



First Congregational Church
of
Spencer, U.C.C.
207 Main Street
PO Box 187
Spencer, Massachusetts 01562
www.spencerchurch.org

Sunday Worship 10:00 a.m.

Rev. William R. Wildman, Jr.
Pastor
wwildmanjr@verizon.net
Direct 508-885-5098

For emergencies after office hours
please call 508-885-5863

The Tie
December 2011

Church Office
8:00 a.m. to noon
fccspencer@verizon.net
508-885-2149

PASTOR'S MESSAGE

***“We wish you a Merry Christmas! We wish you a Merry Christmas!
We wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New year!”***

Is it really that wonderful time of year again? It is! Advent is here and the countdown to Christmas has officially begun. It seems like it came really early this year, or maybe, it's just that this year went by really quickly for me. What an awesome to finish out what has been an absolutely awesome year. Soon the tree will be going up with all of the lights and decorations, stocking will be hung with care by the fire place, presents will be wrapped, Christmas specials will start airing on TV, “wall to wall” carols playing on the radio... some much will be going out and up, including the most important decoration for the season, the Nativity scene!

The Nativity scene is the one decoration at Christmas that most and best reminds of what everything is all about. Without that holy and epic scene, and the events that it depicts, everything else is just seasonal décor, missing the meaning that made it special in the first place. For in that scene of figures of animals and people, right in the middle, is the figure of a new born baby. The most special baby ever born, for in that baby being depicted is all the holiness and glory of God, the hopes and salvation of all peoples, and the ultimate reminder of what is will to do to reach us... for that baby being remembered is Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the Redeemer of all creation. What a powerful message and reminder from such a small part of our Christmas decorations!

Jesus message of love, salvation and reconciliation with God is timeless, and one that we can cherish, be inspired by and share each day of the year. Christmas reminds us of how it all started, and that it is still going on every day. We have a magnet on our refrigerator at home that says, “Christmas just isn't a day, it's a state of mind.” So maybe we can celebrate Christmas more often than just on December 25th, or during those days that come before and after it. Maybe, we can have a little bit of

Christmas each day of our lives. I am thinking that what makes Christmas special, Jesus Christ coming into the world, is something that didn't end on December 26th, but is something that we are still experiencing right now, and every day. And may it ever be so!

How about a visit from Pastor Bill this Christmas season? If you would like a visit, or to get together for a cup of coffee, soda, etc., or have some other way that I can be of help to you, please let me know. **Also, if you know of someone who is sick, or in distress, or in the hospital, please let me know so I can pay them a visit.** Feel free to call me at 508-885-2149, stop by the office, or e-mail me at revwilliamwildman@yahoo.com to set up a time to get together. May God bless us all and Merry Christmas!

In Christ,

Pastor Bill

Bible Trivia Contest: December 2011!!!

Thank you to everyone who sent in answers for November's Bible Trivia question. Congratulations to Harold Carlson on being our winner! November's question was **"What is the name of Philemon's run a way slave?"** Harold was the first to correctly answer "Onesimus" and has won coffee and pastry at Five Loaves Bakery with Pastor Bill. Would you like to win coffee and pastry too? It easy, just answer this month's trivia question:

"Whose is John the Baptist's Dad?"

Be the first to get the answer to Pastor Bill by either phone, e-mail or in person, and win free coffee and pastry with him at Five Loaves Bakery.

Another Way to win for 2011-2012: Have a question for Bible Trivia? Submit it (with the answer) to Pastor Bill and get a chance to win a prize. If your question is selected for publishing in a future edition of the *Tie* as one of our Bible Trivia questions, you will win coffee and pastry with Pastor Bill at Five Loaves Bakery, as well as a credit for your question when it's published. Limit one prize per month.

So get your thinking caps on and let this month's contest begin... God Bless!

2011-2012 Bible Study Programs!!!

We are pleased to offer the following Bible Study Programs for the 2011-2012 Church Program Year. There will be three separate programs, each covering different topics, during the course of the year. This year, our topics for Bible Studies were suggested by the members of last spring's "The Parables of Jesus Christ" Bible Study. The programs will include **"Enriching Our Faith," "Writing A Christmas Sermon,"** and **"Bible 101: The Basics."**

"Enriching Our Faith" will explore the topic of faith, and ways that we can build a deeper relationship with God. **"Writing A Christmas Sermon,"** our Advent program, will involve learning how to write a sermon with Pastor Bill. The work of our class will be presented during one of our

Christmas services this year. **"Bible 101: The Basics"** will offer a chance, during the season of Lent, to better understand and use the Bible.

We will be meeting on the Tuesdays listed below, at 10 AM (if there is enough interest) and 7 PM. Times may be subject to adjustment due to other church functions. Please bring a Bible of your choice to share and use. Please sign up on the sheet outside of the office, and feel free to call or see Pastor Bill with any questions. Hope to see you there. Thank you and God bless!

Program Two: Advent Bible Study: "Writing A Christmas Sermon"

12/06/2011: "Setting the Stage" ((Meet at 6 PM)
12/13/2011: "Exploring the Lesson" (Meet after Beef Stew Supper)
12/20/2011: "Application for Today"

Program Three: Lenten Bible Study: "Bible 101: The Basics"

2/28/2012: "Introduction to the Bible"
3/06/2012: "Sections of the Old Testament"
3/13/2012: "Sections of the New Testament"
3/20/2012: "Chapter and Verse"
3/27/2012: "Fun and Games with the Bible"

ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

Administration Committee meeting is **Monday** Dec 19th 7:00PM

We wish to send a **THUMBS UP to Lance Kowal** for the time he took to repair the outside landing to the emergency exit by the choir loft. It was deteriorated to the stage where the iron rebar was protruding through the cement. Lance took parts of two days of his valuable time and talent to do the repair.

We also want to send a **THUMBS UP to Harold Carlson** for donating his time and chain saw in helping Pastor Bill clean up the yard of the parsonage after the damaging snow storm. Harold was the winner of the Bible Trivia question and was having morning coffee with Pastor Bill as is the prize for winning. During their conversation the results of the snowstorm damage came up and Pastor Bill stated how there were limbs down at the parsonage. Harold told Pastor Bill he would come up and take care of the downed limbs later on in the day.

The above two incidents are one way how we can share our talents, time and energy to help maintain the church property as we try to balance our Budget. We have received 44 pledges as of Nov 14th, Stewardship Sunday, totaling \$41,226.00. **If you have not returned your pledge card please do so. Please think about what this church family means to you and faithfully pledge what you are able to do.** We will need everyone's help to reach our goal.

We are continuing to work on nominations for the 2012 year. **We are looking for people to fill the positions of Historian, Church and Education has (2) openings and one Deacon for the Diaconate.** If you are interested please contact Ken Landine 508-867-6979, Pat Stark 508-885-5131 or the church office. Thank you to the people who have said yes and to those who have yet to be asked, we anticipate a positive response.

We look forward to working and worshipping with all of you.

Ken Landine,
For the entire Administration Committee

CHURCH COLLECTOR

Just a reminder – In a few weeks your 2011 pledges will need to be completed. If you want your total pledges to show in the 2011 yearend report, please have them in no later than Thursday, December 29, 2011. Any pledges received after this date will be on the 2012 statement.

If you have any question please call me at 508-885-9362.

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year
Judy Chicoine
Collector

CHURCH & COMMUNITY

The committee sponsored a family for Thanksgiving dinner and will be sponsoring the same family for Christmas.

The committee will be selling felt Christmas Ornaments on December 4th through December 18th again this year. The ornaments will be in honor and in memory of family members, friends, etc. The donation per ornament will be \$5.00. (Like the hearts and tools sales we have for Mother's & Father's Day). All proceeds will go to Pastor Bill's Benevolence Fund to help him purchase food & gas gift cards etc for needy families. The hat and mitten tree has been placed in the front of the sanctuary, for anyone who would like to donate hats or mittens and the tree will remain until December 18th.

CHURCH COUNCIL

All committee chairperson's and church officers are expected to attend the December 6th meeting at 7:00 P.M.

Chairperson's are requested to give a short report on the plans and concerns of their committee.

This is a great way to improve church wide communication!

CHURCH & EDUCATION COMMITTEE

This committee met on Sunday November 13. We have filled one of our vacant positions. Amy Vandale has joined the committee. That leaves one position still open. Our next meeting is scheduled for Sunday December 11. We are preparing for the Christmas Pageant.

Lisa Brown, Church School Superintendent

CHURCH SCHOOL

Attendance is staying consistent. The Advent Workshop was enjoyed by all. We made wreathes and played Advent Bingo.

The **Christmas Pageant** will be on **December 18**. The children will be practicing for the Pageant the two weeks prior to the pageant in Sunday School. We are excited about the new skit they will be performing.

Lisa Brown, Church School Superintendent

DIACONATE NEWS

Diaconate will meet on Sunday, December 11, 2011 following the worship service.

Deacon of the month for December Robert Ahlquist

Communion will be served on December 4, 2011 during our worship service.

Next healing service (Blue Christmas) will be held on Wednesday, December 7, 2011 at 7:00 P.M.

Christmas Eve services will be held on Saturday, December 24th Family Service 4:30 P.M. and Annual Christmas Eve 11:00 P.M.

We look forward to greeting, meeting and worshipping with you on Sunday mornings.

Merry and Blessed Christmas to All!
Warmly in Christ,
Robert Ahlquist
Chairperson

FLOWER COMMITTEE

Annual Poinsettia Sale began on Sunday, November 27, 2011 and will be on sale through Sunday, December 11, in the Lower Narthex. You will have a choice of either a single plant (\$8.00) or a double plant (\$14.00) the colors choices are red, pink or white. All flowers must be ordered by December 11th. You may also contact Claire Harding at 508-885-5441.

MEN'S LEAGUE

We had our first meeting of the season on November 15th with a delicious Lasagna supper prepared by Ken Landine. There were only seven men in attendance, but we got our business done as necessary.

The next meeting will be the annual Beef Stew Supper on December 13th. There will be a sign up sheet posted on the bulletin board in the Mary Porter Hall. This sign up is for Ken Landine so he will have a head count for the supper.

I wish for all to have had a great Thanksgiving holiday with plenty to eat. And looking forward to having a very Merry Christmas.

Sincerely,
Al Orne

MILITARY WHIST PARTY & PENNY SALE

Will be held on
Friday, December 9, 2011
Time: 7:00 p.m.
Refreshments will be served
Donation \$5.00

Come and enjoy the fun and fellowship. If you have items for the penny table or would like to bake for the refreshments, please call Mary Ingalls at the church 508-885-2149 and items for the penny table please mark Whist party.

MUSIC COMMITTEE

Seasons Greetings! Once again we find ourselves approaching Advent, a time when our music ministry is in full gear preparing to celebrate the birth of Jesus! I've always loved the music this time of year and all the styles our favorite songs come in. I am thankful to have a music staff and choir who work so hard to provide high quality performances throughout the year. By the time you have read this Faucher Organ Company has come to perform the bi-annual and most necessary maintenance on our instruments and after about 9 months of planning, working, and of course anxiously waiting...*Blue Christmas*, our CD has arrived! About eight years ago we began a project with the Bethesda Evangelical Lutheran Church of Springfield, to deliver a free Christmas concert once (now twice) a year for our communities. This February the band decided it was time to go into the studio and preserve the show. The best part.....ALL proceeds from the sale of this CD go directly to our churches!!! So, if you just aren't sure what to get Uncle Fred this year....maybe you have a swap coming up...perhaps like me, someone in the family who listens to Christmas music starting November 1st....*Blue Christmas* may be the ideal gift. These will be available until gone in our office and at various church events and services, including the annual Christmas concert on Sunday, December 18, 2011 at 4pm, for \$12 or two for \$20. We are looking forward to helping our church maintain its spirit of giving with your generous support. God Bless!

Keith Rutkiewicz
Phil Harding
Dave Wentworth

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

The 150 Family Albums were either mailed or passed out by our route drivers. As of November 13, 2011 we have received 44 pledges for a total of \$41,226.00. Thank you for your response, together, we make our church the strong, vibrant place it is.

We would like to thank our witnessing Stewards Pat Stark and David Ingalls they did a great job. Our first witnessing steward Jean Vandale was snowed in on Sunday October 30th. We hope she will save her speech and volunteer to be one next year's witnessing Stewards. We would also like to thank Rev. Linda Michel who was our guest minister, she was wonderful.

If you have any questions, please contact any member of the committee, Co-Chairpersons

Bev Wentworth 508-885-2992 & Phil Harding 508-885-5441 or Karen Frykberg 508-885-3317, Linda Gould 508-885-3672 Joyce Landine 508-867-6979 and Marilyn Olsen 508-885-6988.

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

The next executive board meeting will be held on Monday, December 5. All the Women of our church are members of the fellowship and are invited to attend the monthly Executive Board meetings. On December **Women's Fellowship Semi-Annual** meeting will be held on Tuesday, December 13th at 5:30 P.M. followed by a beef stew supper prepared by our church Men's League.

Sunlighters meeting will be held on Tuesday December 6 at 1:00 P.M. All the women of the church are welcome to attend.

EVENING WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

The next meeting of the Evening Women's Fellowship will be held on Monday, December 12. The meeting will be our annual Christmas Party, Pot Luck Supper and cookie swap which will be held on Monday, December 12th at the parsonage, 38 Greenville St. – Spencer, MA at 6:00 P.M. Please bring you favorite dish and 4 dozen cookies.

YOUTH GROUP

Youth Group Christmas Party: Sunday, December 12, 2011 at 2 PM

This year's Youth Group Christmas Party will be on Sunday, December 11, 2011 from 2 PM to 4 PM at the Parsonage, 38 Greenville Street, Spencer, MA. Come join us for all of the fun and fellowship! Please see Christi Wildman or Pastor Bill with any questions, and to RSVP. Hope to see you all there!

Operation Christmas Child Update

A very special thank you to everyone that took part in this year's Shoebox Project for Operation Christmas Child. Because of your generosity, and the hard work of the Youth Group on November 6, 2011, **17 shoeboxes** were prepared and filled with school supplies, hygiene items, toys, candy, and lots of other goodies... a new record for us! We will know sometime in late January where our boxes were shipped, which could be anywhere in the world. Watch for updates later this winter. Thank you again to all and may God bless you!

FYI

Christmas Fund mission is to provide assistance dollars in situations of critical need, while preserving the dignity of those who receive the aid.

The proceeds from this Offering are a critical source of funding for the ongoing work of the United Church Board for Ministerial Assistance in providing needed support to retired and active UCC clergy and lay employees.

This Offering enables us to: Send Christmas "Thank You" Gift Checks to low-income retirees each December; Provide Supplementation of Small Annuities; Provide supplementation to help cover the cost of premiums for low-income retirees in the UCC Medicare Supplement Health Plan, & Provide funding to make grants to clergy and lay employees who find themselves at a moment of financial hardship.

Enclosed is a Christmas Fund envelope. If you wish to donate to this fund please return you envelopes by Sunday, December 18, 2011

Fundraiser for the Music Committee: Ross Brown has graciously volunteered to make bread. He will be making wheat and white. The proceeds from the sale of the breads will go to the Music Committee to help with special programs. For the month of December the bread will be sold on Sunday, December 18th.

Hearing Assist Devices are Available... Feel like you're missing some of what is going on during our service? We have hearing assist devices available to help you enjoy our worship service. These small, comfortable and convenient devices are connected directly to the sound system of the church via FM radio signals. Every sound spoken into any microphone in the church will be transmitted to the device. Why miss out when you can hear every word crystal clear? Please see one of the ushers for assistance. They will be happy to assist you.

Know Somebody in the Hospital? Please let us know...

Do you know of someone from the church who is in the hospital or some other health care facility? Please let us know at the church office so Pastor Bill can pay them a visit. Due to the Federal Health Insurance Privacy Protection Act (HIPPA), hospitals and health care facilities can no longer tell us if anyone from the church is there, even if they have made their church membership known to them. In other words, we have no other way of knowing if someone is in the hospital other than word of mouth. Please let us know the full name that they were admitted by, what the facility name is, and if possible, what their room number is.

Thank you so much for your help with the visitation ministry of the church!

Lay Reading dates available now through March 2012!

Looking for a simple and fun way to take part in the Sunday worship service? Sign up to be a Lay Reader. The Lay Reader leads the congregation in the Call to Worship and reads the scripture lesson for the day. No previous experience is necessary, and it's a great way to share in our Sunday service. A sign up sheet is posted in front of the church office. Please feel free to pick a date or two and sign up. You can also call the office and ask us to put your name down as well. Please see Pastor Bill with any questions. Looking forward to seeing you in the pulpit one of these Sundays soon!

Make a difference in someone's life... be a Parish Visitor!!!

Have some time and want to make a difference in someone's life? Become a parish visitor! A Parish Visitation Ministry is now underway at the church. All that is required is a few hours a month and a compassionate heart. Please see Pastor Bill for more information.

CALENDAR

December 1 – 30th Office hours are 8:00 A.M. to 12:00 P.M., Monday through Friday.

Dec. 3rd **CHRISTMAS STROLL** 9:00 A.M. TO 3:00 P.M.

Dec. 5th **WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP EXECUTIVE BOARD** meeting 9:00 A.M

Dec. 6th **SUNLIGHTERS** meeting 1:00 P.M.

BIBLE STUDY 7:00 P.M.

Dec. 7th **BLUE CHRISTMAS HEALING SERVICE** 7:00 P.M.

FAITH BASED WEIGHT LOSS program begins 7 P.M.

Dec. 9th **ANNUAL REPORTS** All the Church Committees reports are **DUE**.
Please have your reports in on or before this date.

MILITARY WHIST PARTY and Penny Sale 7:00 PM

Dec. 11th **DIACONATE** will meet following worship service

CHURCH AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE meeting following worship service.

Dec.13th **WOMEN'S EXECUTIVE BOARD** Semi-annual meeting 5:30 P.M.

MEN'S LEAGUE Beef Stew Dinner 6:30 save the date.

BIBLE STUDY 7:00 P.M.

Dec. 14th **FAITH BASED WEIGHT LOSS** program begins 7 P.M. Last Class.

Dec. 18th **CHRISTMAS PAGEANT** performed by our Sunday School Children

CHRISTMAS CONCERT 4:00 P.M.

BREAD FOR SALE benefiting the Music Committee.

Dec. 19th **ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE** meeting 7:00 P.M.

Dec. 20th **BIBLE STUDY** 7:00 P.M.

Dec. 21st **TIE NOTICES** are due in the office for the January Tie.

Dec. 24th **CHRISTMAS EVE:** Services will be at 4:30 P.M. (Family) 11:00 P.M. (Traditional)

Dec. 25th **CHRISTMAS DAY** – Regular Sunday Service 10:00 AM

Dec. 26th **CHURCH OFFICE** closed for Christmas Holiday

LOOKING AHEAD

Jan. 1st **NEW YEARS DAY** – Regular Sunday Service 10:00 A. M.

Feb. 5th **ANNUAL CHURCH MEETING** - time 12 Noon

Feb. 14th **FATHER & SON BANQUET** 6:30 P.M.

HELD AT THE CHURCH

Alcoholics Anonymous, Al-Anon and Al-A-Teen meeting every Monday at 6:30 p.m.

Deacon of the month for December Robert Ahlquist