

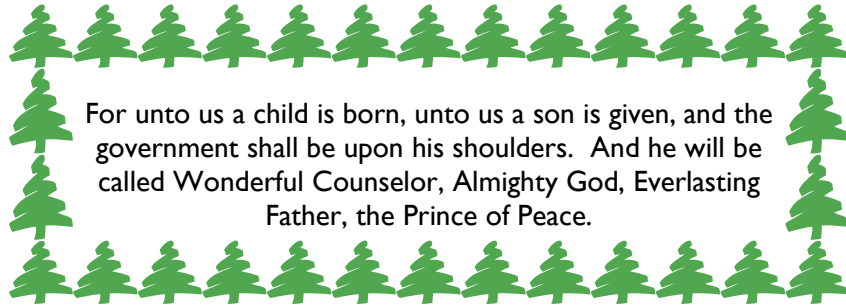
The Steeple



A monthly publication of
The First
Congregational Church
of Milford,
Massachusetts.
A member of the United
Church of Christ.

December, 2010

Volume 52 No. 11



For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Almighty God, Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.

Ask your children two questions this Christmas. First: "What do you want to give to others for Christmas?" Second: "What do you want for Christmas?" The first fosters generosity of heart and an outward focus. The second can breed selfishness if not tempered by the first. - Author Unknown

"Never worry about the size of your Christmas tree. In the eyes of children, they are all 30 feet tall." Larry Wilde.

Are you willing to believe that love is the strongest thing in the world - stronger than hate, stronger than evil, stronger than death - and that the blessed life which began in Bethlehem nineteen hundred years ago is the image and brightness of the Eternal Love? Then you can keep Christmas. - Henry Van Dyke

As we struggle with shopping lists and invitations, compounded by December's bad weather, it is good to be reminded that there are people in our lives who are worth this aggravation, and people to whom we are worth the same. - Donald E. Westlake

~~ *From Our Minister, Reverend Eric Quinney-Burnard* ~~

As I look back at the 50 plus Christmas' I have experienced, there are two things that are consistent. The first is that no two Christmas holidays have ever been the same. From my memories as a child at my grandparents to the dislocated, meeting half way at an inn, in Northfield, Minnesota, the location and the people always seem to shift as much as a snow drift in a windstorm. Along with this, I have experienced a wide array of Christmas pageants, some with uncooperative donkeys and malfunctioning props as well as candle light services where the candle holders caught on fire. No two years are ever the same.

So the first consistent to my Christmas holidays is they are always inconsistent. Basically, expect the unexpected, again, and enjoy the moment.

But the other "consistent" for my Christmas is nearly opposite of the first, that every year there is that child-

like wonderment and giddy anticipation that something very special will arrive again in Bethlehem. And no matter how inconsistent and displaced my holiday, or life, may be, there is one more star, manger, Magi, shepherds and choruses of angels that shout in my heart "expect the unexpected, again, and enjoy the moment".

Funny how such differences of experience, one so inconsistent and the other grounded in consistency, brings the same results into my heart and soul. But then, the gentle glow of a star-beam resting on an obscure, isolated location, calling me to meet the light in the dark, the comfort with the uneasy, the consistent with the unknown, and there to unwrap the joy of God's expected-unexpected love. And then to return again, like the Magi and shepherds, knowing that walking through life with the Christ child, is to always expect the unexpected, and enjoy the moment as it comes.

Paz, Eric

Purple Bag Donations



Sunday, December 5th will be the last Purple Bag donation for 2010. We are 14 bags away from our goal of 175 bags.

Please join us in making this goal a reality and supporting a good cause.

The Daily Bread Food Pantry is in need of Canned Pasta (Spaghetti O's), Boxed Pasta, Juice Boxes, Snacks and Baked Beans.

Thanks and God Bless

Cindy Kearley and the Missions Committee

If you are not attending church on that Sunday, please bring your bag anytime and leave your donations in the baskets near the front doors of the church. Thank you for your participation. **Cindy Kearley**



Salvation Army Kettle Drive

Please join in on Saturday, December 11th at the Stop & Shop in Milford to ring bells for the Salvation Army Kettle Drive. Time slots available are 10:00 to 12:30, 12:15 to 2:45 and 2:30 to 5:00. We will ring in pairs so we need 12 volunteers to cover both entrances. If there are more volunteers that want to participate I will contract the Salvation Army for another place to ring. Please see Cindy Kearley to sign up. Thank you.

Be sure to mark your calendars for our *Annual Christmas Open House* on December 5th from 3:30 to 7:00. Our Sunday School children will participate in the *Welcome Santa Parade* with a *nativity scene float* and a traveling choir will be singing Christmas songs along the parade route.

The large vestry will be transformed into a *Christmas wonderland* with an amazing display of homemade *gingerbread houses* (enter one and/or take a chance to win one), children can decorate cookies and *visit with Santa* and for a small fee photos with Santa will be available.



Hot coffee, tea and hot chocolate will be ready, and don't forget *Jane's delicious hot chili* and hot dogs at the food court.

New this year will be delicious and *beautifully decorated Christmas cookies* you can buy by the pound - we bake, you get the credit. Also, you can take a chance to win one of many *gorgeous gift baskets*, sure to

delight that special someone on your gift list.

Come join us for some *holiday spirit, good food, fun and fellowship.*



2010 Christmas Memorial Poinsettias

The Flower Committee will be accepting orders for Christmas poinsettias beginning Sunday, Nov. 28th through Sunday, Dec. 12. All orders must be turned in by this date. The committee will be available after church to accept your order, or you may mail orders to:

Sue Cooper
103 Highland St.
Milford, MA 01757

The price is \$15.50 per plant. Please make checks payable to: First Congregational Church.

Number of plants _____ @ \$15.50 = Total _____

Given by: _____

In memory of: _____

In celebration of: _____



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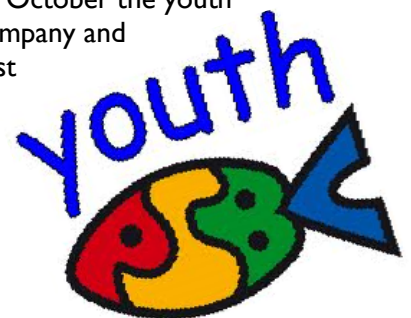


Youth Group News!

Hello church friends and supporters of the Youth Group,

We have been busy and we thank you from the bottom of our hearts for your support! In October the youth group enjoyed hiking at Purgatory Chasm in Sutton, MA. We had great weather, great company and no one got hurt or lost! A true success! In November, the Youth Group hosted their first yard sale with the help of many wonderful people! Between the yard and bake sale the kids raised \$750, \$187.50 of which will be donated to help prevent animal cruelty. The Youth Group also enjoyed hosting the Founder's Day Brunch! They served approximately 85 people with no major mishaps. The Youth Group is looking forward to taking some time to relax and get into the Christmas spirit.

Merry Christmas to all ~ ~ Michelle Zale



December Birthdays

- 2 Sandra Mae Dwyer
- 2 Jenna Hoopingarner
- 3 Kelsey Hoopingarner
- 5 Barbara Waite
- 7 Evan Kober
- 9 Daniel Sette
- 11 Janet Doherty
- 11 Pam Holmes
- 12 Jake Cassinelli
- 12 Devin Cassinelli
- 13 Alicia Colcord
- 13 Susan Greenberg
- 13 Paula Homer
- 15 Robert Holmes
- 15 Greg LaPlante
- 20 Cavin Burnard
- 22 Cheryl Hanington
- 25 Todd Freehan
- 27 Shawn Doherty
- 27 Taylor Gillian
- 27 Samantha Lathrop
- 28 Raymond Tiberio
- 30 Neil Rouleau
- 31 Michael Delfanti



Please notify Beth Rayner-Zyskowski of any errors or omissions -
 508-634-1742 or
 blondepatsfan@verizon.net

Worship Support



Memorial lighting in December is given by Fred and Donna Andreotti is given in memory of Donna's father Gordon A. Nelson.

Memorial Flowers



Dec. 5th - In loving memory of Susan and Ronald Lang from **Jane Metzger**.

Dec. 12th - given in honor of all the men & women who serve in our Armed Forces from **the Watson family**.

Thank you to everyone who had worked so hard and support the yard sale in November. The youth and all involved did an excellent job and are thankful for everyone's support. They would like to extend a thanks to Metropolitan Removal for their services. Again, thank you to everyone. Pastor Eric



SAVE THE DATE SAVE THE DATE

All women of First Congregational Church, please save the weekend of March 11 - 13, 2011 for the

Women's Retreat at Craigville Conference Center on Cape Cod!

This will be a great time to relax, renew, and recharge your mind, body, and soul. Joan Eaton will lead the program. Please bring your mom, daughter, or friends with you! Watch for more details in the January Steeple.

If you have any questions please contact one of the organizers, Heather LaPlante, Joan Eaton, Jane Metzger, Kathy Binney, Susan Edmondson, Peg McCowin, and Kay Quinney-Burnard.

THANK YOU to the Women's Society for allocating the funds for the new technology in the church office. Mendon Computer Outlet provided the hardware and training. John Edmondson coordinated the entire project. Thank you to all involved. Our church office now has state of the art church technology!

THE PRAYER TEAM

*Would you like to request prayer?
Would you like to join the team?*

The Prayer Team continues to be active within our church family even though we keep a low profile. We're all working together as one, daily offering to God the needs, cares, and concerns of our families and friends, and giving thanks, too.

We recently welcomed *both* of the Quinney-Burnards to the team. Our pastor, Eric, and his wife, Kay, joined us shortly after their arrival at First Congregational. We thank Eric for his willingness to step in as our spiritual guide when questions arise, and thank both of them for being willing to pray with us.

If you or a loved one is in the midst of illness or difficult circumstances and would like to be held in prayer on a regular basis until the crisis has passed, we hope you'll contact us. You may make your request known to *anyone listed below*, that person will forward it to the team.

Many times the situation being prayed for is already known throughout the church family, but if that is not the case, we have a rule that *a prayer request remains confidential unless we have your permission to share it*. We do appreciate periodic updates from those who've made the original request, so we hope you'll keep that in mind.

If YOU would like to join us, please contact me and I'll get you started with the information you'll need (if you don't have email, that's ok, we'll arrange to contact you by phone and send written updates through the U.S. mail). Being part of a prayer team is a very uplifting commitment, a beautiful connection to God and our church family.

For the Prayer Team,
Jane Dillon

Prayer Team Members:

Cheryl Choiniere:	Cchoiniere@comcast.net or 508-883-8928
Erica Choiniere Brown:	cherica05@gmail.com
Jane Dillon:	mainejane@comcast.net or 508-473-1219
Susan Edmondson:	susanwed@comcast.net
Donna Serocki:	mimidls48@comcast.net or 508-478-5581
Muriel Swenson:	55greenthumb@comcast.net
Lisa Vasile:	lvasilenp@comcast.net
Alice Wright:	arwright30@comcast.net
Kay Quinney-Burnard:	qburnard@yahoo.com
Rev. Eric Q-B:	eqbfcc@yahoo.com or 508-473-5259

Women's Society Fundraiser!

The Women's Society held a cash for gold/Silpada jewelry fundraiser which raised \$150 toward the church's 2010 fundraising goal. Attendance was great, it was standing-room-only in the Ladies' Parlor and shoppers enjoyed hot mulled cider and munched Christmas cookies while browsing the selection of high quality sterling silver jewelry. Thanks to all who attended and we hope everyone enjoys their purchases. Save the date for next year.

Hurray! Hurray! Announcing the iTeam!

A new First Congregational Church "Information Team" has been formed. Its primary goal is to help committees and ad hoc groups with communicating church events to church members and local communities.

iTeam

The team hopes to assist committee and church members with community outreach by documenting details of church sponsored events and communicating information about those events to the appropriate internal and outside media.

If an event will benefit from being publicized in media such as local cable, radio and newspaper publications, the iTeam can help with these activities by working with the individual or group responsible for the event.

For now, the team is an ad hoc group that will not rotate. It will report to Church Council on an as needed basis. Team members Martha Ellis, Jane Metzger and Kay Quinney-Burnard with the support of Susan Edmondson and Pastor Eric kicked off the initial meeting for the group on October 31st.

As part of the team's main purpose, members discussed various promotional means, the need to identify and compile contacts and resources, and an approach for helping event planners with documenting their event.

An additional goal of tracking church technology resources and future technology needs was also identified.

Having just gone through the purchase and installation of new technology, the group quickly determined that a complete technology inventory and recording of assets was a next logical step.

In addition, the team recognizes that a technology assessment may be periodically needed in order to consider future needs.

If you feel that your upcoming event can benefit from iTeam support, please contact Martha Ellis, Jane Metzger or Kay Quinney-Burnard to discuss the event and how best to communicate to our membership and communities.

Thanks, Jane Metzger

Christmas Prayer, by Robert Louis Stevenson

"Loving Father, Help us remember the birth of Jesus, that we may share in the song of angels, the gladness of the shepherds, and the worship of the wise men. Close the door of hate and open the door of love all over the world. Let kindness come with every gift and good desires with every greeting.

Deliver us from evil by the blessing which Christ brings, and teach us to be merry with clean hearts. May the Christmas morning make us happy to be Thy children, and the Christmas evening bring us to our beds with grateful thoughts, forgiving and forgiven, for Jesus' sake, Amen!"



For families wishing to bless our country and our brave soldiers this Christmas season, below is a prayer excerpted from George Washington's prayer book:

O kind Father, continue Thy mercy and favor to me this day and ever hereafter.

Preserve and defend our rulers in Church and State.

Bless the people of this land.

Be a father to the fatherless,

a comforter to the comfortless,

a deliverer to the captives and a physician to the sick.

Let Thy blessings be upon our friends, kindred and families.

Amen.

There are scholars among us!

Congratulations to our AP Scholars! Thomas Cooper and Andrea Smith were of only six Milford High School students to qualify for the AP Scholar with Honor Award. They earned an average grade of at least 3.25 on all exams taken, and grades of 3 or higher on four or more of these exams. And Jenna Nelsen-McMichael was one of ten students qualifying for the AP Scholar Award by completing three or more AP Exams with grades of 3 or higher. Congratulations to our scholars!



Do you have friend and family accomplishments that you want to share? A new job? Acceptance to a new college or educational program? A marriage? A new baby in the family? Please share your good news with your church friends and family through the Steeple, and photos can be shared on the church web site. Please submit victories to the Steeple editor, Margaret, mmyatt01757@yahoo.com

Dear Members and Friends of First Congregational Church:



In Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol" Mr. Scrooge has three visions each showing the joys and blessings of life as remembered in the past, experienced in the present and what can be in the future. Though the story's "conversion" of Mr. Scrooge from self-centered to enlightened graciousness draws on our emotions, it is the call for

us to reflect on the blessings of our past, present and future.

The Stewardship ministry of our church invites all of us to journey into those three visions about the life and ministry of First Congregational Church:

1. Remember the times you were thankful the people of the congregation were there for you or your family or for a friend in times of joy or sorrow. Remember the children and families that were touched by the spirit of this church.
2. Look around today a give thanks for the people who are here, the voices and smiles of children and families whose lives are being touched each day. And the thankfulness of how you are being touched by them.

3. See the faces of the children and how the seeds of faith you planted today has formed their faith in the future. See what you did today had been such a monumental foundation in the future life of the congregation.

This year's Stewardship ministry is calling all of us to generously respond to God's Spirit as it has been with us yesterday, walking with us today and also within our faith and commitment be the strength for the next generation.

We invite you to watch the second in a series of attached Stewardship videos "Making All Things New". First Congregational Church Stewardship Committee produced these videos and as you view them please make a serious and prayerful consideration and response to what your financial commitment can be for the church as we continue to walk in faith with the vision God has given us.

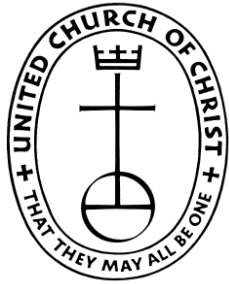
<http://www.firstchurchmilford.org/pledging.htm>

also posted it on the church's Facebook are the first and second video in the series.

<http://www.facebook.com/#!/group.php?gid=113720908639164>

Dean Cooper





**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

4 Congress Street
P.O. Box 344
Milford, MA 01757
(508) 473-5259

firststewardship@yahoo.com
www.firstchurchmilford.org



Pledge Card

For Church Records

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip code _____

I plan to give beginning _____ \$ _____ each week
month

Please check here if interested in other payment options Electronic Fund Transfer (EFT) Credit Card

For an annual total of \$ _____

I understand that this commitment can be changed at any time by giving notice to the appropriate church officer.

I would like to talk with someone about including the church or church-related institution in my will.

Signed _____ Date: _____

This form can be printed and returned to the following address:
First Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
4 Congress Street
P.O. Box 344
Milford, MA 01757

(Please keep copy for your records if printed)

This form can be completed and sent back by e-mail to: "firststewardship@yahoo.com"

Salvation Army Adopt-A-Family

Each year the community comes together to support the Salvation Army's Adopt a Family project to ensure that local families have Christmas gifts for their children who would otherwise have little to nothing on Christmas morning. Missions supports this project by adopting families each year. This year we have two families:

Family 1

16 year old girl – Pants size 7 (likes leg with small flair on bottom)

Shirts size large

Shoe size 7 ½

Jewelry

15 year old girl - Pants size 9 (likes leg with small flair on bottom)

Shirts size large

Shoe size 7 ½

Jewelry

13 year old boy - Pants size 32W – 30L

Shirts size Adult Medium

Shoe size 11

Ball Caps

8 year old girl - Pants size 7-8

Shirts size 7-8

Shoe size 2

Christmas CD's



Family 2

3 year old boy - Leapfrog

Star Wars

Transformers

8 year old girl - DS Games

Bike

Dolls

13 year old girl - DVD Movies (Mean Girls, A Nightmare Before Christmas)

Make Up

Hair Accessories

16 year old girl - Digital Camera

Hair Accessories

Jewelry

The gift tags are on the tree in the sanctuary. Each tag contains a gift request and some information about the person who wants that gift. Example: an 8 year old girl wants a bicycle. That's a big ticket item so perhaps you and a friend could go in together to purchase one and make a young girl's wish come true. Please take the tag of the item you wish to purchase, wrap your gift and attach the gift tag to it and bring it to church no later than: **Sunday, December 12, 2010.**

Any questions, see a member of Missions: Cindy Kearley, Steve Kearley, Dennis LaPlante or Beth Rayner-Zyskowski.

Thanks for participating in this worthwhile project!

calendar

Parishioner Preferred Page

We thank the following local businesses who help sponsor the monthly publication of The Steeple.

Baystate Financial Services

Paul Tamagni
189 Main St.
Milford, MA 01757
508-634-9900 t
508-634-9960 f
Email: ptamagni@baystatefinancial.com

Jenney P Gallerane, LICSW

Hopedale Collaborative Counseling
17D Airport Drive
Hopedale, MA 01747
Office: (508) 478-4875
Cell: (508) 450-5919

Bright Insurance Agency Inc.

6 Congress Street
Milford, MA 01757
(508) 473-0556
www.b-right.com

Watson Colonial Funeral Home

Dwight L. Watson, Funeral Director
24 Congress Street
Milford, MA 01757
(508) 473-0282
www.watsoncolonialfuneralhome.com

Buma-Sargeant Funeral Home

42 Congress Street
Milford, MA 01757
(508) 473-5511
www.bumafuneralhome.com

Whitinsville Monumental Works

1312 Providence Road, Rte. 122
Whitinsville, MA 01588
Thomas C. Delfanti, Proprietor
Mary Delfanti, Manager

Hands of Health Massage Therapy

Michelle Zale
291 Main St. Milford, MA 01757
(508) 259-0707



Attention Quilt Lovers

A beautiful, warm, flannel, over-sized quilt will be raffled at the Christmas open house on Sunday, December 5th!

The quilt is now on view. Check it out and buy some raffle tickets

Tickets are \$1 for one, \$5.00 for a book of six.

If you have friends interested in this gorgeous quality flannel quilted piece, you may pick up some books from Jane Milani, Martha Ellis, Donna Andreotti or the church office.

The Steeple

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