

# COLUMNS

First Congregational Church East Hartford, Connecticut

*Over 300 Years of Ministry!*



## January 2009

### Sunday Schedule

**Jan. 4**

10:00 a.m. **Morning Worship & Sunday School**  
11:30 a.m. JYF  
7:00 p.m. **Koinonia III**

**Jan. 11**

*First Sunday after Epiphany*  
10:00 a.m. **Morning Worship & Sunday School**  
11:15 a.m. Library Committee

**Jan. 18**

*Second Sunday after Epiphany*  
10:00 a.m. **Morning Worship & Sunday School**  
11:30 a.m. JYF, PYF & Parents to Laser Quest  
6:00 p.m. **Koinonia I**

**Jan. 25**

*Third Sunday after Epiphany*  
10:00 a.m. **Morning Worship & Sunday School**

The **Senior Choir** rehearses each Wednesday evening at 7:30 p.m. and on Sunday morning at 9:00 a.m. unless otherwise notified.

**Children's Choir and Youth Choir** rehearse immediately following morning worship on Sundays (11:15-11:30 a.m.) unless otherwise announced.



### Six Month Calendar

I am in the process of compiling the calendar for the next 6 months. In order to be as accurate as possible, I am requesting someone from each group, board and committee to please see me to confirm your meeting schedule for this calendar. Also, any special dates and events you would like to include. Thank you. *Louise*



**Winter Weekend** at Silver Lake will be February 13-15, 2009. Join us for a weekend of fun, fellowship, and friendship in the hills of Sharon, CT. Everyone - young or old, single or married, with children or without children - is welcome to share in this unique experience.

Our theme this year is "Biblical Occupations". There will be a planning meeting Sunday, Jan. 11 at 11:30 p.m. and Wednesday Jan. 21 at 6:30 p.m. for anyone interested. Come with ideas!

Price: \$80.00 individual  
\$150.00 couple  
\$190.00 family of 3 or more



### *Annual Report*

**Annual Report** information is due in the church office no later than January 11, 2009!! Every board, committee, club and scouts are asked to submit a report. Remember, what you submit is part of the history of First Congregational Church.

### **EHIM**

East Hartford Interfaith Ministries  
Human Needs Fund Office  
*Beth*, Coordinator  
(860) 289-4919

### **Offering Envelopes**



**2009 Offering Envelopes** are ready to be picked up for those who requested envelopes. They are located on the table just inside the dining room.



Jan. 4, 11, 18, 25

Children will begin in worship before going to their classes



### Youth News

JYF is a youth group for students in grades 6-8. We meet on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays of each month, 11:30 a.m. -1:00 p.m.

**Sun., Jan 4** JYF

JYF Meeting 11:30-1:00 p.m.  
Bring your lunch

**Sat. Jan 17** Senior High

**Can & Bottle Drive**, please bring your cans & bottles before 12:00 noon.

**Sun. Jan. 18** JYF, PYF, and Parents

Laser Quest in Newington following worship.



**Coffee Hour** - Everyone is invited to Coffee hour following worship. Members of the **Board of Deacons** are serving for the month of January. Each week the Board of Deaconesses provides the refreshments. Please be generous with your donations to the *Coffee Fund* in the basket on the table in the dining room.

The **Board of Christian Education**

will meet Monday, January 26 at 7:30 p.m.

The **Board of Deaconesses** will not meet in January.

The **Board of Deacons** will meet Monday,

January 12 at 7:00 p.m.

The **Board of Stewardship** will meet

Monday, January 12 at 7:00 p.m.

The **Board of Trustees** will meet Thursday,

January 8 at 7:00 p.m.

**Guild – W.E.B.** will meet on Tuesday,

January 6 at 11:00 a.m.

**W.E.B.** will not meet in January.

**"Care & Share"** Sunday is the first Sunday of every month when we bring items for Food Bank. You will find white envelopes marked **Food Bank** in the pews in which monetary donations may be made. All donations (including monetary) are gratefully accepted!! Thank you!!!

### Stewardship Board

#### The Giving Heart

As 2008 closes and 2009 begins, we look back at our accomplishments and look forward to our future. What a spectacular year 2008 was in terms of the Stewardship commitments at First Church. We were able to support two mission trips to repair homes in Mississippi and Pennsylvania. We continue to provide space for an active food bank, a home for East Hartford Interfaith Ministry's Human Needs representative, scouting programs are alive and well under our roof, our fair was a wonderful success, we've begun renovations in the kitchen, the faithful came down to decorate the sanctuary and put up the crèche outside for Christmas, Easter Sunday was full with two services and an Easter Egg hunt ... Despite financial uncertainty during the year, we still met our many commitments.

2009 promises to have unique challenges for us. We're asking everyone who has not yet done so to please return their pledge cards. Our success in supporting our many missions would be impossible without the financial backing, hours of dedicated service and the sharing of talents by our many church members. We are the lilies of the field that God has provided for and we shine as we reflect back His radiance in the gifts that we share with others. Help us to shine even brighter in the coming year.



Just a reminder...if you have moved, have a new phone number, or your college student would like to receive news from their church in the Columns..... we want to know!!!

**(Information for February Columns must be in the church office no later than January 15th!)**



## The Pastor's Corner

### Joining Church

Yo, Ted! I heard First Church is going to receive new members on the 25<sup>th</sup> of January! Gotta keep those numbers up, huh?

*It sure is more fun welcoming new people into church membership then trimming the roles of those who no longer participate.*

That's just it. As long as people participate, what's so important about joining church? Where in the Bible does it say that a person needs to be a member of a church in order to be in right relationship with God? Come on, admit it, institutionalized religion is just a way of controlling people.

*Now, surely that idea has nothing to do with your ambivalence about making commitments of **any** kind?*

What do you mean?

*Well, how long have you been living with your girlfriend now? Three years?*

We have made a commitment to each other to love each other for the rest of our lives. We don't need to get married in order to do that?

*If you made the commitment anyway, why not get married?*

There is no difference.

*You must think so.*

Maybe I just don't want to submit to social convention.

*Okay. What happened with that bowling league you were going to join?*

That league bowls every Tuesday night. What if I don't feel like bowling some Tuesday night?

*I see what you mean.*

Anyway, I thought we were talking about why you think it's so important to join a church. I know some people who never even attend church and they are a lot better Christians than some church members.

*Actually, that's impossible. Part of what it means to be a good Christian is to be in community with other Christians— mutually supporting each other in their faith by worshiping and praying together, caring for each other and about each other, and working together for God.*

So, I'm not a good Christian unless I join your church?

*Not my church necessarily, of course not, but unless you are an active member of some church, somewhere, then, yes, you are not being a good Christian. I understand that some people who*

*participate at First Church might hesitate to join because they have emotional or traditional ties to another church, but those people are still members of a church, just not this one.*

Isn't it better not to make a commitment in the first place than to make it and break it?

*You really want my opinion?*

Yeah.

*If you sincerely intend to keep the commitment at the time you make it, then it is better to have made the commitment and broken it, then not to have made the commitment at all. No one is perfect. Human weakness is broadly distributed. Circumstances change. But not making loving commitments to people and good causes because at some time we might break them, is just an excuse to do what we want when we want, to lead little, unreliable, self-centered lives without concern for anything larger than our own next desire.*

Gee, you're tough today.

*I'm just tired of our generation fooling ourselves about this.*

*Ted*

**Flower Donations:** *If anyone is interested in donating a larger flower arrangement for worship they are available for \$50.00. The standard size would remain at \$35.00.*



### **CANCELLATIONS**

If there are any questions about Church closings, consult WFSB – Channel 3 (Station number 2 on most local cable providers,) or WFSB.com.

### **The Holiday Village Fair**

The 2008 church fair is now a memory. But thanks to ALL of you, it was a great success! We made \$8,478.00! We thank everyone who baked, sewed, donated, or made anything that was sold. Thanks to everyone who worked during, helped set-up, or helped clean up the fair. We appreciate everyone who purchased anything or invited a friend to come. Eating is one of the many highlights to the fair. Thanks to all who prepared, enjoyed, or invited a friend to the Victorian Tea, Chuck's Wagon, or the fantastic fair dinner. I do hope you are proud of your efforts. I know we are!

God bless you all!!

*The Fair Committee*

Thank you to everyone who put donations under our **Wish Tree** for the homeless shelter this year. You helped many people have a better Christmas.

**LET'S RESOLVE**

IN THE NEW YEAR

- † to read more books
- † to explore and use the resources of the church library

FYI – Do you know?

- † the library has approximately 2000 religious and inspirational books, videos, DVD's and audio cassettes for use by the congregation?

† Subjects range

- ✂ from bible study to biographies
- ✂ from devotion to dictionaries
- ✂ from parenting to pot-luck suppers
- ✂ from Christian history to coping with life's problem

- † a separate children's library is across the hall from the adult library

- † books and audio-visuals may be borrowed for a period of 4 weeks (no overdue fees)

- † a member of the library committee is available Sundays before and after worship service every week, except July and August, and at any other times you can just follow the instructions for self-service.

SAVE TIME – SAVE MONEY  
USE YOUR CHURCH LIBRARY



**PYF Grinder Sale**

February 1, 2009

\$4.00 or 2/\$7.00

Please indicate the number of grinders and additional items: American cheese, provolone cheese, lettuce, tomato, peppers, or mayo.

**Ham** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Tuna** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Turkey** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Meatball** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Genoa Salami** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone Number** \_\_\_\_\_