

FOR REFLECTION

Psalm 148

Pew Bible pg. 571

WELCOME

THE PRELUDE

“When Jesus Was a Tiny Baby” (Traver) -The Junior Choir

CALL TO WORSHIP

-Carolyn Ross, Deacon

Leader: With all the problems you face: unemployment, debt, illness and all the hardships of life, why have you come to worship?

People: We come to be reminded

that no suffering or pain can separate us from God.

Leader: The prophet Isaiah cries out today! "Arise; shine for your light has come!"

I'm ready for that bright light from God to light my way.

We see that light in Jesus, God-with-Us,

and we recognize that light in our lives as well.

We are all created in God's image:

God's light was born in us as we breathed our first breath.

People: We come to worship to stand in the presence of light, to connect God's light in us, so that we might illumine the world.

Leader: What a reason to worship! How do we recognize that light?

People: In the continued work of Jesus the Christ;

in compassion for all,

in justice for the poor,

in welcome for the stranger

we shine God's light into the world.

Leader: So come, let us bring the joys and hardships of life to worship

and celebrate that God's light is already with us and within us.

***HYMN OF PRAISE**

“As with Gladness”

#173 Chalice Hymnal

INVOCATION

Leader: Light of the world, shine on us today. Warm our hearts. Open our eyes. As the clouds of sorrow disperse, let the light of hope shine upon us as we begin this new day and this New Year.

People: Amen

CHURCH AT PRAYER

Prayer Requests

Silent Prayer

Pastoral Prayer

THE LORD'S PRAYER (Unison)

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

OFFERING OUR GIFTS TO GOD

The Offertory Statement

Offertory

-Michael Jovovich

***Doxology**

#46 Chalice Hymnal

Prayer of Dedication

THE NEW TESTAMENT LESSON

Matthew 2:1-2

Pew Bible pg. 877

SERMON

“A Different Way”

-The Rev. Ed Rawls

***THE COMMUNION HYMN**

“O Morning Star”

#105 Chalice Hymnal

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

(Please take the elements when received)

THE INVITATION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (Unison)

Divine light that enlightens all who come into the world. We admit that sometimes we would rather hide in the darkness than to come out into the light. We confess that often we are afraid; afraid of you and afraid of what others think. Forgive us O God, and help us to come out of our self-imposed closets. Help us to stand before you and be completely honest. Help us to open up that we might find grace in the darkest places of our lives.

SILENT PRAYER

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Jesus promised. ðAnyone who comes to me I will in wise cast out.ö God's arms are wide open in the person of Jesus Christ. There is no sin too great that it won't be forgiven, no transgression too shameful, that God would be ashamed to call you her own child. God's love is steadfast and eternal. Enter into the light and receive the grace of God.

***THE GLORIA PATRI**

#35 Chalice Hymnal

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

THE WORDS OF INSTITUTION

THE PRAYER OF CONSECRATION

THE DISTRIBUTION OF ELEMENTS

THE PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING (Unison)

We give thanks, Almighty God, that you have refreshed us at your table by granting us the presence of Jesus Christ. Strengthen our faith, increase our love for one another and send us forth into the world in courage and peace, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit, through Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.

***THE CLOSING HYMN**

“In Remembrance of Me”

#403 Chalice Hymnal

THE SONG OF SIMEON (Unison)

Holy One, now let your servant depart in peace; your word has been fulfilled: my own eyes have seen the salvation which you have prepared for all people; a light to reveal you to the nations and the glory of your people Israel.

THE BENEDICTION

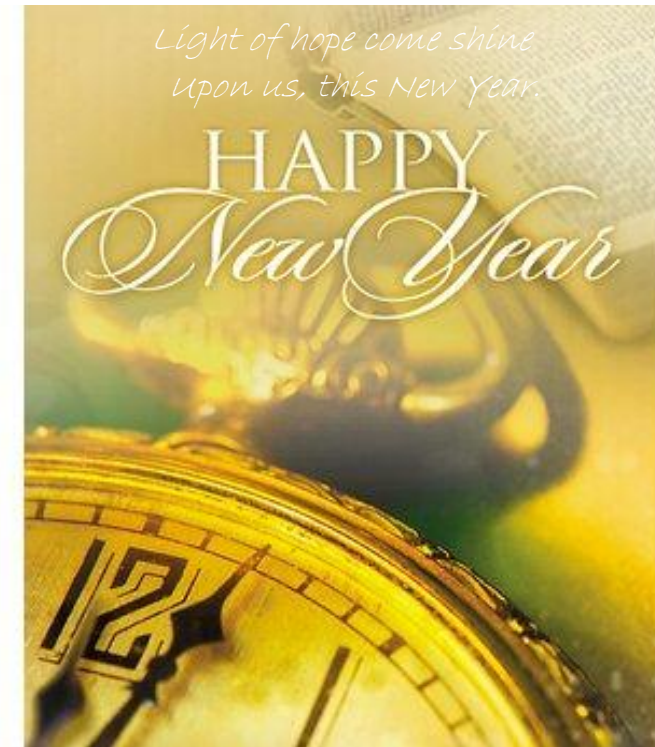
THE BENEDICTION IN MUSIC “Shalom to You Now”
-Michael Jovovich

#436 Chalice Hymnal

THE POSTLUDE

“Improvisation”

Our Vision: Praising God and meeting the needs of people through worship, study, outreach and fellowship, in the name of Jesus Christ.



**First Congregational Church
2301 Main Street
Stratford, Connecticut 06615
Firstchurchstratford.org**

**WORSHIP 10:00 AM
Sunday School 10:00 AM – Sept. to May**

Communion Sunday, January 1, 2012

The Rev. Edward Rawls, Minister
Don Coulson, Financial Secretary
Anne Larsen and Jane Hartigan, Parish Nurses
Kristine Bacon, Director of Christian Education



Dr. Joe Utterback, Director of Music
Bill Hickey, Facilities Manager
Sandy O’Neill, Church Administrator
Tammy Langston, Youth Director

Gathered 1639

First Congregational Church, 2301 Main Street, Stratford, CT 06615

Phone: 203-378-2644 Fax: 203-377-6749

Email: Firstchurchofstratford@yahoo.com

Minister: The Rev. Edward Rawls

Bulletin Supplement, January 1, 2012

Pastor's letter of the week:

Is a letter written by the Reverend Ed Rawls, sent via email, containing important information on the events that are happening at the church. We would like to send it to everyone who has email. If you are interested in receiving the Pastor's letter of the week, please fill out and put into the offering plate or email the church administrator at firstchurchofstratford@yahoo.com.

Name: _____

Email address: _____

Let's Go Green and receive the Courier by email.

It has come to our attention that we are using a great deal of paper each month in sending out the Courier by regular mail. We send out over 270 Couriers each month that are sometimes over fourteen pages long. Over a year, that adds up to a lot of trees. It also adds up to a lot of money. In a time when we seriously want to cut our deficit, switching from regular mail to email is a rather painless way to do it.

We know that some of you do not have email addresses and some don't use a computer. That's fine. We plan to keep sending it to you as usual. But for those who use the internet, we would like to encourage you to move from receiving your Courier by mail to email. Believe it or not, if over a hundred people would do this, it could save the world a lot of trees and save the church a lot of money.

If you are interested in helping the church save money by going green and receiving your Courier by email, please notify the church administrator by email at firstchurchofstratford@yahoo.com or by leaving this notice in the offering plate with the following information:

Name: _____

Email: _____

TODAY, January 1, 2012-New Year's Day

10:00am Worship with Communion

11:15am Fellowship

12:00pm-3:00pm French Speaking Baptist Church-Sanctuary

4:00pm-7pm The Unitarian Universalist Church-Sanctuary & Lower Packard Hall

MONDAY, January 2, 2012

Office Closed

6:30pm-8pm Girl Scouts-1st/2nd Grade classroom

7:00pm Boy Scouts-Scout Room and Lower Packard Hall

TUESDAY, January 3, 2012

5:00pm Table Tennis-Lower Packard Hall

7:00pm French Speaking Baptist Church

WEDNESDAY, January 4, 2012

7:00pm Alcoholics Anonymous Planning Meeting

7:30pm Camera Club

THURSDAY, January 5, 2012

7:15pm Alcoholics Anonymous Meeting-Lower Packard Hall

FRIDAY, January 6, 2012

SATURDAY, January 7, 2012

9am-12pm French Speaking Baptist Church-Sanctuary

10:00am Alcoholics Anonymous Meeting

SUNDAY, January 8, 2012

10:00am Worship

11:15am Fellowship

Board of Christian Education Meeting

12:00pm-3:00pm French Speaking Baptist Church-Lower Packard Hall

3:00pm Rose Window Concert-Michael and Friends

4:00pm-7pm The Unitarian Universalist Church-Lower Packard Hall

GOOD MORNING! And welcome to worship at First Congregational Church. To all our guests and visitors: we are especially pleased you are joining us for worship this morning and hope that your spirit is uplifted, your soul nourished and you will be able to face the days and week ahead. We invite you to complete one of the pew cards in the pew and place it in the offering plate. If you would like to meet with the Pastor, please complete the request card in the pew holder.

Today is a Family Sunday children are to sit with their parents. Childcare will not be available today. For those parents who wish to keep their baby with them, we ask that if the child should become fussy, please feel free to make use of the rocking chair located at the back of the sanctuary. The

glass doors, which are located at the bottom of the stairs leading from the Narthex to the lower level, will be locked on Sunday mornings. If you need access to the lower level during worship, please see an usher. The restroom is located out the doors of the sanctuary and to the left in the Narthex.

USHERS: Our Ushers today are Allison Jessoop, Fred Whittemore, Bob Preto-Rodas, Cynthia Buckley, Al Brown, Jane Hartigan, Sharon Brown and Nancy Mellardo.

DEACONS: Our Deacons today are Beth Turner, Gary Hanson, Al Brown, Barbara Hickey, Ken German, Jean Martire, Eric Nyquist, Arlene Bernor and Charlie Bitzer.

OUR GREETERS today are representing the Pilgrim Fellowship Youth Group.

FLOWERS: *The altar flowers are given by Bud and Sally Stevens celebrating the mission of the FCC.*

The Nominating Committee is looking for people to serve on the following boards or committees:

Board of Christian Ed (3) - Two positions are one-year terms
Ushers (1)

If there is a committee or board that you wish to serve on, please contact the Chairperson of Nominating, Virginia Millington at 203-378-1974 as soon as possible. Thank you!

OFFERING ENVELOPES:

Please pick up your 2012 Offering Envelopes in Upper Packard Hall during fellowship hour.

Contact Office

Please contact the church at 203-378-2644 or firstchurchofstratford@yahoo.com if someone is sick or is in the hospital, so we can be praying for them.

Submission of information for the Courier: The February 2012 Courier deadline will be January 15, 2012. Please try to send all submissions for the Courier via the church email address at firstchurchofstratford@yahoo.com to help make production of the Courier easier to process. For those of you who do not have a computer, your handwritten or typewritten articles will still be accepted, but please try to have them in a few days prior to the deadline. In addition, if you would like to **receive your Courier via email**, please contact the office and or check out the website for the Courier at firstchurchstratford.org.

Thank you for your continued support and cooperation.

Sandy O'Neill, Church Administrator

Sincere Thanks!

The Women's Service League sends sincere thanks to everyone who supported our Holiday Cookie Sale. Thanks to all the ladies that baked, those that packaged cookies Saturday morning and all of you wonderful people that purchased the cookies.

We hope that you are pleased.

Thanks to all these folks working together, our treasury will benefit \$600.00! We wish you all a happy and healthy New Year!

WOMEN'S SERVICE LEAGUE JANUARY 14

The Women's Service League will meet Saturday, January 14 at 10A.M.

We have lots to talk about and plans to make.

***Jamie Dobrovich will bring a display of Pampered Chef as well as
Co-host with Beth Turner.***

Please join us with some good ideas for the New Year!