



THE WITNESS

December 2009

WINTHROP CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UCC
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gospelgifts.com

Interim Minister: Rev. Karen Janus

Music Director: Rosalea Kimball

Office Assistant: Marie Pettengill



YE OLDE CHRISTMAS FAIR
DECEMBER 5, 2009 – 9:00 A.M.-2:00 P.M.



bestfreechristian.com

Our Christmas Fair is fast approaching and your help is needed. The success of our fair depends not only on our “customers,” but also on you and your monetary giving and/or table donations.

The Fair opens at 9:00 a.m., and the holiday tables will be filled and ready for customers. The aromas of the coffee shop will fill the air with breakfast sweets, hot chocolate, and coffee.

The Christmas Fair is not only a wonderful place to buy your Christmas items, but you can also enjoy a yummy lunch. The Famous Fish Chowder is steamy hot, at only \$4.00 a bowl; fresh lobster rolls are \$6.00; homemade meat or vege lasagna at \$5.00 a plate. We will also have hamburgers, cheeseburgers, hot dogs, assorted pies, and beverages.

Our sign-up sheets are posted in the vestry, or you may call the office to add your name. Our committee this year is:

- Chair – Marie Hatfield
- Sign-up & Posters – Marie Pettengill
- Kitchen – Diane Richardson
- Set-up/ Clean-up – Doug Whittier
- Silent Auction – Carol Whittier
- Treasurer – Cyndi Hall

Our holiday tables could use donations of baked goods, candy, ornaments, cookies, gifts, books, and jewelry. You get the idea, please help where you can. It means a great deal to our church. This year we are looking for **Silent Auction ideas**; if you know of anyone who would donate a gift certificate, service, or item please let Carol Whittier or Debbie Burns know. You might have an item in good condition that someone else would love to bid on!!

Wreaths will be available with or without red bow and decoration. They are double-sided 12” wreaths made in Maine. You may reserve yours with Marie Hatfield.

Here is a list of fair tables and areas where helpers are needed:

Early Helpers:	Publicity/Posters		
Thursday Evening:	Set-up and decorating crew		
Saturday Helpers:			
Fair Treasurer	Cashier	Kitchen	Dish Washers
Memorial Lights	Christmas Ornaments	Dining Room Hostess	Waiters/waitresses
Jams & Jellies	Silent Auction	Raffle	Jewelry
Christmas Cookies	Wreaths	Bows	Candy
Beans, Brown Bread, & Pickles	Second Time Around & Books	Holiday Gifts & Collectables	Floater
Holiday Baked Foods		Kitchen clean-up	General clean-up

Thanks and Merry Christmas to you all!



gospelgifs.com

A NOTE FROM REVEREND KAREN JANUS

December, 2009

Dear Friends,

As the Search Committee continues its work, I am privileged to be again journeying with you through an Advent and Christmas season. I look forward to the special events offered during this season. The WCC annual Christmas Fair will be held on December 5th; the choir's "Cantata" will be presented on December 13th; and the Sunday School pageant will be on the 20th.

This year, in preparation for the pageant, the Sunday School children have collected the stories of Christmases past from the adults of the congregation—our stories from our childhood experiences and thoughts about the holiday and its meaning. I join with other adults in the congregation in anticipating this year's Christmas pageant and the presentation based on the children's gleaning of our memories.

Each year I revisit my "pet-peeve" regarding Christmas—the blatant commercialization of the Christmas season. This year I cringed when I saw Christmas merchandise popping up in October, well before Halloween! Recently I heard a report on Public Radio describing training for the ubiquitous department store Santa which now includes all the acronyms and abbreviations for the latest in electronic games, gadgets, and gizmos. I have begun to envision the commercialization of the season as a voracious crouching animal ready to pounce. But as we all get caught up in the holiday preparation, we must not lose track of the true meaning of the season.

Advent is a time of expectant waiting! It is the time that reminds us of the original waiting that was done by the Hebrews for the birth of their messiah as well as the waiting we Christians observe for the coming of Christ. It also marks the beginning of a new liturgical year.

December 25th is our traditional celebration of Christ's nativity. It is a glorious time of celebration and renewal in our understanding of how we perceive the roots of our Christian faith. It also serves to remind us of the call from God and the awakening of a new understanding of mission and ministry. When we look at the ministry of the church, especially during this season of Advent and Christmas, remember that we are to be faithful stewards of God's call in all that we do.

I encourage you to embrace the season with both joy and refreshed resolution to diligently preserve the ultimate message that Jesus continued to reinforce throughout his life and ministry: love God with all your heart, mind and strength, and love your neighbor as yourself. What better time to meditate on that commandment than Advent.

Yours in Christ,

Karen

Rev. Karen Janus

CHURCH BASICS 101: HOW CAN I SERVE OUR CHURCH?

For those of you who are new to the Winthrop Congregational Church UCC, or would be interested in joining a board, we would like to include some basic information about our Boards.

Church Council consists of the Officers of the Church (Moderator, chair, Clerk, Treasurer and Financial Secretary), Minister, the Chairperson or appointed representative of the Boards (Deacons, Trustees, Christian Education and Church and Community Concerns), and three active members of the Church.

The **Church Council** oversees and coordinates the activities of the church and its various boards, committees and organizations. The **Church Council** votes on new memberships and fills temporary vacancies on Boards and Committees.

The four official Boards of the church are the **Board of Deacons, Board of Trustees, Board of Christian Education, and the Board of Church and Community Concerns.**

The Board of Deacons consists of nine members, all of whom shall be active covenant members or Associate Members, elected for terms of three years. The Deacons are responsible for the religious ministry of the church and oversee worship, including assistance in preparation and administration of the sacraments, provision of music, selection of ushers, training and helping the acolytes, altar supply, and visitations. They present the budget for their Board, the Minister, and the Music Director to the Trustees.

The Board of Trustees consists of nine members, all of whom shall be Active Covenant Members or Associate Members elected for a term of three years. The Trustees oversee the care and custody of the church properties and investments, oversee church use, prepare the annual budget, and monitor financial affairs.

The Board of Christian Education consists of six members, at least three of whom are Active Covenant members or Associate Members, elected for three years. The Board is responsible for Christian Education for children and adults, which includes Intergenerational Services, Bible Studies, Sunday School, and pageants.

The Board of Church and Community Concerns consists of six members, at least three of whom are Active Covenant Members or Associate Members, elected for terms of three years. The Board promotes various local and global endeavors to encourage interest and participation in benevolent giving. Past offerings have benefited the Winthrop Food Pantry, Pilgrim Lodge, Church World Service, and One Great Hour of Sharing. The Board oversees the Stewardship and pledge campaigns.

Copies of the By-Laws are available through the Church office. If you are interested in serving on a Board or have any questions, please contact anyone on the Nominating Committee.

Carol Whittier

Gerry Edgar

Marie Hatfield

CE MATTERS

The Board of Christian Education has been focused on Sunday school classes, a fall intergenerational activity, and our Christmas pageant. Our board is taking turns teaching Sunday school and would welcome other volunteers. Our classroom size ranges from 0 to 8 on any given day.

We arranged a mini-instruction about the meaning of communion, which Rev Karen graciously provided on Nov 1st. Corinna was the only child to take part, but it was nice to provide the open gesture of including children into the communion rite.

On October 25th, Amy coordinated an intergenerational hike to Torsey Pond trails in Readfield. We were delighted to have 21 folks enjoying the day, the hike, and the time together.



More pictures can be viewed on our website at www.wccucc.org/christian-education.html

We stopped by at the Apple Shed at Kent's Hill Orchard afterwards for some yummy treats. Many expressed they'd like to do more group hikes, so we encouraged people to announce hikes at worship, and invite others, and that's just what happened the following week. Mike & Debbie announced that they would be hiking Mt Pisgah in the afternoon on Nov 1st, and Lee, Wendy, & Marie Hatfield joined them for another wonderful adventure.

Our next focus is on the upcoming Christmas pageant. We thank all of you who took the time to fill out questionnaires about your family traditions and experiences and we thank the children who assisted in conducting the interviews. We will be using some of those answers in the pageant, titled "Our Family Memories of Christmas" to be presented on December 20th during worship.

The children are encouraged to bring a small offering to Sunday School. We also need to coordinate the acolyte schedule better. We will try a sign-up sheet in the Sunday School room, next to the Attendance sheet. That way, we could ask for acolyte(s) a week in advance. Acolytes need to arrive by 9:45 AM to be ready prior to worship.

At some point, we will have the children decorate a bottle collection box, to promote Bottle Returns to benefit Christian Education programs, such as camp scholarships or outings. This is an effort to offset budget cuts in the Christian Ed program.

Cyndi Hall, Chair
Board of Christian Education

SEARCH COMMITTEE NEWS

The committee continues through the discernment process to find our next settled minister. We are talking with candidates, listening to sermons and conducting interviews. It has now been one year since the committee was formed and we are making good progress. We ask that you keep us in your thoughts and prayers.



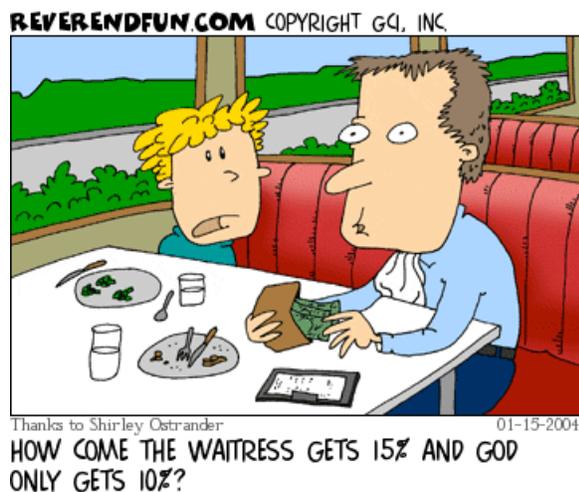
BCCC BASICS

If you were not in church on November 13, please fill out your pledge sheet and bring or send it to church as soon as possible. The Trustees will need the information to prepare the budget for 2010.

Monetary donations will be collected for the Winthrop Food Pantry on November 20 and 27. Envelopes will be available in pews. Please write checks to WCCUCC with Food Pantry written in the Memo space. Donations of food may be added to the display table during November as well.

White Gift Sunday will be observed on December 13. Personal items such as toothpaste, combs, deodorant, lotions, hair brushes, etc. should be wrapped in white to be placed under our decorated tree during worship. These items will be taken to Family Violence.

We will again "adopt" a family this Christmas. As soon as the slips have been created, individuals may select an item to provide for someone in the family. These gifts should be wrapped and labeled. More information will be forthcoming.



WOMEN'S GUILD NOTES

Cyndi Hall hosted the WCC Women's Guild meeting on October 27th.

In the aftermath of worldwide tragedies, Church World Services has sent out an urgent call for extra clean-up buckets and hygiene kits. We will concentrate on hygiene kits in our church. A list of needed items will be available (the list is currently posted on our website at www.wccucc.org/womens-guild.html) -- you are encouraged to participate by donating either money or kits.

The church will be decorated for Christmas on Nov. 22nd; the following Sunday is the first Sunday of Advent.

Betty Evans was given a prayer shawl.

We are very grateful for the new refrigerator in the kitchen, which was purchased from the Methyl Sturtevant Memorial Fund. Also from the fund permanent refillable advent candles will be purchased -- a special reminder of Methyl's love and joy of Christmas.

Carol Ellingwood is coordinating a group trip to the Fayette Baptist Church for the annual Christmas production and nativity on December 12. Please notify Carol if you would like to attend.

The next regular meeting will be held on January 26 with Carol Whittier as host and Marie Hatfield as co-host.

Submitted by Diane Richardson

DEACON NEWS

UPCOMING EVENTS FOR ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS

* **Sunday, November 29, 10:00a.m.** - First Sunday of Advent lighting the purple candle of **Hope**.

* **Sunday, December 6, 10:00a.m.** - Second Sunday of Advent lighting the 2nd purple candle of **Peace and Communion**.

* **Sunday, December 13, 10:00a.m.** - Third Sunday of Advent lighting the Pink candle of **Joy, the Choral Cantata**. **Decorate the tree and White Gift Sunday** with personal items such as soap, shampoo, body lotion, toothpaste, toothbrushes, etc. Please wrap the items in white paper and they will be placed under the tree. They will be given to the Family Violence Center in Augusta.

* **Sunday, December 20, 10:00a.m.** - Fourth Sunday of Advent lighting the third purple candle of **Joy, the Christmas Pageant**.

* **Thursday, December 24, 7:00p.m.** - **Christmas Eve Service** lighting the Christ candle, a service of Lessons, Candlelight, and Carols. Please join us for this beautiful and moving service where we together hear the story of the birth of Jesus ending with a candlelit Silent Night.

MEMORIAL LIGHTS

It's time, once again, to light up the lovely blue spruce tree on the church lawn that stands as a memorial to Hit Twombly.

We will begin with all colored lights and change them to white as the memorial donations come in. Each memorial light, in memory or in honor of a loved one, costs \$5.00. The goal is to entirely light the tree

with white lights by Christmas Eve. The memorials will be listed on an insert with the Christmas Eve bulletin, as well as in the special Memorial Book in the foyer.

We hope that you will remember your loved ones with a white light on our memorial tree, which will shine brightly for the entire town to see, and in so doing will become a beautiful part of our community holiday festivities.

Please complete the form below with your name/names exactly as you would like them to appear in the bulletin, and mail it or bring it to the church office. There will also be forms at the back of the sanctuary during the Advent Season.



Memorial Lights in Memory of:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Enclosed is \$5.00 for each memorial light.

Given by: Name(s) as they should appear in the bulletin.



FROM THE TRUSTEES

A Reminder...

Weekly Cleaning: A sign-up sheet is posted on the kitchen door for weekly cleaning duties, such as bathrooms, trash, floors, etc.... This is a very important duty that, unfortunately, seems to be completed by the same few individuals week after week. To be fair to them, we ask that everyone try to pitch in when and if they are able.

Projects: A list of additional cleaning and maintenance projects that have been recommended by members of the Church is posted on the kitchen door. **MANY thanks to those who have tackled some of these big projects, your hard work is much appreciated!** There are more good deeds to be accomplished for any interested and available parties. Please fill in date when completed, so we can keep track of what has been done and when.

Thanks for your time and dedication to our fine Church.

THE MEANING OF CHRISTMAS

Cheer

Holly

Refrains

Icicles

Santa

Trees

Merry

Angels

Stockings

are the words that "spell" Christmas, but Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior is the "meaning" of Christmas.

--Gerry

CHRISTMAS CONCERT

CODA Chorus invites you to join us for our annual Christmas concert as we celebrate in song the story of Christmas. On Sunday, December 6th, the concert will be presented twice at St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church in Winthrop at **3PM** and again at **6 PM**. Included in the program are songs to welcome in the season, spirituals, English carols, and favorite traditional carols. A free-will offering will be taken.

Ed Larson is CODA's music director and Bridget Convey is the accompanist. CODA would like to thank Kennebec Savings Bank for its continued support as our sponsor. For more information about the Christmas concert, please call 622-6959.

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

2	Lois Gibbs
9	Patrice Putman
13	Emily Dooling
15	Marja Hatfield
19	Nathaniel Smith
24	Ann Mitchell
28	Kay Webster
29	Daniel Whittier

DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

12/6/75 Rick McNaughton
& Marianne Martin

If any birthdays/anniversaries were missed, or if there are any errors, please let Dina know.

A CHEROKEE LEGEND

Do you know the legend of the Cherokee Indian youth's rite of passage?

His father takes him into the forest, blindfolds him, and leaves him alone. He is required to sit on a stump the whole night and not remove the blindfold until the rays of the morning sun shine through it. He cannot cry out for help to any one. Once he survives the night, he is a MAN.

He cannot tell the other boys of this experience, because each lad must come into manhood on his own. The boy is naturally terrified. He can hear all kinds of noises. Wild beasts must surely be all around him. Maybe even some human might do him harm. The wind blew the grass and earth, and shook his stump, but he sat stoically, never removing the blindfold. It would be the only way he could become a man!

Finally, after a horrific night, the sun appeared and he removed his blindfold. It was then that he discovered his father sitting on the stump next to him. He had been at watch the entire night, protecting his son from harm.

We, too, are never alone. Even when we don't know it, God is watching over us, sitting on the stump beside us. When trouble comes, all we have to do is reach out to Him.

If you liked this story, pass it on. If not, you took off your blindfold before dawn. Moral of the story: Just because you can't see God, doesn't mean He is not there. 'For we walk by faith, not by sight.'

Submitted by Marie P.

THANKS

To all my friends,
I want to thank you all very much for the prayers and thoughts during our illnesses. Also for the food sent to us. All are greatly appreciated. The lap shawl is beautiful and warm.

Fondly,
Ethel and Sonny

Thanks to all for the continued prayers for me and my family as we struggle with the disappearance on 12/24/08 of my father, William Blodgett. It's been almost 1 year, and we still do not know what happened to him. We have accepted the reality that we may never know, but continue to pray for closure.

Warmest Regards,
Dina Blodgett

PRAYERS FOR:

Dina Blodgett and family	Ethel and Sonny
Betty Evans	Maxim
Ernie Henderson	Helen Scott
Tom Clements	Ann Dixon
Sally Pelletier	Janis Price
Roger Rollins	Clayton Grace
Joyce Proulx	Laurie Rollins
Michael Hamlin	Our Military Men & Women
Ann Ponzetti	People who are suffering from violence of any kind
Myra	Our Search Committee
Barbara Rand	
George Rollins	
