
Elmwords

Elmwood Community Church

December 2011

PASTOR'S CORNER

I met my friends Sean and Maureen when we were all students in the seminary. They are from Australia. Their first Christmas in the northern hemisphere was a surprise in several ways. They had heard that it gets cold in New England, but they did not realize what that felt like until they had their first experiences with snow, sleet, and freezing rain. They were appalled. They wondered how so many people put up with it.

Sean was a bit surprised by what he called, "all the imagery of darkness and cold. They make it sound like Christmas is a nature festival; as though Jesus' birth was connected with the Solstice." That gave many students from the northern hemisphere pause for thought. Many acknowledged that they did in fact speak in terms of "the darkest time of year, or the light shining into the dark."

Sean went on to say that for Australian children Christmas brings another joy, a joy beyond parties, food, and present. School gets out for summer vacation. When the American kids heard this, they were fascinated and a little bit envious.

The fact of the matter is that Jesus' birth is not a celebration of the solstice, when the days begin to grow longer. That is a natural event. The birth of Jesus was and is a supernatural event. In that child born in a manger so long ago, God entered human history. God came to earth in person to demonstrate God's will through everything Jesus thought, said, and did. Does anyone wonder what God is like? They have only to look to Jesus to see God's tender love, holy truth, invitation to a life of service and joy here and now, and the promise of eternal bliss. All this and more from the Christ-Child so humbly born.

May this season bring you joy and peace. May you be filled with hope for what Jesus will do in your life. May your hopes be fulfilled. May you be forever blessed.

Merry Christmas!



Dave

Church Council Meeting – November 21st, 2011 – Agenda/Moderator's Notes

Meeting was called to order at 6:38pm with ten members present: Al Croxall, Susan Wiley, Rev. Dave Congdon, Bill Alberti, Barb Hesse, Susan Giaccotta, Patrick Nobou, Robin Lindemann, Wendy Leonard, Mickey Allgaier

Opening Prayer and Scripture (Pastor Dave): Jeremiah 31:31-34

Minutes of the previous meeting: Approved with minor corrections.

Old Business:

- People need rides: write article and start sign-up sheet.
- Fair – financial spreadsheet shared.
- Nominating Committee to meet after Thanksgiving.
- Photo directory session postponed to Friday, Saturday February 3rd and 4th.

New Business: Thank you note to Council from Mark Janas for gift card.

- Saturday, December 3rd, tag sale in Conte Hall from 9am-1pm.
- Start working on Annual Reports.
- Norma M. and Susan G. would volunteer to give a slide show to Circle 6 and congregation.

Deacons – Colleen Peterson (not present) Report given by Mickey.

- Position of Assistant Historian to Ellen Bucchere by unanimous vote.

Pastor's Report – Pastor Dave

- Norm and Cynthia will usher at Silva Service.
- Need paper goods – Dave will call Jerry Gray.
- Dave Smith asked about using the balcony.
- Susan Wiley will contact cleaners to clean and put up folding chairs.
- New Members: Katrease Rogers, Diana Collins, Will Cook, Rhoda DeBonee, Adele Martinez, Cindy Gauthier.

Missions – Robin Lindemann – No report – unable to meet

- Leftovers from fair went to South Park Inn.

Trustees – Bill Alberti

- Amistad has moved on.
- Short-term rental on December 10th & 17th.
- Hatchway completed.
- Kitchen railing broken – will be replaced.
- Caution when snow on roof, be careful on stairs.

Christian Ed – Patrick Nobou

- Advent Workshop – Christian Ed will supply lunch and want to combine coffee hour.
- Christmas Pageant – scheduled for December 18th ...will order more costumes.
- Youth Group: Dinner at South Park went well.
- Youth Group plan trip for summer to Indiana.
- Youth Group may have retreat in Fall 2012 at SLCC.
- January: trip to Norwalk for show.

Controller's Report – Susan Wiley

- Spreadsheet given and explained.
- Will be working on 2012 Budget.
- Scrip discussed.

(moderator's notes continued)

MEMBERS-AT-LARGE

Junior Member-At-Large – Al Croxall

- Many people driving fast thru our parking lot.
- Questions about Amistad leaving and why.
- Many favorable comments on entrance way in Conte Hall now painted.
- Thrift Shop closet still has leak.
- Huge congratulations to Susan Wiley – Fair was lovely.
- 50/40 Dinner wonderful.

Senior Member-At-Large – Susan Giaccotto

- Read lovely note from church member about evident growth in church.
- New handicap bathroom: door lock not working and needs to be fixed before Saturday.

Newest Member-At-Large Barb Hesse

- Main floor bathroom looks nice; apparent problem with upstairs bathroom (leaks).
- Thanks to all who helped with Fair luncheon.
- Thanks to Joan Stavola for hand soap and decaf coffee.

Upcoming Events (Just so we're all on the same page)

- Saturday, June 14, 2013 at 4pm 140th Anniversary of the Founding of our Church.

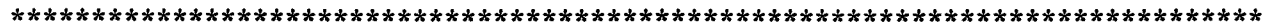
Meeting Adjourned at 8:22pm.

Next Meeting: December 19, 2011



CALLING ALL CARS!!!

There are a number of members and friends who would love to attend church services, social events, and meetings, but need transportation to do so. There are a few who routinely volunteer on a regular basis, but we need to widen that pool. I suggest that we develop a list of folks who would be willing, on occasion, to provide rides. Choir members, for example, would be unable to bring people to church, as we have to be an hour early, but some of us could take people home. If we had a list of names, the town they live in, and the times they might be able to help, I think we could easily fill this need. Please give prayerful thought to this concern. We will provide a sign-up list, or you could contact the Church Office, or me at m.allgaier@comcast.net or (860)206-0125. Thanks so much. The more folks in church, the better the view from the choir loft! Mickey



ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL HOLIDAY FAIR!

The 2011 edition of the Holiday Fair is complete. It was another true congregational effort everyone pitched in. Many thanks to Pat MacDougall, Ellen Bucchere, Eleanor Kibbe, Rosli and Joan Gustafson for hours of sorting through donations, cleaning and pricing. Barb Hesse, Mickey Allgaier and the entire Carter Family for producing an excellent lunch with THE BEST APPLE CRISP EVER! Table workers: Joan and Beth Gustafson, Kristina Wittchen, Susan McLarney and Shirley Marshall, Al Croxall and Gene Knorr, Daysha Haxton, Norma Moskey, Diane Ludwick, and Rod Tyler. Our set-up/clean-up helpers: Mason Ellison, Will Cook and Ginger Croxall, and everyone who baked, and Eleanor Mitkoski's niece for the ever popular bird feeders. A special shout-out to our new friends Joan Stavola and Adela Martinez; Adela worked on the jewelry table (definitely hazardous duty) and Joan worked all day Friday setting up. We took in over \$2,290.00, just a few dollars less than last year. Thank you everyone. Susan Wiley

A Personal Note

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

02 Kasey L. D'Ambrosio
 03 Gabriella Nobou
 04 Al Croxall
 08 Nick Allgaier
 13 Adela Martinez
 16 Paulette Evans
 19 Jerry Bilak
 20 Kelly Lincoln
 24 Adam Swift
 28 Joan Gustafson
 29 Dorothy Swenson
 29 Carol Alberti
 30 Sally Waite



DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

20 Roberta & Gonzalo Rodriguez
 31 Ethel & Al Croxall

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

04 Dorothy Guertin
 04 Melissa Cunningham
 05 Eleanor Mitkoski
 08 Patrick Nobou (senior)
 10 Gina Evans D'Angelo
 10 Kara Brown
 15 Dalicia Eschoe
 15 Casandra Hoyt
 18 Norma Moskey
 19 Frank Nobou
 23 Pauline Burwood
 26 Vernon Coffin
 26 Beth Gustafson

BIBLE STUDY

There will not be any Bible Study until January 11th, 2012.

SYMPATHIES

Sympathies to the family of Thelma Cassells upon her death on November 8th.

A Memorial Service was held at Elmwood Community Church on November 12th at 1pm.

Sympathies to the family of Zuzette Silva upon her death on November 17th. A

Memorial Service was held on Saturday, November 26th at 11am followed by a reception in Conte Hall.

ANNUAL REPORTS

Copy ready deadline is January 9th, 2012.
 Reports distributed on January 22nd, 2012.
 Call to Meeting read Jan. 8th, 15th, & 22nd.
 Annual Meeting is January 29th, 2012.

MISSIONS

The Board of Missions will be collecting new men's clothing for the Open Hearth at *Christmas* time—the items should be new, wrapped, and marked with the size and what it is. They can be left in the quiet room.

The Mitten Tree will be up again this year... scarves, mittens, gloves and hats make such beautiful decorations on the tree and they are so welcomed by the recipients... please help to make this *Christmas* merry for others... Thank you for all your support! Missions

There will be an offering "*The Christmas Fund*" on December 18th, and Christmas Eve. Gifts to the *Christmas Fund* provide resources for the Emergency Fund, which offers assistance to those who serve the church today. Gifts to the *Christmas Fund* help provide Pension and Health Premium Supplementation to lower income retirees and Christmas "*Thank You*" Gift Checks to hundreds of annuitants. Thank you!

APPRECIATION ORNAMENTS

This year, during the upcoming Advent Season, we'll again offer Appreciation Ornaments. There will be red and green paper "ornaments" available as you enter the sanctuary. Please take at least one paper "ornament", and on that ornament, please write down something that you appreciate about Elmwood Community Church --- It could be something about the church itself, something about the service, an individual staff member of ECC, or any member of the congregation. Fill out as many ornaments as you want. When you've written your appreciative comment on the ornament, place it in the offering plate. Once all the ornaments have been collected, they'll be used to decorate the church. Afterwards, the sentiments will be posted in *Elmwords*. So...If you're happy and you know it, WRITE it down!

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

There will not be any Circle 6 meetings during the months of January and February 2012. Also, due to the Christmas and New Year Holidays falling on Sunday, the office will be closed on Monday, December 26th and January 2nd, 2012.



CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS AND WREATHS

When ordering Christmas flowers this year, please fill out the form below. Poinsettias should be ordered and paid for by December 16th. Money for the wreaths should be in by December 1st for the "Hanging of the Greens". . If you are paying by check please make checks payable to Elmwood Community Church and write Christmas flowers in the memo field.

Poinsettia – Price \$8.00 Wreaths – Price \$16.00

In Thanksgiving of _____

In Memory of _____

Given by _____

Amount Enclosed _____

I would like the plant to go to someone on our Parish Visitation List

I would like to take the plant home _____

Thank you for helping to provide two of the many symbols used to decorate the church this time of year.

Peace, Your Deacons

A Personal Note

ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE FOR 2011

As a way of preparing ourselves spiritually for Christmas, Elmwood Community Church offers the following worship and fellowship opportunities this coming Holiday season. Come prepare your heart and home for Christmas.

November 27 – The First Sunday in Advent
During Children's time in worship on the four Sundays of Advent, **our children** will light the candles on the Advent Wreath.

The Annual Advent Workshop sponsored by the Christian Education Committee will be held on **Sunday, November 27th, 2011** after worship service. **Please join us!**

December 4th – The Second Sunday in Advent
Join us for our annual **"Hanging of the Greens"** service in which we highlight some of the symbols of the season with Scripture verses, music, and readings while we decorate the Sanctuary for Christmas. The children and youth join us for worship.

December 18 – The Third Sunday in Advent
The **Christmas Pageant** will take place on **December 18th** after worship service. All are welcome to join the children in this traditional celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ. The **Christmas Fund** offering will be taken today.

December 24 – Christmas Eve
Christmas Eve worship welcomes all ages on **Saturday, December 24th, at 7pm here at Elmwood Community Church.** Please join us for; familiar scripture, favorite carols, music from our Choir, lighting the candles on the Advent Wreath, bringing the baby to the Creche and candle-lighting as we celebrate God's gift of Jesus Christ. The offering for the **Christmas Fund** will also be received this evening.

~ DID YOU KNOW? ~

Welcome to a features column by the Deacons! We hope you find it informative and helpful.

Did you know that having fresh flowers in church on Sunday mornings is one of the ways we offer praise to God? Flowers are one of God's beautiful gifts. They bring joy and delight to whoever receives them, including God. Please consider signing up to bring some one Sunday be they from your garden or a grocery store sale. Thank you! Luke 12:27 "Consider the lilies... even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these."

Peace and blessings, your Deacons ♥

SUE LYONS

There's another person who has been in our community and in our midst, not in this church but in the community of Hartford, whom some of you may have known. Her name was Susan Lyon. Susan Lyon was the Protestant chaplain at Hartford Hospital. She was severely crippled with arthritis, so that she was grotesque. She was also blind; she walked around with a cane. She had been here for a couple of years. I remember the first time I met her was at a meeting of the city-wide Hartford Clergy Association, and I noticed that this woman was sitting all by herself. All the other tables were full, but nobody was sitting with her. And then, because of the cane, I thought, "Well, she's blind," so I went over and asked if I could help her get her lunch, and she invited me to do that. So we went over, and I told her what was available, and she told me what she wanted, and then I was privileged to sit with her and have lunch. She asked me about myself, and she told me about herself, and it was a great privilege to get to know this woman. She was so full of the love of God that her face gave off an incredible sense of peace. About a week or so ago she had surgery, she had a breast removed, because she had invasive cancer in the breast. After a couple of days she was back at work at the hospital.

People tell me that she was full of the same spirit, loving, caring, reaching out, expressing her love and affection, her support and care to all those other people. That was her *privilege*, to do that, because she was so full of love inside. On Friday night I received a telephone call that Susan Lyon had tripped and fallen down the stairs at her home, and she broke her neck, and she died. And the woman who called to tell me about this was broken-hearted. Other students in this church who have worked with her in clinical pastoral training are in deep grief, as I am. But I want you to know that I know a secret about Susan Lyon that changes everything—and that is that Susan Lyon is at home now, and that she is with the Lord who has loved her and whom she has served all her life. And God, I believe, took her so that she wouldn't suffer any more than she already has. She didn't insist on her own way. The only thing she insisted on was that God would fill her with his love and enable her to love others.

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-----United Church of Christ-----
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**PLEASE DELIVER PROMPTLY
DATED MATERIAL**

DATES TO REMEMBER

NOTE: NO BIBLE STUDY UNTIL JANUARY 11TH, 2012
NOTE: NO CIRCLE 6 IN JANUARY OR FEBRUARY 2012
December 1st, 8th, 15th, 22nd, & 29th7:00pm Choir
December 4thCE Meeting
December 4thHanging of the Greens
December 4th6:30pm Youth Group Meeting
December 7th6:30pm Deacons
December 11thMissions Meeting
December 12th6:30pm Circle 6
December 14th6:30pm Trustees
December 18thChristmas Pageant after worship
December 18thChristmas Fund Offering
December 18th6:30pm Youth Group Meeting
December 19th6:30pm Council Meeting
December 20thNewsletter Articles Due in Office
December 24th ... (Note Time Change)7:00pm Christmas Eve Service
December 24thChristmas Fund Offering
December 26thOFFICE CLOSED FOR HOLIDAY
January 2ndOFFICE CLOSED FOR HOLIDAY
January 8thJanuary Newsletter Available
January 9thCOPY READY ANNUAL REPORTS DUE IN OFFICE
January 22ndANNUAL REPORTS AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW
January 29thANNUAL MEETING FOLLOWING WORSHIP
January 29thFebruary Newsletter Available