

First Community Church

Newsletter

Celebrating 150 Years of Christian Worship

December 2014



Our Mission Statement

We are a community of faith believing in the power of prayer and seeking earnestly to deepen our spiritual life and share the love of God with others.

The Pastor's Message

We are entering into my favorite time of year. I am not speaking of the winter weather, which can be brutal here in New England. I am not speaking of the aesthetic beauty of this season for, though the snow can be beautiful, I find the rich colors of fall more pleasing to the eye. I am speaking of what this season means in the life of the church and in our own deepening spirituality.

We have had a very busy fall here in this church! We began the celebration of our 150th anniversary with a wonderful gathering of present and past parishioners on Homecoming Sunday. In October, our former pastor Bill Leonard delivered a talk on religious experience, preached, and gathered with us around the communion table. In November we hosted the United Parishes of Southborough Ecumenical Thanksgiving Service, a beautiful service that was very well attended. By the way, our friends from other churches really love our renovated vestry! We have a banner in front of our church letting passersby know that we are celebrating 150 years of Christian worship, fellowship, spiritual growth, and mission. On the first Sunday of December, our former pastor Sue Hansberry will be with us. Sue will be preaching on the theme of peace.

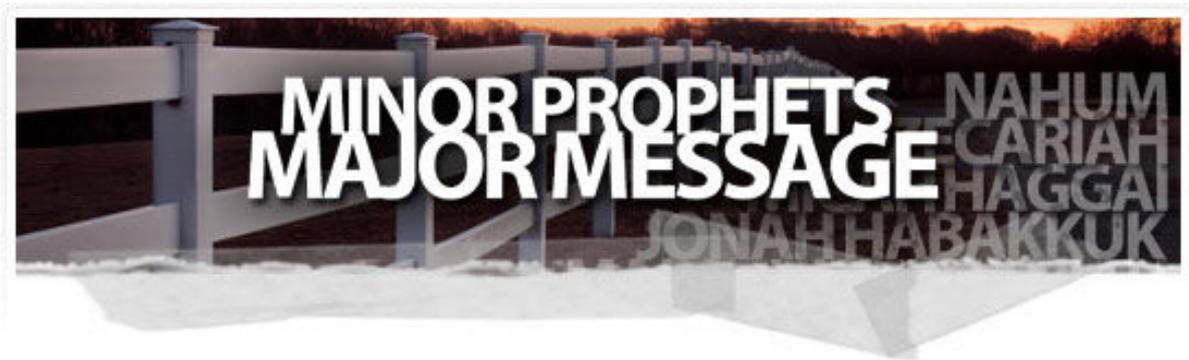
In addition to our regular board and committee meetings and the activities of Women's Fellowship, we held a very successful pie sale and are preparing for the Advent Event potluck supper. This was the first year that we set up an informational booth and handed out our beautiful new brochures on Heritage Day. On a more somber note, we celebrated Eugenie Boutilier's life in a memorial service November 2 here in our sanctuary. Eugenie, at 97, was our oldest living church member.

This year I find myself really looking forward to Advent. Advent is a time to pull back from the extraverted life of the church. It is a time to turn inward. It is a time to open our minds and our hearts to the symbols and rituals of our faith: the humble manger, the lighting of the Advent candles of hope, peace, joy, and love, and the singing of our beloved Advent and Christmas hymns. It invites us to enter into the beautiful stillness of our Christmas Eve service: receiving and sharing the light with each other, celebrating our Lord's birth two thousand years ago and also in our lives today.

In the busyness of this Christmas season, let us once again find and center our lives in the presence that is the true meaning of this season. Be with us in worship, prayer, and mission throughout Advent and on Christmas Eve as we tend the light that at times flickers within us, the light that can fill our lives and drive back the darkness that surrounds us and threatens to engulf our world.

Yours in Christ,
 Reverend Paul D. Sanderson

Adult Bible Study



Our Adult Bible Study meets on the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Sundays of every month from 9:15 - 10:30 AM in the Vestry.

and **WHAT** *Lord* require of you?
 DOES THE **JUSTLY** and
 To act **MERCY** and
 To love **HUMBLY** and
 To walk **God**
 with your
 MICAH 6:8

This year we are exploring the writings of some of the so-called “Minor Prophets” beginning with the prophet Micah, and how their inspired preaching is applicable not only to their time and nation but to our world, our nation, and to us as individuals.

Biblical beginners are welcome! Bibles are provided!



Save The Date

The Classic Ham & Bean Supper, planned and cooked by the D&D Dynamic Duo a.k.a Darlene Sanderson and Dianne Simmons, has been set for Saturday, January 31, 2015.

Missions Offering



Our Mission Offering for December is given to the Salvation Army through our church “Christmas Card.” We continue our long tradition of this program in lieu of sending individual Christmas cards to members of the congregation whom we see regularly. If you would like your name to be included on this card, which will be sent to all those members and friends of our church family who are on our mailing list, please make your donation no later than **Sunday, December 14**. This will insure that your name will appear on the special holiday greetings that will be enclosed with the Pastor’s Christmas Letter. If you have a pledge box, please use the special envelope provided in it. Or you can make a check payable to the church, (note on it “Salvation Army”) and give it to Jim Holmes or place it in the offering plate. This is a great way to extend Christmas greetings to everyone in our church family and support a very worthy cause in the process.

The Salvation Army, an international movement, is an evangelical part of the universal Christian Church. Its message is based on the Bible. Its ministry is motivated by the love of God. Its mission is to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and to meet human needs in His name without discrimination.

11 THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT THE SALVATION ARMY

1. The Salvation Army was founded in London, England in 1865 by former Methodist minister William Booth. Booth abandoned the conventional concept of a church and a pulpit, instead taking his message of spiritual salvation directly to the people – in particular the homeless, the hungry, and the destitute of Victorian-era London.
2. National Salvation Army Week was first declared by President Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1954. In the proclamation, Eisenhower noted: “Among Americans, The Salvation Army has long been a symbol of wholehearted dedication to the cause of human brotherhood. Their work has been a constant reminder to us all that each of us is neighbor and kin to all Americans. Giving freely of themselves, the men and women of The Salvation Army have won the respect of us all.”
3. The annual Red Kettle Christmas fundraising campaign started in 1891 when a Salvation Army captain in San Francisco set up a crab pot at Oakland Ferry Landing to collect money for the poor at Christmas. The campaign has since become one of the longest-running and most recognizable fundraising efforts in the world. Kettles are now used in such distant lands as Korea, Japan, Chile and throughout Europe.
4. The Salvation Army's first major disaster response effort in the United States followed the devastating hurricane that impacted Galveston, TX in 1900, literally destroying the coastal city and killing more than 5,000 people. Following the storm, Army officers from across the country moved into the Galveston area to help clean, feed and shelter the thousands of survivors, while also providing much needed spiritual and emotional support. The Army's emergency response capabilities were once again tested six years later following the Great Earthquake in San Francisco in 1906.



The Season Of Advent



This year the sacred liturgical season of Advent begins on Sunday, November 30. This is always a special time in the life and worship of our church. We begin to sing the Christmas carols that are so much a part of our tradition, one each week until Christmas Eve. Our sanctuary is always decorated so nicely thanks to the artistic touch of David Sickles.

In our worship, we usually focus on a theme that helps us to prepare for the celebration and the experience of Christmas. This year we will be reflecting on the blessings of Christmas – the gifts or fruits of the Spirit that God gave birth to in Christ, gifts that are ours to share with others. Each week, as we light one of the candles of our Advent wreath, we will explore what it would mean to receive the gift symbolized in that candle and then discover how we might give birth to these gifts in the world.

November 30	The Gift of Hope
December 7	The Gift of Peace
December 14	The Gift of Joy
December 21	The Gift of Love
Christmas Eve	The Gift of Light

Our former pastor, Sue Hansberry will be with us on December 7 to lead us in our reflections on peace and to share communion with us.

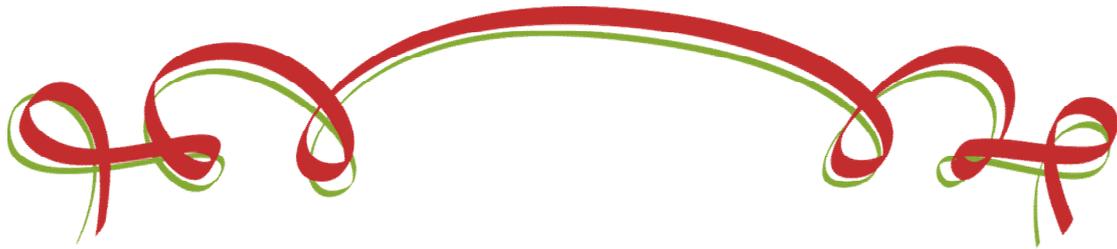
Please join us during this special and blessed season as we prepare to receive the Christ child into our lives.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service



Let us welcome our Savior into the world and into our lives on Christmas Eve as we gather for our traditional service of lessons and carols, as we both “receive the light” and share it with each other.

Join us on Wednesday, December 24 at 6:30 PM.



The Advent Event **POTLUCK** *Supper*

& Tree Lighting Sing-A-Long

Saturday, December 6, 2014 -- 6:00 PM

We will start off the evening with our usual potluck supper where the table is overflowing with a variety of foods, then head up to the sanctuary for the traditional Christmas carol sing-a-long and the “lighting of the First Community Church Christmas Tree.”



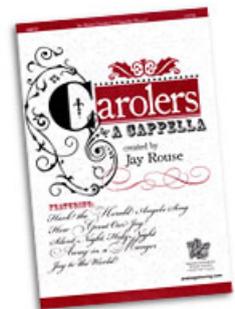
Then get ready for more surprises!

This event is sponsored by the Choir and is always a great way to get into the holiday spirit. Come for a time of food, fellowship and fun as we kick off this great holiday season!

Everyone should wear something RED – anything RED! See you all there!!

Please sign up on the posted sheet in the Vestry and let us know what food you will be bringing (entree, appetizer, side dish, or salad - whatever your specialty is). Desserts and drinks will be provided by the Choir.

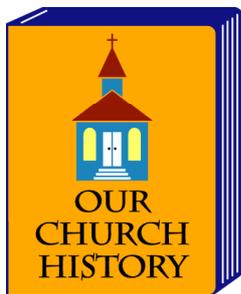
If you would like a ride to and from the Advent Event, don't hesitate to call Jim and Cheryl Holmes (508-460-0142). We want you to be there and share in this special event with us.





Celebrate Our Heritage

History Lesson 104



“House of Worship”

Though we will be celebrating the sesquicentennial (150) years of our Church this coming January 18, our Church structure is not quite so old!

We find in the Church records:

- January 14, 1869 - “An adjourned meeting of the Society was called to order...the report of the committee to look out a situation for building a Chapel was then heard the report not being complete it was voted that the aforesaid committee report a location at an adjourned meeting 1 week from date.”
- January 21, 1869 - “...The report of the Committee on location was called for. They reported not decided, in consequence of disappointment, a succession of several votes was taken and withdrawn and finally it was voted to choose three Solicitors to obtain subscription in this Town for Building a Chapel. S.R. Jones, W.J.C. Hobbs and Chas. Hooper chosen.
- February 4, 1869 - “An adjourned meeting called to order...The committee on location reported that they had decided upon accepting Mr. Harvey Newton’s lot and the report was accepted and a vote was taken thanking Mr. Newton for his offer of the Lot. A committee of two men was then appointed to report a plan for a chapel and report one week from this date. S.R. Jones and Rev. S.L. Hobbs were chosen.
- February 11, 1869 - “An adjourned meeting called to order...the report of the committee on a plan for a Chapel reported that they had visited the Chapel at South Natick and showed the plans they obtained from that people. On account of a fire in the vicinity the meeting was partly broken up and it was voted to adjourn to Saturday, February 13.
- February 13, 1869 - “The committee on procuring plans for a Chapel was then listened to and it was voted to instruct a Building Committee to follow the plans recommended by the Committee on plans and the expense of Building not to exceed Three Thousand Dollars. It was voted to empower the Solicitors to collect 1/4th of the money raised in the town before April 1, 1869. A Building Committee consisting of S.R. Jones, Harvey Newton and Rev. S.L. Hobbs was chosen. They were empowered to use their judgment in letting out the work on the Chapel.

- April 26, 1869 - “The members of the building committee present reported what had been done by them for the past week and a change in a lot for the chapel was reported.
- June 1, 1869 - “Remarks were made by building committee and others in relation to action of the Committee of the Conference of Churches and it was thought best NOT to proceed with building until we could hear favorable reports from them.
- June 15, 1869 - “Reports were made in regard to what the Conference Committee had done toward assisting our Building Enterprise which seemed satisfactory.” Building was not to exceed \$3,000.
- September 25, 1869 - “Meeting of the Society was held at the R.R. Station in Southville....Article 2d was then taken up and the society voted to sell to Newton & Hartt for the sum of one hundred dollars, a piece of land being the westerly part of the Meeting House lot running sixty feet on each road and to authorize Chas. J. Hooper to give a deed of the same in behalf of the Society.
- Mr. Prentiss, local carpenter for whom Prentiss Street was named was given charge of the building program. By April 1870, the chapel was far enough along to hold meetings in the Vestry.
- May 9, 1870 - “After some consultation it was voted to authorize the Treasurer to make application for a loan of six hundred dollars from the American Congregational Union.”

Jim Holmes
Church Historian

S O U T H B O R O U G H
F O O D
P A N T R Y



Please help us help others!

First Community Church Shopping List for December

For the month of December, we will be collecting all donations that are appropriate and you are willing to give. Choose from the list below or consider making a check out to First Community Church of Southborough with a note earmarking it “Southborough Food Pantry.”

Coffee Instant or Ground Regular	Cookies	Brownie & Cake Mixes
		

The collection box is located next to the L'il Shoppe for you to drop off your items.

A Blast From The Past

150 Years Ago

1864 – December

- ◆ A major controversy within the Fayville Baptist Church. A group of parishioners sought dismissal of Rev. Robbins and formed special Parish Committee, which voted him out. This caused a split in the Baptist communion between the Parish Committee and Robbin's faithful. Deacon Rice arbitrated in favor of Robbins. The split widened and the Parish Committee refused to attend services. Seeing that this was destroying the Church, Rev. Robbins tendered his resignation, which was accepted. It was agreed that the Church would close for one full year. It would be reopened at the end of that time in hopes its members would have used the hiatus for prayer and meditation.

(From Richard Noble's *Fences of Stone*)

125 Years Ago

1889 – December

- ◆ Rev. Truman A. Merrill closed his labor with us as pastor of this Church.

100 Years Ago

1914 – December

- ◆ The public schools have closed for a few weeks owing to an epidemic of mumps among our children.

75 Years Ago

1939 – December

- ◆ The Ladies Circle of Southville Federated Church held their annual fair in the Church vestry on Tuesday afternoon and evening.
- ◆ Mrs. George Henderson passed away at her home in Cordaville.

50 Years Ago

1964 – December

- ◆ Chester Barrows, non-member died December 16th. Service by Rev. Appleby.
- ◆ The Senior Youth Fellowship went caroling in the neighborhood and had a Christmas party.
- ◆ The Sunday School had a Christmas program consisting of songs and recitations by the youngest classes and a pageant "Christmas Carols" written by Mr. W. Earl Appleby. Following this, was a visit from Santa in the vestry, who presented each child with candy and a gift.
- ◆ The Women's Fellowship "with the feeling of holiday spirit" gathered together to fill baskets for the shut-ins. Baskets were filled with fruits and goodies and the prayers of good will.

25 Years Ago

1989 – December

- ◆ Rev. Elven Riggles (& his wife Jill) completed 5½ years as pastor of our Church and began serving a church in Durham, CT. A catered luncheon in their honor was sponsored by the Women's Fellowship that was attended by about 50 people.

10 Years Ago

2004 – December

- ◆ Millie Turenne passed away on December 3rd at the age of 92.
- ◆ The traditional Advent Potluck Supper was held on Saturday, December 4. Everyone who came together for fellowship and good food had a great time. It is a wonderful feeling to know that we are all part of such a wonderful family.
- ◆ Sarah L'Heureux passed away on December 8th at the age of 67.
- ◆ The Church Growth Committee sponsored a Christmas Carol Sing-a-Long open to the general public on Sunday afternoon at 3:00 PM on December 19 in the Sanctuary. Food and refreshments were served. It was a great success with over 40 people attending.

Women's Fellowship

"Thus says the Lord God: "Indeed I myself will search for my sheep." Ezekiel 34:11 NKJV

With joy and enthusiasm, we came together on November 18, to make up twelve "Sunshine Baskets" for some special people on our shut-in list. Fresh fruit, home baked items, juice boxes and many other great items went into the baskets. Another great joy is in delivering them to those we love and care about giving us a chance to greet them and wish them well. Special thanks to all who brought in and donated a basket and the assorted items.

We had a brief business meeting and discussed final plans for our Christmas Party and Christmas Fundraiser Table. Please note that all women of the church are welcome to join us for our Christmas Party on Sunday, December 14 at the church at 1:30 PM. Please bring a light finger food and a gift (\$10.00 limit) for the Yankee Gift Swap.

We are looking for any donations to our Christmas Table – baked goods and/or homemade items. Shirley Hutchinson has already donated some of her artwork and other homemade items.

The following people will be responsible for overseeing the sales:

December 7	-	Mattie Cummings
December 14	-	Helen Varney
December 21	-	Beth Hook

We look forward to a busy December!

Mattie Cummings
Secretary

Our Gifts We Bring

Our Missions Offerings are donations made above and beyond our gifts of the Pledges that we make to support the First Community Church of Southborough's General Operating Budget.

Bob Farmer, our Treasurer, has provided us with an update of what we have collected and donated as of November 23, to the Missions that we have chosen to support this year.



From The Desk Of The Collector

Thirty-one days until 2015! 31 days to make contributions to your favorite Charity (like your Church!) and receive a deduction on your 2014 tax return if you itemize!

You don't itemize? Perhaps lumping some 2015 contributions into 2014 would be the difference between itemizing and not itemizing. Paying your February 1, 2015 property tax bill on December 31, 2014 may also help. Remember we need to receive your contribution by Sunday, December 28 to record it in 2014.

If you would like pledge envelopes for 2015, remember to either check off "I desire envelopes" on your pledge card or just let me know. They will be available in Church on Christmas Sunday, December 21. Since the minimum order is 50, we always have some left over.

As always, thanks for all you do with both your talents and your treasure!

Jim Holmes
Collector

Stewardship & Growth Committee Report



The first half of our Stewardship and Growth meetings has been dedicated to planning and implementing our 150th Anniversary Celebration. All church members and friends have been invited to these meetings and they have shared their ideas, suggestions and help. Their input and assistance has been very much appreciated.

We have accomplished much over the past few months. The Homecoming Sunday was a wonderful success in September. The evening with Reverend Bill Leonard on November 1 and the Sunday Communion Service the following morning, was very much enjoyed and appreciated by all who were fortunate enough to attend. Kudos and thank you to Bob L'Heureux who put so much time and effort into arranging for the weekend with Rev. Leonard.

Rev. Sanderson, Bob L'Heureux, and Jim Holmes have been reaching out to other former pastors and inviting them to join us in some way in our 150th Celebration. Former pastor Sue Hansberry will be delivering the morning message "Peace" on December 7, the Second Sunday of Advent.

We had a booth at Southborough's Heritage Day in October to make our presence more known to the community. Our informative brochures offering information about our unique special church were readily available to hand out. They were also distributed at our Annual Pie Sale in November. We will be making these brochures more available in Southborough and neighboring towns during the upcoming new year. Kudos and thank you to Cheryl Homes for all her time and hard work in bringing these brochures into existence.

The bold and beautiful banner announcing our celebration of "150 Years of Christian Worship" is proudly displayed on the front lawn of the church for all passersby to see on that busy road.

And last but not least, Darlene Sanderson and Michael Larson have composed a special hymn, which speaks to "150 Years of Christian Worship." You will be hearing it from the Choir in the coming weeks. Then as a congregation, we will all be singing it on Anniversary Sunday, which is January 18, 2015. On that date, we will be having a special luncheon of soups, breads and cake following the service. Stay tuned to hear more about that special day.

*God sent a star to light the night for
The Way, The Truth, The Life--His Son.*

*He sent the Light of Life to prove His heart
so we would invite His Son into our own.*

*God has given us all the light we'll ever need
to find peace on earth, goodwill to men.*

-Pamela F. Dowd



Oh The Weather Outside Is Frightful....



Our general policy as a church is to try to hold worship whenever we can, if only for a few people. We believe that if you want to make the effort to attend on a snowy day, we should be there for you. However, we wouldn't want you to be hurt either walking or driving to church in inclement weather. We also need to remember that our Pastor and our Organist come from quite a distance. It may be a lot easier for some of us to get to the church than it would be for them. Above all, we don't want you to end up driving to church on a snowy or icy day only to find that church has been cancelled.

In anticipation of snowy or icy days, when we would not want people to go out, the Diaconate and the Minister have established a policy and procedure for the cancellation of our Sunday service. The decision of whether to hold or cancel church because of weather will be made by the Pastor, who lives in Foxborough; the Moderator – Lou Dundin, who lives in Grafton; and our Deacon Emeritus, Bob L'Heureux, who lives in Southborough.

We will not post the cancellation on the telephone tape at the church number because that would entail someone trekking to the church and re-recording the message. We will also not be posting it on our website.

Notice of the cancellation will appear on the three Boston television stations:

Channel 4 (WBZ) -- Channel 5 (WCVB) -- Channel 7 (WHDH)

In addition, WBZ News Radio will read the list of cancellations twice every hour – at :05 and at :35 past the hour. We are listed as “First Community Church – Southborough.”

The decision will be made and the cancellation will be called in to these stations by 8:30 AM Sunday morning by the Pastor, who alone has the secret, encrypted code numbers that enable our church to appear on the cancellation list for each station.

From The Editor

The deadline for the January-February 2015 Newsletter will be Monday, **January 5, 2015**. Remember to include any dates for meetings or events you would like listed on the calendar. Articles may be submitted to Cheryl Holmes by:



(508) 460-0142



244 Flanders Road
Westborough, MA 01581



caholmes@charter.net

Thank You

From Our Missions



Dear Members and friends,

Thank you so much for your recent donation to benefit the families associated with the Southborough Food Pantry.

The Southborough Food Pantry exists to help our friends and neighbors when times are tough. We do so with the generosity and caring of people like you.

Sincerely,

Barbara Jandruie
Director

Thanks for thinking of us!

With Our Special Thanks To –

- ♦ All who baked for or otherwise supported our very successful 27th Annual Pie Sale fundraiser. Thanks to Skip Willman for transporting the church vestry tables and to our dedicated all-weather sales team: David Crane, Jim D’Arcangelo, Bob Farmer, Bob L’Heureux, and Scott McKeen; and to David Crane for preparing and placing the sign announcing the sale. And a big thank you to Darlene Sanderson for again coordinating the list of all the baked goods.

Bob Farmer reported that we set another new First Community Church record raising \$950.00!

- ♦ Michael Larson, the Choir, Diane Newland, and the Women’s Fellowship for their help to make the United Parishes of Southborough Ecumenical Service of Thanksgiving a deeply meaningful and enjoyable event for all those in attendance.



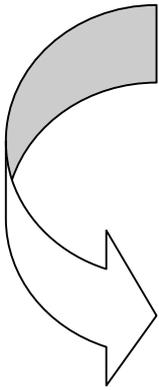
Overflowing With Thanks

LOOKING AHEAD

150th Anniversary Celebration Events

Guest Preacher – Former Pastor Sue Hansberry
 Sunday Morning Worship Service – December 7

A very special event to be held for a very special day in the life of our Church
 Sunday, January 18, 2015



Write down these dates!!



Birthdays

Gilbert Joe	2 nd
Nancy Hite	3 rd
Betty Tebbetts	12 th
Tanner Willman	13 th
Bayley Willman	18 th
Cheryl Holmes	19 th
Darcy Hilbert	20 th
Stacey Willman	21 st
Dick Varney	24 th
Justin Elias	27 th

Anniversaries

Kristen & Michael Springer	16 th
Lynn & Scott Webster	23 rd
Dorothy & Michael Larson	24 th

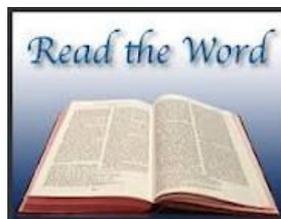


CELEBRATIONS

"then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind." *Philippians 2:2*

Lay Leaders

December 7 - Sandy McKeen
December 14 - Karin Farmer
December 21 - Joyce Harrington
December 28 - Mattie Cummings



Greeters

December 7 - Bob L'Heureux
December 14 - Bob Farmer
December 21 - Sandy & Scott McKeen
Christmas Eve - Sharon & Skip Willman
December 28 - Joyce Harrington



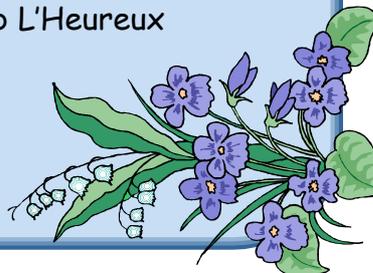
Coffee Hour Hosts

December 7 - Beth Hook & Martha Hubley
December 14 - Sandy McKeen
December 21 - Barbara Crane
December 28 -



Memorial Flowers

December 7 -
December 14 -
December 21 -
December 28 - Bob L'Heureux



Deacons for December

David Crane & Dianne Simmons

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
 <p style="text-align: center;">Mission Salvation Army</p>	1	2 5:00 PM Choir Rehearsal 6:30 PM Diaconate Meeting	3	4 7:00 PM Church Council	5	 <i>Advent Potluck Supper 6:00 PM</i>
7	8	9 5:00 PM Choir Rehearsal 6:30 PM Trustees Meeting	10	11	12	13
<p style="text-align: center;">SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT</p> <p style="text-align: center;">GUEST PREACHER – Sue Hansberry <i>Former Pastor</i></p> <p>10:30 AM Choir Rehearsal 11:00 AM Sunday School 11:00 AM Worship Service <i>Sacrament of Holy Communion</i> Coffee Hour following Worship Service</p>						
14	15	16 5:00 PM Choir Rehearsal	17	18	19	20
<p style="text-align: center;">THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT</p> <p>9:15 AM Adult Bible Study 10:30 AM Choir Rehearsal 11:00 AM Sunday School 11:00 AM Worship Service Coffee Hour following Worship Service 1:30 PM Women’s Fellowship Christmas Party</p>						
21	22	23	24 <i>Christmas Eve Candlelight Service</i> 6:30 PM 	25  CHRISTMAS DAY	26	27
<p style="text-align: center;">FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT</p> <p>9:15 AM Adult Bible Study 10:30 AM Choir Rehearsal 11:00 AM Sunday School 11:00 AM Worship Service Coffee Hour following Worship Service</p>			31  NEW YEAR’S EVE			
28	29	30				
<p style="text-align: center;">FIFTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT</p> <p>10:30 AM Choir Rehearsal 11:00 AM Sunday School 11:00 AM Worship Service Coffee Hour following Worship Service</p>						