



# NEWSLETTER

Of The United Church of Rowayton

December 2009/January 2010

Vol. 40, No. 6

## From the Pastor



*What do I want for Christmas?  
I want to kneel in Bethlehem  
the air thick with alleluias  
the angels singing  
that God is born among us.  
In the light of the Star,  
I want to see them come,  
the wise ones and the humble.*

Ann Weems

This year Judi and I will be celebrating our 24<sup>th</sup> Christmas here in Rowayton. We are looking forward to carrying on the traditions which have become so endearing to us and our family. Perhaps at no other time of the year than Advent and Christmas do old and new intersect so profoundly. We anticipate and then celebrate God doing something quite out of the ordinary in the world yet we do that by reminiscing and carrying on traditions that speak so powerfully to us in this time. As you read this Christmas newsletter you will see just how wonderful and meaningful the Advent and Christmas season can be if you choose to let the spiritual dimension of the season guide your plans.

I encourage you to come to worship. The lighting of the Advent candles each week is meaningful and a treasured tradition. Stop by for worship on Wednesday mornings at 6:30am. This has become a tradition that some people will simply not miss because it adds such peace to the busy season. Experience the true meaning of giving by taking a "White Dove." Share this wonderful tradition with another person or family. I take a White Dove family for our Confirmation classes and this has become an inspiring tradition for the classes and me. Join us for the Advent Pizza Party and Tree Lighting on December 6<sup>th</sup>. This tradition continues

to enrich the hearts of all ages. Find the joy and wonder of Christmas on December 13<sup>th</sup>, our nativity Sunday complete with the baby Jesus, Mary, Joseph, shepherds, angels, the Wise Men, sheep, donkey and camel.

On Sunday December 20<sup>th</sup>, our traditional Christmas Music Sunday, all our choirs - adult and children, singers and ringers - will fill our House of Worship with the glorious song of the angels. Our choir will present John Rutter's "Gloria" with brass, percussion and organ. This will be a memorable morning of worship.

All the Sundays of Advent lead us to Christmas Eve worship with our Family Worship at 4pm and our Candlelight Service at 11pm.

Carrying on traditions will help make this 24<sup>th</sup> Advent and Christmas season meaningful for the Livingston family, however traditions are just not the same without you. What do we want for Christmas? We want to share these traditions with you because that is what makes this the most memorable time of the year.

With great anticipation and love,



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## Advent Worship - 10:15am



### November 29 - First Sunday of Advent

Message: Sign of Things to Come

Scripture: Luke 21:25-36

Advent Candle: Sine Demaio



### December 6 - Second Sunday of Advent

Communion Sunday

Message: Make Ready

Scripture: Luke 3:1-6

Advent Candles: Roxanne, Douglas  
& April Gall



### December 13 - Third Sunday of Advent

Our Living Nativity

Advent Candles: Gina, Alex, Zach,  
Julia & Katharine Ely



### December 20 - Fourth Sunday of Advent

"Gloria" by John Rutter

Presented by our Senior Choir  
with Brass and Percussion

Advent Candles: Dana, Chris, Allison  
& Charles Basta



### Christmas Eve Worship

4:00pm - Family Worship with

Traditional Readings and Carols

11:00pm - Candlelight Christmas

Eve Service - Scripture: Luke 2:1-20

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## Come to the Manger!

December 13<sup>th</sup>

*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 from our Senior Choir with orchestra. Don't miss the chance to experience this joyous season.*



## Gloria for Christmas

December 20<sup>th</sup>

*Join us for this special Sunday of music on December 20<sup>th</sup> featuring the Senior Choir performed with brass and percussion ensembles. Rutter's "Gloria" is meant to reawaken the promise of God's presence and love and to serve as a reminder that our faith is a song worth singing. Please join us as we celebrate this glorious season during this memorable worship service.*

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## Worship Following Advent

Dec. 27 Message: Who Is This Child?

Scripture: Luke 2:41-52

Jan. 3 Communion

Message: Close to God's Heart

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

Jan. 10 Message: Affirmed by Love

Scripture: Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

Jan. 17 Message: Extravagant Sign

Scripture: John 2:1-11

Jan. 24 Message: Addicted to Hurry

Scripture: Luke 4:14-21

Jan. 31 Message: Prophet on the Edge

Scripture: Luke 5:1-11

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## 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 10<sup>th</sup>. Your loved ones' names will be included in the Christmas Eve Orders of Worship.



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## 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 2, 9, 16 and 23.

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## Annual Nativity Pageant

Rowayton's 46<sup>th</sup> Annual Nativity Pageant will be held on Saturday, December 19<sup>th</sup> at 6:00pm under the great light at Rowayton School.

Pastor John Livingston will be one of the narrators. Volunteer carolers are invited to go to the school at 5:00pm. Don't miss this presentation of the Christmas story.

Raindate: Sunday, December 20<sup>th</sup>.

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## Associate Pastor's Study



It has been an interesting journey encouraging our Church folks to sign up for the New York City - Youth Service Opportunity Project (YSOP) work camps that have been offered. It is interesting because I know our wonderful Church body wants to do Mission work, yet there is a reluctance to sign up and commit to it. Let me be honest with you - **I completely understand.** I, too balk when offered opportunities in service work that are outside of my comfort zone. Especially as the winter months are upon us, I love my cozy cottage in Fairfield with our warm and fuzzy pets, my comfortable sofa and private study. I love hunkering down for the winter after parking my car in our enclosed garage that connects into our basement so you don't have to get wet or cold when getting out of the car. I really like to hang out with my husband after a delicious dinner (I love to cook!) and play scrabble, watch some dopey show or read a good book. These kinds of comforts and pleasures are a treasure, but they are exactly the small, precious moments and things that our brothers and sisters who are hungry or homeless do not enjoy, the way we do.

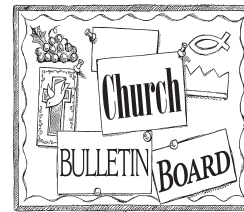
There are times for happiness, joy and comfort which our Christmas season is all about! But there are times for helping others who do not have quite so much joy and happiness. Will you consider joining my husband John Carroll and me on our work with YSOP to assist the homeless in New York City? **We need 12 people** and will only be going one of the "weeks" (really only 3 nights and 4 days) that the sign up in our Meeting House Lobby indicate. Whichever week fills up with 12 people first, that is the one we will pursue. If you want to chat about the YSOP organization or the service trip, please feel free to call me or stop by anytime. This is not only an out of pocket fee of \$200 per person but a commitment of your heart to help those in our local NYC community who are in need. We need six young people from 8<sup>th</sup> grade through college age. Parents please take note. I can promise you one thing - doing service work like this will educate your life in ways you never imagined and your heart will feel a little bit warmer.

God Bless you and your family and may your Christmas and New Year be bright and filled with the warmth of the Holy Spirit!

*Carla*

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## Dates to Remember:

### **Church School:**

December 6 Church School for PreK - 4<sup>th</sup> Grade  
December 13 Nativity Pageant  
December 20 Christmas Music Sunday,  
Church School for PreK-3<sup>rd</sup> Grade  
December 27 Intergenerational Worship  
(nursery/toddler care provided)  
January 3 Church School for PreK - 4<sup>th</sup> Grade  
January 10, 17, 24, Church School for all  
January 31 Intergenerational Worship  
(nursery/toddler care provided)

### **Youth Group:**

Wednesday night Youth Group December 2,9,16  
and January 6,13, 29 and 27.

### **January 24<sup>th</sup> Special Guest Preacher**

The Reverend Dr. Kirk Byron Jones is the author of "Addicted to Hurry." A copy of Dr. Jones book is available in paperback or as an audio book in Carla's office if you would like to find out more about him and his prescription for a less stressful life prior to his visit. It can also be purchased online at Amazon.com or at Kirkjones.com

He teaches social ethics and pastoral ministry at Andover Newton Theological School in Newton, Massachusetts. He is the author of Rest in the Storm, Self Care Strategies for Clergy & Other Caregivers. Hope you will join us!

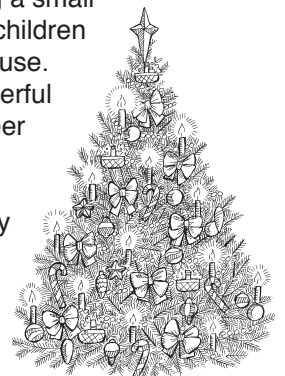
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## **Advent Pizza Party and Christmas Tree Lighting**

Join us for pizza and caroling on Sunday, December 6<sup>th</sup> at 5:00pm, with a special guest appearance from SANTA CLAUS!! Please bring a small unwrapped toy to benefit Norwalk children in need. Sign up in the Meeting House. Everyone is welcome for this wonderful evening to share some holiday cheer with our Family of Faith.

At 6:00pm, following the pizza party all are invited for a wonderful tradition. We will gather around the tree by the Memorial Garden and sing carols and Christmas songs as we light the tree for the season.





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## Stewardship Campaign

We're making great strides toward completing our 2010 Stewardship Drive, "Mission of Caring." This year's ambitious goal is the same as in 2009 -- \$400,000, but we'd love to have all our pledges in by Thanksgiving to solidify our budgetary plans.

It is important for all UCR members to understand the importance of the Stewardship Drive and the need for each of us to commit to a meaningful annual contribution. Each year, every year, 75% of our annual Church budget is paid for by your pledges. And your Church works hard to get the maximum bang for your pledging buck. The United Church of Rowayton's budget has increased but little over the last five years. And we kept this year's budget the same as in 2009.

To help you in figuring out how much to pledge, the following background information is useful. While we have high annual participation in the Stewardship Drive, you might be interested to know that 37% of the amount raised for stewardship comes from just 15 people (five percent of the Congregation). These generous donors average over \$8,000 per pledge.

You will be glad to know that we are not looking for you to pledge \$8,000. But to make our 2010 goal, we are asking each pledging unit to step up this year and pledge at least \$2,000 to make our 2010 goal of \$400,000. This is the only way the math will work.

The good news is that many of you have already done so. We are more than two-thirds toward our total in just over three weeks -- having raised \$270,000 of the \$400,000 we need. Now, some more good news.

This year, a few generous members agreed to bump up their pledges so for the first time ever we could set up a \$10,000 matching gift fund! Anyone who increases their 2010 pledge or pledges for the first time (which means you did not pledge in 2009), we will match your increase (or new pledge) on a dollar to dollar basis! So, if you increase your pledge by \$250 it brings in \$500 to our Church. If you pledge \$500 for the first time, it becomes \$1000. It's not a miracle but it's pretty good. So please pledge and please increase your pledge -- it is a win/win for everyone and all.

Also -- remember to let us know when you plan to actually contribute. This saves time and ensures that we don't hassle you with unnecessary phone calls/emails going forward. Another time saver: use the on-line donation option from our web site: [www.ucrowayton.org](http://www.ucrowayton.org). There is a quick link on the UCR homepage to on-line pledging. Or use the pledge envelopes we sent along or email Kris Jenkins if you need new ones: [kris@ucrowayton.org](mailto:kris@ucrowayton.org). To those who have already pledged (and most of you have) -- thank you...thank you...thank you. To those who haven't pledged yet...please do so with some alacrity -- and don't forget the matching gift component -- so increase your pledge. Many thanks and Happy Thanksgiving.

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## Connecticut Conference Report

A short report from your lay delegate to the UCC Connecticut Conference.

"October 23 - 24 was the annual fall Connecticut Conference and what a bold meeting!



Geoffrey Black, the new president of the national church was the keynote speaker. The theme of his talk and the whole weekend was "Sacred Conversations on Race." Over 350 local church lay delegates, ministers and visitors were in attendance and, under the guidance of 60 trained facilitators, people broke into 30 discussion groups and earnestly explored, on a personal and institutional level, the fact that prejudices continue to exist.

In one word, the conference is best described as being "reflective." Personal reflections. Community reflections. Home church reflections. Are we "walking the talk?" If not, what should we personally and as a church, be doing to welcome all races in our lives and our congregation. What a fun, exciting and rewarding experience to be part of a larger UCC denomination.

I found the conference to be very transforming and a "teachable" moment particularly as we, at The United Church of Rowayton, enter into broader discussions about what does it truly mean to be an "open and affirming" church?

I enjoy being your lay delegate to the state conferences. The best kept secret is that you don't have to be a delegate to attend and experience a conference. It is open to all! So, come join me next year for the spring conference.

John Carroll

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## 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. Last year we brightened Christmas morning for 137

children in the local area. We hope to keep the joy flowing this season.

On each dove suggested gift items are listed for a child. Doves will be available on Sundays November 22<sup>nd</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>. If you will not be in Church either Sunday and would like to participate contact Patti Palmer at 227-9843 prior to November 22<sup>nd</sup>.

If you would like to help Patti with the White Dove Program, please contact her.

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.

### NEW THIS YEAR!!!

CCA is also soliciting grocery store gift cards for the families to help them purchase Christmas dinner items. CCA welcomes this family gift in addition to the children's gifts. If donors wish to include **OR** if you choose not to purchase children's gifts, but would like to donate grocery store gift cards separately, we will add them with the children's gifts.

Make this a joyful activity in the true spirit of Christmas for those in need. Doves are due back no later than December 13<sup>th</sup> and no earlier than December 8<sup>th</sup> (due to space constraints).

For more information, please call Patti Palmer at 227- 9843.



## Welcome New Members

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

- Louise Wang & Robert Allen** 857-4257  
Lily, Matt  
13 Dock Road, Norwalk, CT 06854
- Sine Demaio** 838-7746  
35 Hollow Tree Road, Norwalk, CT 06854
- Valerie & William Harden** 856-2635  
Amber, Charlette  
31 Harborview Road, Norwalk, CT 06854
- Jill & Rick Klein** 354-3779  
Katherine, Teddy, Gretchen  
122 Witch Lane, Rowayton, CT 06853
- Hillary & Hank Lammens** 831-0607  
Greer, Jake  
11 Hilltop Road, Norwalk, CT 06854
- Nancy & Scott Loomis** 286-6698  
Madeleine  
10 Pond Ridge Lane, Rowayton, CT 06853
- Lisa & Dan Massey** 855-7515  
Peter, Colin  
271 Rowayton Avenue, Rowayton, CT 06853
- Sally & Craig Stansbury** 655-3243  
Ethan, Charlotte, Madeleine  
15 Harriett Lane, Darien, CT 06820

## 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:

- Lynn & John Massey 866-6347 Co-Chairs  
Lois Froelich 866-2958  
Ginny Green 855-1310  
Sarah Starkweather 656-3793  
Ineke Atkinson 655-6557

Detailed information on each of our Boards and Committees is on our website: [www.ucrowayton.org](http://www.ucrowayton.org) on the **Who We Are** page.

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## 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 8 Park Street Singers  
December 22 Christmas Carols

**2x4s on Hiatus  
until March 9<sup>th</sup>**

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## UCNS Nursery School Registration

Registration for the 2010-2011 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, 2010. 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](http://www.unitedchurchnurseryschool.com).



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## Trunk Show

The United Church Nursery School (UCNS), founded in 1966, will hold their 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Trunk Show on Thursday, December 3<sup>rd</sup> from 5-8 pm and Friday, December 4<sup>th</sup> 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.

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## "For Everything there is a Season. . ."

Ecclesiastes 3.1

### BAPTISMS

-- Madelyn Viera Close,  
son of Nicole Volavka and Forest Close  
grandson of Stephanie and Bill Close

### DEATHS

-- Mark Stewart  
-- Betty Ann Smith  
-- Helen Kardos

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## Boy Scout Troop 2

Troop 2 has been selling wreaths as an annual fundraiser for 49 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.



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## Knitting Hands, Healing Hearts

Anyone interested in learning about this project is welcome to attend. No knitting experience necessary. We will meet on January 25 at 7:30pm at the parsonage. For more information call Judi Livingston at 866-8793.



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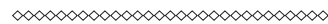
## Deadline for February/March Newsletter Tuesday, January 7, 2010

Send information to Kris Jenkins  
[kris@ucrowayton.org](mailto:kris@ucrowayton.org)

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## 2009 ANNUAL REPORTS are due in the Church Office by January 7, 2010



## ANNUAL MEETING FEBRUARY 7, 2010 - during Worship

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# Silent Auction & Live Auction and Wine & Micro-Brew Tasting Gala Evening – Saturday, March 27, 2010

Save the date! This is going to be a night to remember as well as a wonderful fundraiser for our Church! Last spring we had a terrific Silent Auction during Fellowship Hour on March 27<sup>th</sup> and we anticipate history will repeat itself except that we will have a live auction as well as wine and micro-brew tasting.

We are hoping members of our Family of Faith will contribute what they can. We are looking for antiques, jewelry, china and collectibles in mint condition. In addition, we would love to be able to auction vacation rentals, sports, concert or theatre tickets. Perhaps, you patronize the same restaurant, salon or other retail establishment that you could solicit a donation or purchase a gift certificate from. Maybe, you yourself, could provide a service: financial planning, interior design, catering, sky diving, picnics, etc. Theme baskets (movie night, bath essentials, etc.) are also a great idea. Financial donations are also greatly appreciated for purchasing gift certificates.

Please fill out the form below and return it to the Church Office if you can contribute to our Gala Fundraiser.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell: \_\_\_\_\_

Town/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Description (Please give explicit details): \_\_\_\_\_

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