

wierwille words

Stand up! Raise your heads! Look! Listen! Be alert! -- Jesus' words in Luke

As we move to year end and wait on the New Year, in the church we find ourselves in the season of *Ad-vent* counting down to Emmanuel – God-with-us! We try to prepare ourselves for the real live presence of Love-amongst-us and we hear Jesus' startling words of wakefulness. It seems more than ever that we instead too easily get caught up in the material bottom-line definition of “a good Christmas” that dulls our senses and dissipates our energies and diminishes our resources. This season finds the ending of time and the beginning of time as a place the Celtic folk called “*the time between times.*”

Our faith-story helps us understand this place and time of “not yet” between this world and the world beyond us. This holy time calls to us and describes to us a world to come, a dusk evening time and a dawning new day when we learn what we must relinquish and to what we must open our hands. The church year draws us into a drama that takes us to a deeper and nearer “redemption center”– the saving grace of God's love and mercy right here, now-amongst-us.

I hope that you find your spirit lifted and lightened during this Advent journey. There are opportunities for singing and praying, for communing together as a family of faith, for reaching out and sharing with those on the margins of life. In this in-between time let us be gentle, generous and caring to ourselves and others, with heads up and alert to the deeper and more powerful words and images of the season around us. In the holiday pageantry as well as in the almost overwhelming moments of stillness may you find renewed in your life God's-gift-of-love incarnate within and around you.

Peace and holy/day blessings to all, RW

December 2009

Minister: Rev. Richard Wierwille

Worship Service: Sunday 10 AM

Church School: 10:00-11:15

Email: wlcc@valley.net

Web Site: www.westlebcc.org

Phone: 603-298-8096

Church Office Hours:

Tuesday and Thursday 8:30-3:30

Wednesday 9:00-12:00

Pastor's Office: Tues, Wed, Thurs a.m. or by appt.

DECEMBER 2009

ANNIVERSARIES

1 Carol & Allan Campbell

BIRTHDAYS

4 Andrew Kebalka
5 Kelsey Allan
9 Kirsten Rediker
10 Molly Akers
12 Bill Mitchell
12 Neil Miller
13 Marge Farnsworth
14 Jeanne May
18 Phil Pillsbury
18 April Miller
19 Nancy Pyer
19 Michael Adam
20 Ann Collins
22 Lori Higgins
23 Lindy Hatch
23 Dot Greene
27 Ike Hartson
31 Forrest Miller

CHURCH SCHOOL OPPORTUNITIES

If you have considered teaching a Sunday School Class, and experiencing the joy of spending time with the children, now is the time to give it a try – full time or sharing part-time with another teacher. See the Christian Education Article later in this news letter.

Liz sez,

Holidays turn on our memories as we watch our youngsters display awe, wonder and joy. As was the first Christmas, we realize a small child is the heart of the holiday.

Grandma's Gingerbread Boys

At Christmas we all gathered as a united Family at Grandma's old farmhouse to enjoy our Christmas tree.

Memories of those gatherings dwell in my heart and dreams.

My foremost recollection surmounts the rest, it seems. I cannot forget Grandma's talents making loads of gingerbread boys of many different sizes, decorated to reflect greatest joys.

Some peeked from our stockings,
some danced o'er the fireplace,
some were strung midst tinsel
overhead to swing in grace.
There were plates of them in the kitchen,
in the parlor and the halls.
They guarded the gingerbread house
and paraded midst popcorn balls.
Every little gingerbread boy
wore a happy, holiday smile.
Their spicy, sweetness was temping
so that they lasted a short while.

I cannot produce their aroma
or mimic their sweet taste
I cannot paint them faces like Grandma
with accuracy and haste.
If I buy them in sealed packages
from a display at the store,
they lack the drifts of aroma that
flowed through Grandma's door.
If I rush with Christmas shoppers
searching a fair match ----
I never locate gingerbread boys
like my Grandma made from scratch.

May the wreath of joy and hope decorate your door and may peace and love warm your homes.
Merry Christmas.

Sez Liz

MISSIONS AND SOCIAL ACTION

Our thanks to all who participated in the October 4th CROPWALK. Your participation as a sponsor or walker helped ease hunger locally, nationally and globally. Our congregation had a large turnout this year and raised \$1150. Thank you!

Thank you for your support of the Listen Holiday Basket program. We are sponsoring a family of six (four children) as well as two seniors. All donations are due by Sunday, December 6th at the church.

Missions is looking for input from the congregation about local volunteer opportunities. If you are volunteering for an organization that may need some help, would you please share the information with Lori Lounsbury (lalounsbury@netscape.net or Dick Weirwille). We would love to know where you are volunteering and what you are doing to help. We would like to share volunteer opportunities with the congregation.

Thank you for your continuous support of the Listen and Haven food pantries. Food bin Sunday is the last Sunday of the month, but we are taking donations to the pantries as they arrive. The following items are needed for December...

FOOD PANTRY NEEDS: Baked Beans, Canned Evaporated Milk, Dry Milk, Box Potatoes, Jelly, Prepared meals like Dinty Moore Stew, Soups, Stew, Spaghetti-O's, etc; Tuna, Peanut Butter, Spaghetti Sauce, Spaghetti noodles, Stuffing, Rice Side dishes, Cranberries, & Gravy.

Missions Committee: Linda Oidtmann (Chair), Lori Lounsbury (Secretary), Averill Tinker (Treasurer), Sandy Tisdale, Bill Mitchell, Grace Dickerson.

DECEMBER 13TH WORSHIP SERVICE

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

CE would like to thank the members of the Historical committee for their presentation in early November about the history of the church and different articles of the church and why they are valuable. Christian Education is looking for teachers for the Winter Term that begins in January. We are looking for teachers for k-1 and 2nd-3rd grade classes. If anyone is interested see either Susan Schwarz, April Akers, or Adam DalPra. The Christmas pageant will be held on December 13th this year with practices on November 29th and December 6th, with additional ones possible. Any child interested just come to a practice and we will find a role for you. Right now CE is looking into different ways to enrich the childrens experience within the church. Many ideas have been talked about but we are always looking for more. If you have any ideas please let a member of CE know.

MUSIC COMMITTEE

The Music Committee wants to thank the generous folks who donated \$245 to the piano protection project. We decided to use the Elsie Wood Fund to pay the balance required for both the humidifier and the dolly. Hal Sheeler the director of Bel Canto Singers (who rehearse in our sanctuary) is contributing money to pay for tuning, which will happen at the same time. All should be completed by early December.

The organ has just been tuned for the Christmas Season.

We are also grateful to Averill Tinker, Molly Bonhag, Nancy Wolfe, the Bell and Intergenerational Choirs, and Mark Pageau for their musical contributions to our Sunday services. Donna Butler is recuperating well and will be playing occasionally after the new year.

The Music Committee is down to only 2 members since Norm's departure after many terms. Please consider joining us. Being a musician is not required.

TRUSTEES REPORT

The Trustees met on November 12th and began our 2010 budget. We've been making some significant cuts, some of which came by luck! Our oil cost should be half that of last year. We're still looking into going with a paperless steeple which would be a significant savings. We realize that some will still have to be mailed out, but we would like to get as many people as possible to receive it paperless. Not only would this reduce cost but also help our church work towards going green!

We still have a huge hill to climb to balance our budget; we are still around \$39,000 short which we have to come up with. To date, pledges and pledging units are down by almost half from the previous year which will increase our deficit, we're hoping that more pledges will be submitted soon.

Wayne Bonhag also conducted a study/comparison as to how much we saved by moving Sunday services into the Kilton room during the winter months. His findings were that by keeping our thermostat at 55 degrees in the sanctuary when not being used, as well as controlling where people using our building hold classes etc. we should be able to keep Sunday services in the sanctuary. We're also looking into hanging a large curtain in the balcony to hold heat in the Sanctuary. With everyone's help being energy efficient, this can help our bottom line.

Wayne will be stepping down from the Trustees once we finalize our budget. Dana is also getting done her term this year; we will truly miss them both but are grateful and thankful for everything they have done for the Trustees.

Looking forward to 2010 we have some large hurdles to accomplish, but with everyone's effort we can jump these hurdles and not look back!

We hope everyone has a nice holiday season and look forward to working on tackling some of our large projects in the New Year.

Respectfully yours

Trustees

It is the season of poinsettias. If you would like to order a poinsettia to honor, or to remember, a loved one please complete the form below and return it to Nancy Simpson by December 11 with check (made payable to Nancy) or cash. The price is \$7.00 for each plant.

The poinsettias can be picked up at the services on Christmas Eve.

In Memory of _____

In Honor of _____

Given by _____

Number ordering _____

Total amount enclosed _____

Our heartfelt sympathy goes out to the family of

Richard Henry "Dick" Abbott
Feb. 11, 1920 – Nov. 14, 2009

Special prayers are with Betty Abbott & her family

Prayers are also extended to the family & friends of:

Shirley A. Jenks
November 4, 2009

Whose Service was held on November 13, 2009.

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

As those of you who attended Stewardship Sunday know, Matt Van Wagner led us again in the Stewardship Service with an uplifting message and consecration of pledges. It always amazes and enriches us as we see how our church family comes forward to support our church each year at this time regardless of personal situations.

It is exciting to note that approximately 25% of the families pledging this year have increased their pledges this year. This indicates the truly strong commitment to West Lebanon Congregational Church that members of our church family has in helping with the growth and support of our church. If you have not made your pledge to the church at this time, please help us out by returning your pledge card and, at the same time, consider increasing your pledge this year as we know that this will be a really hard year for the church and the church budget, and one that is going to be more extreme than previous ones.

As an active member of the West Lebanon Congregational Church family, please prayerfully consider how you might respond to God with your earnings now to support West Lebanon Congregational Church in the coming year. If you want to discuss pledging with anyone on Stewardship, please speak with any of us: Wayne Bonhag, Mark Estes, Debbie Ford, Judy Macnab, Peter Simpson, or Judi Strong. God bless each and every one of you during this special time of year and into the coming year.

HISTORY OF THE WEST LEBANON CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH UCC

(PART 1)

When the settlers of Lebanon established their homes in 1761 along the Connecticut River in West Lebanon, their first religious gathering was held beneath an elm tree near the bank of the river, the spot marked today by a granite stone on South Main Street. Services were held there until 1772 when a church was built on Seminary Hill, the site indicated by a boulder.

A new meeting house, for the use of all denominations, was erected on Coburn Park and used until 1828 when the Congregationalists decided to have a church of their own on the site of the present Congregational Church.

No longer was there a church in West Lebanon. Members from West Lebanon traveled to Lebanon to attend services until the coming of the railroads brought more people to this village. However, Sunday School classes were started in West Lebanon in the home of Eunice Hutchinson and later in Union Hall until the new church was built.

In 1848, ten interested members met at the home of Oliver Stearns to plan for a church in West Lebanon. These ten members: Oliver Stearns, Richard Kimball, Daniel Richardson, Elias Richardson, Aruna Hall, Ebenezer Kimball, Henry Wood and Thomas Wood voted to continue to support the church at Lebanon Center until "times shall demand a separation". By June 1849 land had been purchased in West Lebanon, from Gideon Dickerson and Oren Hubbard, on which to erect the new building. Plans were drawn up by Moses Wood and by November 8, 1849 the edifice was completed at a cost of \$3,500 and dedicated.

To be continued next month.

The Historical Committee

WLCUCCWorship December 2009

- Tue. Dec. 1st 1:30pm** **Bible Study Discussion**
- Thurs. Dec 3rd 12noon** **Brownbag Book Study**
- Sat. Dec 5th 9am-1pm** **WLCUCC Annual Holiday Bazaar and Luncheon**
4:00pm ***Bel Canto Chamber Singers & Orchestra Winter Concert***
(in sanctuary) Adults \$10, Age 13-18 \$5, Children Free
- Sun. Dec 6th 10am** **2nd Sunday of Advent Communion Worship**
Scripture Malachi 3:1-4; Luke 3:1-6
Message *Prepare: make ready – recycle, refine, renew*
Hymns *Love Divine; Come, O Long-Expected Jesus; O Come, O Come*
- Tue. Dec 8th 1:30pm** **Bible Study Discussion**
- Thurs. Dec. 10th 12noon** **Brownbag Book Study**
- Fri. Dec. 11th 5:30pm** **Holiday Family Movie Night, Trim Tree & Carol Singing**
Fun age-appropriate movies, song, hotdogs, popcorn and refreshments
- Sun. Dec. 13th 10am** **3rd Sunday of Advent Childrens Pageant Worship**
Parsonage Open House Coffee Hour Refreshment
- Tue. Dec 15th 1:30pm** **Bible Study Discussion**
- Thurs. Dec. 17th 12noon** **Brownbag Book Study**
- Sun. Dec. 20th 10am** **4th Sunday of Advent Worship**
Scripture Luke 1:39-45
Message *Prepare: draw closer to One who changes everything for the better*
Hymns Little Bethlehem; My Heart Sings Out; O Little Town of Bethlehem
- 12noon** **A Gentle BLUE CHRISTMAS Worship in our Sanctuary chancel**
Brief service of Scripture and Prayer for all who grieve
acknowledging the holiday season's an especially difficult time for many
- 4:00pm** AutoTours for all ages to see Holiday Lights at Jos. Smith & La Salette
- Thurs. Dec. 24th 6:00pm** **Christmas Eve Family Worship Celebration**
10:00pm **Traditional Service of Lessons and Carols**
Both Services conclude with Candlelight Singing *Silent Night*

A Safe Healthy Happy Christmas Holidays to All from WLCC

- Sun. Dec. 27th 10am** **First Sunday After Christmas Worship / Food Bin Sunday**
A Family Worship Service of Christmas Stories and Singing
Wassail & Donuts Coffee Hour refreshment following service