening as one expands contacts within the Connecticut Conference and the theme, speakers and workshops are very informative. The keynote speaker, Dr. Robert Orr, UN Assistant Secretary General (and a life long UCC member) spoke about issues facing the world. Major challenges face the global community. He reported that the number of people living under war conditions is going steadily down. The UN is having success in tackling poverty by focusing on the poorest of the poor. He said, "if we can do in those impoverished countries, we can do it anywhere!" Lastly he stressed the serious dangers of global climate change. UCC congregations can help in all these arenas through outreach and political action.

The Conference passed two resolutions. The first to hold a Global Mission Conference over the coming year (implications for UCR service trips). The second commends Sabbath and Sacred Time to a busy, complicated society. Think how different it would be if we committed to a slower, more reflective Sunday! Similarly, it provokes thought about how UCR can open up its doors to alternative worship and gathering times outside the morning sports activities and daytime recreational activities. If we can't change them how about us adapting to them. Some food for thought!

John Carroll, Lay Delegate

2x4s Tuesday Luncheon

The 2x4s meet the **SECOND** and **FOURTH** Tuesdays of the month in the Meeting House behind The United Church of Rowayton Sanctuary. The social hour starts at 11:30am and lunch follows at 12:00 noon. Lunch is provided on the **SECOND** Tuesday. Bring your own lunch on the **FOURTH** Tuesday. Coffee and dessert are always provided. Donations are most welcome to help defray our expenses. Come and make some new friends. Everyone is welcome.

December 14 Christmas Program
December 28 TBA

2x4s on Hiatus Until March 8th



"For Everything there is a Season. . ."

Ecclesiastes 3.1

BAPTISMS

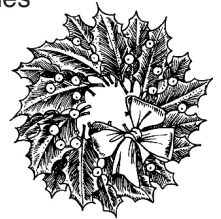
-- Peter Grayson Davies,
son of Lauren and Ben Davies
grandson of Bob and Kate Davies

DEATHS

-- Betty Kelley
-- Eliza Oliver
-- Sandy Campbell

Boy Scout Troop 2

Troop 2 has been selling wreaths as an annual fundraiser for 50 years. The sale provides funding for additional equipment and supplies as well as providing camp scholarships for scouts in need. They appreciate the support of the Church. Please look for them in the Rowayton Center and during Fellowship Hours between Thanksgiving and Christmas.



Trunk Show

The United Church Nursery School (UCNS), founded in 1966, will hold their 3rd Annual Trunk Show on Thursday, December 2nd from 5 - 8 pm and Friday, December 3rd from 9am - 4pm. The proceeds directly benefit the Nursery School and the development of their new playground. There will be a variety of home accessories and giftware, handbags, jewelry, children's clothing and much more! Some of the vendors included are Trish Becker Jewelry, Chickiddie, Little Follies, Johnnie-O apparel, Orange and Pear, Seaside Delights and SoLuxe. Please join us to do some holiday shopping and support our local Nursery School.

Knitting Hands, Healing Hearts

Anyone interested in learning about this project is welcome to attend. No knitting experience necessary. We will meet on January 24 at 7:30pm at the parsonage. For more information call Judi Livingston at 866-8793.

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Send information to Kris Jenkins
kris@ucrowayton.org
