

*From the
Pastor*



My Brothers and Sisters

This holiday season, let us reflect on what is important in our lives. This requires finding a quiet place with the intension of examining the self. Perhaps it is in nature, or a sacred space in your home. Give yourself a day off from worry, and create a memory of Thanksgiving. Take a deep breath and let go of any hardship you may have of another. Then go out and comfort the discouraged. Help the weak. Be patient with everyone. Make sure no one repays a wrong with a wrong. Always pursue the good for each other and everyone else. Rejoice always. Pray continually. Give thanks in every situation because this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. The beatitudes come to mind.

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas.

May the Joy of the Season fill your heart with goodwill and cheer.

May the chimes of Christmas Glory add up more shine and spread smiles across the miles, today and the New Year.

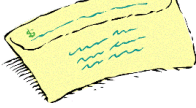
Blessings to all with the Grace of Jesus.

Merry Christmas,

Rev. Dennis

The 2024 envelopes will be out in the Narthex (Hopefully) by Sunday December 24, please pick them up so we can save on postage. Stewardship letters should have been received for all members who have church envelopes with their member number. Those of you who do not have envelopes and wish to pledge and receive envelopes, please call the church office 203-757-0331.

Offering Envelopes



DECEMBER WISHES!

Happy Birthday to the following Church Members

June Gagnon 12/3	Eleanor Raymond 12/21
Noah Sharma 12/06	Christopher Dabbo 12/22
Derek Rodriguez 12/07	Chris McGavran 12/25
Matthew Dabbo 12/9	Maner Tyson 12/29
George Walters III 12/19	



Fluffing for Hanging of the Greens!

Sunday, December 3, 2023 following the Special Church Meeting. **Volunteers Needed!**

Decorating the church for Christmas!

Friday, December 8, 2023 at 11 am.
Volunteers Needed!





Hanging of the Greens

December 10, 2023 - 4:00 pm

First Congregational Church

222 West Main Street Waterbury

First Choir with soloists & instrumentalists!

Festive opening of the Christmas Season

& Decoration for the Church Holiday!

Reception to Follow

Freewill Offering

ATTENTION MEMBERS:

Following the service, we will be hosting a reception in Clinton Hall. It would be greatly appreciated if **church members** could help by bringing cookies, finger sandwiches, and Hors d'oeuvres etc. , **please call Cathy Crouse (203-879-0408) to let her know what you are planning to bring for the reception so she can plan ahead!**

Thanking you in Advance!

Cathy



JOY OF CHRISTMAS DINNER

Monday, December 25th

Joy of Christmas Dinner, special collection. This will be another year of serving a wonderful dinner to as many as 400 less fortunate people on Christmas Day. If you would like to donate to this worthy cause, please make your check payable to First Congregational Church and mark in the memo section "JOC Dinner". Please have your donation in by December 19th.



SAFE HAVEN

WISH LIST FOR SHELTER



- ◆ Liquid Laundry detergent
- ◆ Pillow
- Cases - Pillows
- ◆ Canned Juice
- ◆ Hair Brushes
- ◆ Dish Detergent
- ◆ Diapers (large & ex-large)
- ◆ Paper Towels
- ◆ Cleaning Supplies
- ◆ Jars of Baby Food
- ◆ Baby Cereal
- ◆ Toilet Paper
- ◆ Napkins
- ◆ Women's socks (all sizes)
- ◆ School Supplies
- ◆ Videos
- ◆ Children's Socks (all sizes)
- ◆ Nintendo Games
- ◆ Large Bath towels
- ◆ Women's Underwear (new)
- ◆ Fitted twin sheets
- ◆ Wash Cloths
- ◆ Children's Underwear (new)
- ◆ Gift Certificates

Safe Haven currently provides the following bilingual (English/Spanish) services to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault: Up to 60 days of shelter for women and their children; individual and peer group counseling; 24 hour crisis hotlines for domestic violence and sexual assault; legal advocacy information and referral; community education for adults and children; and court based family violence victim advocacy. All information obtained through counseling remains confidential. They do not subscribe to Caller I.D. Please bring all your donations for Safe Haven on the third Sunday in December.



Food Pantry
Donations Needed

GWIM FOOD BANK DONATIONS

Peanut Butter & Jelly, Canned Meats, Cold Cereal, Mac & Cheese, Pasta & Pasta Sauce, Juice, tuna, canned soups-stews-chili, canned fruits, canned vegetables, beans (canned or dried), rice

pouches, etc. Other donations will be welcomed, but these will be the main focus. The food basket will be available each week in the Narthex.



“Longest Night” - Service to soothe your heart.



While the Christmas season is a season of joy for most people, it is a very difficult time for those who are recently bereaved, or who have lost loved ones at the holidays. On Thursday, December 21 at 7:00 p.m., Rev. Dennis McGuire and the Rev. Dr. Maner Tyson of Waterbury Baptist Ministries will lead a “Longest Night Service”. We hope that members of both congregations will join us at Waterbury Baptist Ministries (our chapel on the lower level), and bring friends who are struggling or sad, for this service of healing and remembrance.



Condolences

Our condolences go out to the family and friends of Carol Hay who joined the Church Eternal & Triumphant on Saturday, November 11, 2023.

We will continue to keep her family and friends in our thoughts and prayers.



Sunday, December 3, 2023
Call to a Special Meeting following Worship
Sunday, December 10, 2023
Hanging of the Greens
4:00 pm – Reception following service
in Clinton Hall

Thursday, December 21, 2023
Longest Night Service - Chapel

Sunday, December 24, 2023 – 10 am
4th Advent /Christmas Eve Morning Service – First Church
Sunday, December 24, 2023- 5:00 pm
Waterbury Baptist Ministries Christmas Eve Service
Sunday, December 24, 2023 – 11:00 pm
Candlelight Service- First Church

The
Joy of
Christmas

Monday, December 25, 2023
12:00 pm to 2:00 pm
Joy of Christmas Dinner – Clinton Hall



From the Director of Music

With Christmas just weeks away, hard to believe it seems, we still have several events coming up. First I would like to thank everyone who took part or attended our annual fair. We had consistent foot traffic throughout the day and also wonderful fellowship between vendors, members of First Church and members of Waterbury Baptist Ministries. I would especially like to thank Karen Cotner and the kitchen crew for their many hours of preparation, also our Arts & Crafts group, Cathy & Ralph Crouse, June Christiansen, Carolyn Flaherty, Karen Cotner, Elaine Maynard, Lois McClain and two of our youth that made several dozen cake pops. It should be noted; the fair was and is a community event, through fellowship, joint activities are one of the ways the community grows over time.

Hanging of the Greens; Sunday December 10th at 4:00pm. A wonderful afternoon of music, light and the spoken word. I would like to extend my thanks to a couple of people from outside and from First Church that will help us make the magic happen; Joe Masulli, Erik Soderberg and Eric Cotner. At least two musical selections will be performed in a way that's much different from what most are used to. If you would like to participate in any way please let us know. Otherwise, spreading the word is also really helpful, posters are available in the office.

Bell Choir; our bell choir continues to work on music for our Sunday morning services. If you are interested in playing please let me know, we would love to have you. There is no requirement of the ability to read music. In fact part of the goal of the bell choir is to help those that have advanced, minimal to no music reading ability the basic ability to do so.

CONTINUED

Drum Circle; our first session was held in October and recently on November 14th. The program will meet once a month for the moment. Kristen Perham leads the group once a month, each time we meet she chooses a different topic for thought and discussion. Some of the outcomes from participating; Improved mood, creates a sense of connectedness with others, builds self-esteem and healthy relationships, enhances overall wellness, induces relaxation and healthy emotional release, provides a fun way to integrate mind, body and spirit, and connects one to a higher power. If you would like to take part or would like more information contact Kristen Perham in the office.

As the likelihood of inclement weather increases, please stay tuned for program cancellations or building closures!

I leave you with this message in closing. While trying to put up the fair banner the Monday before the fair, of course it was windy and to say the least I was struggling a bit. It was at that moment when a passerby offered some assistance. Without hesitation, I said yes. While we were both working on getting the sign attached another passerby stopped and asked if we needed help, why not the more the merrier. After getting the sign up we all shook hands and the response of both gentlemen was God Bless." I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me." This Christmas, give the gift of yourself, often the best gift, give freely of your time, pray for those that cannot pray for themselves above be humble.

Wishing all of you and your families a Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!

Stewart Crouse
Director of Music