



First Congregational Church  
of  
Spencer, U.C.C.  
207 Main Street  
PO Box 187  
Spencer, Massachusetts 01562  
[www.spencerchurch.org](http://www.spencerchurch.org)

Sunday Worship 10:00 a.m.

Rev. William R. Wildman, Jr.  
Pastor

[wwildmanjr@verizon.net](mailto:wwildmanjr@verizon.net)  
Direct 508-885-5098

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

The Tie  
December 2009

Church Office  
8:00 a.m. to noon  
[fccspencer@verizon.net](mailto:fccspencer@verizon.net)  
508-885-2149

### **PASTOR'S MESSAGE**

Dear Brothers & Sisters in Christ,

In the name of Jesus Christ, I offer you the warmest greetings as we begin the Season of Advent. Advent is a season about hope... that joyous realization that good things are going to be coming to us in the future. One hope for our congregation, one that we have been awaiting for more than three years, was fulfilled this past month, with the approval of a church mission statement by the Church Council. This Mission Statement was recently completed and proposed to the council by the Strategic Planning and Church Growth Team. The statement, started during the Timothy Project back in 2006, was the result of much research, discussion, prayer and discernment. Please check out the Strategic Planning article in this month's Tie to read and reflect upon the statement for yourself.

Advent is an ancient season of preparation for the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ. It is the time in the church where we reflect upon a simple miracle, the birth of a child, that is actually the greatest birth of all times. For this child was more than just the son of Mary, but the very essence of God incarnate. In centuries past, Advent was more like the current Season of Lent. Advent was a solemn season of repentance, and a time of personal purification. Today, Advent has taken on a more joyful and celebratory theme, much more of a season of festive preparations. An example of this change includes the transition of the seasonal colors from the purple of repentance to the royal blue of the coming of the King of Kings.

I look forward to again sharing the season of celebration with you. Christi and I will be celebrating the birth of Jesus is with our usual feast of Chinese food between the Christmas Eve worship services. Great experiences lead to great traditions, like the one of having hot coffee or tea with good friends. Anyone interested in visiting over a hot beverage this Advent? Please give me a call at 508-885-2149 or drop me a note at the church, or via e-mail at [revwilliamwildman@yahoo.com](mailto:revwilliamwildman@yahoo.com) to set a

time up. May this Season of preparation, the Season of Advent, be a joyful and hopeful time for you all. May God bless you this Advent season and every season! And an early Merry Christmas and Happy New Years 2010!!!

In Christ,

*Pastor Bill*

P.S. Speaking of celebrating the Christmas holiday, we have much going here at the church to help fill this time with hope and joy. There is a Jazz Christmas Concert on December 13<sup>th</sup>, the Christmas Stroll on the 5<sup>th</sup> and Beef Stew Supper on the 15<sup>th</sup>, our Christmas Eve Services at 4:30 PM and 11 PM, and of course, our weekly Sunday worship services at 10 AM.

### **Bible Trivia Contest for the December 2009!!!**

Congratulations to our November 2009 Bible Trivia Contest winner: Lynn Danner, who correctly answered the question, "How many Psalms are there in the Book of Psalms in the Old Testament?" The answer is that there are 150 psalms in the Book of Psalms in the Old Testament. This correct answer has won her free coffee and pastry with Pastor Bill at Five Loaves Bakery.

Would you like to win free coffee and pastry with Pastor Bill? It's easy, just answer the following question:

***"Which Gospels in the Bible offer an account of the birth of Jesus Christ?"***

The first person to get the answer to Pastor Bill (either in person, by e-mail or phone) will win the contest for December! So get your thinking caps on and let this month's contest begin... Good Luck!

### **Hot Topics Bible Study is now underway...**

Join us on Tuesdays at 10 AM for Bible Study. Like last year, we will meet weekly, with breaks built in to the schedule for holidays, vacations and other busy times of the church year. This year's program will be based on the **Hot Topics** program that we are using with the confirmation class. It explores the various topics of Christian faith found in the United Church of Christ's Statement of Faith. Each week's lesson is self-contained, so new people can join the study anytime with out worry of having to catch up. Please see Pastor Bill with any questions or to sign up. Hope to see you there!

### **HEALING SERVICE**

**Blue Christmas: A Service Healing** - Wednesday, December 9<sup>th</sup> - 7 P.M. All are invited to attend and experience the gift of our congregation's ecumenically minded healing ministry.

### **ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE**

**REMINDER** to all who use the church building, whether it be the sacristy, the hall or the classrooms please make sure the lights are off and the heat is turned down in your area before you leave the building.

Please remember to donate for oil in the collection cans in the upper Narthex.

The next meeting of the Administration Committee will be on Dec. 21st, 7.00pm at Steve Howe's home.

**From the Nomination Committee:** It's that time of year again! We are soon going to start filling open positions on all committees for the upcoming new year. If you are asked to be on a committee please say "YES" !

We really need your help. Please prayerfully consider joining us in making our church an active, spiritual haven for both adults and children. You may get in touch with Barbara Foley, Ann MacDonald or Sue Provo.

### **CHURCH AND COMMUNITY COMMITTEE**

The committee will be selling felt Christmas Ornaments on 11/29/09 through December 20<sup>th</sup> 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 area missions. The hat and mitten tree will also be placed in the front of the sanctuary on this date for those who would like to donate and will remain until December 20<sup>th</sup>.

### **CHURCH & EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

The Church and Education Committee would like to say a special thank you to Ken and Joyce Landine, the Church and Community Committee, and the Men's League for their generous donations for Godly Play lessons. We appreciate your support of our Church School.

We met on November 8, 2009 and discussed Advent Workshop and Christmas Pageant. The Children are excited about the Christmas Pageant. The next meeting is scheduled for December 13, 2009.

LouAnn V. Bean, Chairperson

### **CHURCH SCHOOL**

The Children are enjoying the new curriculum "Godly Play". They enjoy the storytelling to teach each lesson. The Christmas Pageant will be one of the lessons from Godly Play.

#### **New change for January**

Starting with the Intergenerational Sunday on January 20, 2010, the children will be going up to the service with the teachers as a class. They will stay up front until the Children's Sermon is completed and go sit with their parents or they may stay up front for the whole service. If you have any questions, see Lisa Brown or LouAnn Bean.

Important dates to remember: Christmas Pageant practice - December 6 and December 13, Christmas Pageant - December 20

Lisa Brown,  
Church School Superintendent

### **DIACONATE**

Diaconate meeting for December is December 13<sup>th</sup> following the Worship Service.

Deacon of the month for December is Ray Lammi

Annual review of Pastor Bill was completed by the Diaconate and Pastoral Relations Committee.

Church School Christmas Pageant will be part of our worship service on December 20<sup>th</sup>.

#### **Please note the time of the early Family Christmas service is going to be 4:30pm**

December 13<sup>th</sup> at 4:00pm there will be a free family friendly Christmas Jazz concert held at our Church. This is the Music Committee's responsibility and I am just giving them a helping hand in getting the information out. I know a good time will be had by everyone who attends the concert. Hope to see you there.

Looking forward to greeting and meeting you on Sunday mornings.

Ken Landine  
Chairperson

### **FLOWER COMMITTEE**

Christmas Poinsettia Sale began on Sunday, November 15<sup>th</sup> and will continue through Sunday, December 6<sup>th</sup>, in the Lower Narthex. You will have a choice of either a single plant (\$8.00 ea.) or a double plant (\$14.00 ea.) the colors choices are red, pink or white. You may also contact Claire Harding at 508-885-5441.

### **MEN'S LEAGUE**

We had our first meeting of the season on November 10<sup>th</sup> where we conducted our normal business with our disbursements. We also voted for three new member who are new bowlers this season. We also discussed our schedule for the season. As previously reported, the Beef Stew Dinner is scheduled for December 15<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 P.M. There is a sign-up sheet under the clock in the Mary Porter Hall. Donna Gilbert of the Calendar Company has been invited and will attend if the weather cooperates.

When you read this I hope everyone had a joyous Thanksgiving and a wish for a very Merry Christmas from the Men's League.

Hope to see you at the Beef Stew Dinner!

Sincerely,  
Al Orne

### **MILITARY WHIST PARTY & PENNY SALE**

Will be held on  
Friday, December 11, 2009  
Time: 7:00 p.m.  
Refreshments will be served  
Donation \$3.00

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.

### **MUSIC COMMITTEE**

**FREE CHRISTMAS CONCERT-** Featuring "**Golden Ticket**" & "**Bethesda Jazz Praise Sunday, December 13, 2009 at 4:00 PM.** Celebrate the holidays at a family-friendly concert. Join us for classic holiday favorites of Nat King Cole, Harry Connick, Jr., Bing Crosby, Mel Torme, and more.

Admission is free, refreshments will be served, freewill offerings welcome... Come "have yourself a swingin' little Christmas"

### **SHEPHER'S STAFF**

We are still available for short term help or our member. Meals, transportation and respite care (staying with a member in need while the family does an errand.) Feel free to call if a situations arises, there is always someone in the congregation that will be happy to help. Rides to church can also be arranged.. The contact person is Pat Stark at 508-885-5131

### **STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE**

You will have received your Family Album by now, and if not, you can pick one up at the church. Hopefully you brought your pledge in on Stewardship Sunday, November 15, and had a chance to hear Richard F. Jones preach. If not, you can mail your pledge in, and we ask that you do that as soon as possible, so that next year's budget can be planned.

As part of his great sermon, Richard talked about taking part in the pot luck supper that was held with the route drivers who delivered the Family Albums. That night, we all talked about why we love the church, and because of that, give not only monetarily, but also give the time to drive around and visit folks in their homes.

That means a lot-not only that the route drivers gave up their own time and resources, but that they recognize that stewardship isn't only a small committee's job, but something we all can do, every day, as part of our commitment to the church. It isn't just asking for money, (although we do need money to keep the church going) but it's reaching out and sharing all that we all have.

Last year 100 families pledged \$88,250. This year, the Family Album was hand delivered to 166 households and mailed to another 32. We are hoping to increase contributions by reaching out to more families or "pledge units." So far, 74 of you have pledged \$64,076 in 2010.

So far the comments about this year's Stewardship Campaign have been mostly positive, from both the Route Drivers and those households who were visited. It has been suggested that we try making Stewardship Sunday more special and provide church budget information in the Family Album. How do you feel about it? We'd be interested in hearing your feedback about the program and tailoring to our church's needs.

Our sincere thanks to all nineteen Route Drivers and to those who have pledged.

### **STRATEGIC PLANNING & CHURCH GROWTH PROJECT TEAM**

The committee has been working on a mission statement for our Church. We proposed the following mission statement:

**We, the First Congregational of Spencer, UCC, are  
A caring and compassionate family supporting each  
other and the community through strong faith and  
fellowship. We invite you to join our journey seeking  
Christ's love and grace.**

On Tuesday, November 17<sup>th</sup> the committee brought it to the Church Council for their consideration, It was read , voted on and accepted as written and on Sunday November 22<sup>nd</sup> the Mission Statement was read by the congregation during "Joy and Concerns" session in the weekly service.

Our next meeting will be held on Wednesday, December 2, 2009 at 6:30 P.M.

### **WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP**

**Executive Board** – Monday, December 7 at 9 A.M.

**Sunlighters** – Tuesday, December 1, 2009

If you would like to bake cookies for the Shut-ins please bring them to church on Sunday, December 13<sup>th</sup>.

Also the Christmas gifts list for the **Lincoln Hill Manor** residents is on the bulletin board in the Mary Porter Hall. Please help by taking a name – read the possible suggestions - Gifts due in by December 20<sup>th</sup>.

### **WOMEN'S EVENING FELLOWSHIP**

We are participating in the annual Christmas Stroll on December 5<sup>th</sup> from 9 A.M. to 4 P.M. Customers will be provided a passport that can be stamped by each participating business and church. Every person who has the entire passport stamped will be eligible for a drawing of the prizes donated by the participating businesses. We will be serving lunch from 11 A.M. to 1 P.M, Corn Chowder and hot dogs will be available. Hope to see you there. We will be setting up for the Christmas Stroll on Friday, December 4 at noon. Anyone who wishes to help is welcome

The next meeting of the Women's Evening Fellowship will be held at Christilynn Wildman's, 38 Greenville St. at 6:30 pm. We will be having a pot luck supper and we are bringing a \$10 gift for a good old fashion Yankee Swap. All women of the church are welcome.

**FYI**

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

Their goal is to raise \$1,650,000 for the vital ministries of Pension Supplementation, Health Premium Supplementation, Emergency Grants, and Christmas "Thank You" Gift Checks to lower-income retirees during 2010.

Enclosed is a Christmas Fund envelope. If you wish to donate to this fund please return you envelopes by Sunday, December 20<sup>th</sup>.

**Santa Claus** is coming to visit us on Sunday, December 13, 2009. He will be here during Coffee Hour. All children are welcome. If you would like a picture with Santa please bring your camera -

### **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!

### **ATTENTION ALL CHURCH MEMBERS!!!**

This is the time of year when some of our church members go south for the winter months, **PLEASE** notify the office of any **changes** to your **mailing information and phone numbers**. It is important for us to keep an accurate mailing list. So please make an effort to contact the office with any **changes**, either **temporary** or **permanent**.

### **YOUTH GROUP CHRISTMAS PARTY!!!**

Youth Group will be having a Christmas Party on Sunday, December 20, 2009. Please join us from 2 PM to 4 PM at the Youth Lounge in the church for the fun. Please see Christilynn Wildman or Pastor Bill with any questions.

### **CALENDAR**

Dec.1<sup>st</sup> – 31 Office hours are 8:00 A.M. to 12:00 P.M., Monday through Friday.

Dec. 1<sup>st</sup> **SUNLIGHTERS** meeting 1:00 P.M.

Dec. 2<sup>nd</sup> **STRATEGIC PANNING & CHURCH GROWTH COMMITTEE** meeting 6:30 P.M.

Dec. 4<sup>th</sup> **ANNUAL REPORTS** – All the Church Committees reports are **DUE!!!!**  
Please have your reports in on or before this date.

Dec. 5<sup>th</sup> **CHRISTMAS STROLL** 9 A.M. to 4 P.M.

Dec 7<sup>th</sup> **WOMEN'S EVENING FELLOWSHIP 6:30 P.M.**

Dec. 11<sup>th</sup> **MILITARY WHIST PARTY & PENNY SALE** 7:00 P.M.

Dec 13<sup>th</sup> **SANTA CLAUS** will visit during coffee hour.

**CHURCH AND EDUCATION** meeting following worship service

**DIACONATE** will meet following worship service.

**CHRISTMAS CONCERT** for the entire family enjoyment 4:00 P.M.

Dec. 15<sup>th</sup> **WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP** semi-annual meeting 5:30 P.M.

**MEN'S LEAGUE** annual Beef Stew supper 6:30 P.M

Dec. 16<sup>th</sup> **ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE** meeting 7:00 P.M.

Dec. 17<sup>th</sup> **TIE NOTICES** are due in the office.

Dec. 24<sup>th</sup> **CHRISTMAS EVE FAMILY SERVICE** 4:30 P.M.

**CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLE LIGHT SERVICE** 11 P.M.

Dec. 24<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup> **ECONOMY SHOP CLOSED** for Christmas Season.

Dec. 25<sup>th</sup> **OFFICE CLOSED** for Christmas.

Dec. 31<sup>st</sup> **OFFICE CLOSED** New Year Eve day.

### **LOOKING AHEAD**

Jan. 1<sup>st</sup> HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!!

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### **HELD AT THE CHURCH**

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

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Deacon of the month for December is Ray Lammi