



Steeple Sounds December 2010

The Newsletter of Central Square Congregational Church

From the Interim Pastor's Desk:

December 2010

"THE STAR OF BETHLEHEM"

The sky is deep velvet black
yet myriad points of scattered light,
and one sparkles brighter than all,
the resplendent Star of Bethlehem.

This is the light that guided
three travelers from the east,
journeying towards the Great Sea,
until the star stopped, hovering above the
village.

What is it that would guide
three men of wisdom on a spiritual quest?
What but the hand of God,
drawing them by his created star.

The star was simply the sign
of a brighter burning light.
The birth of a child was the beginning
of light for a darkened world.

Shine on, then, Star of Bethlehem
for we too live in deep darkness;
lead us, spiritual thirsting seekers,
to find the light in Jesus,
Prince of Peace.

(John Johansen-Berg)

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Sending you a message for this Advent and Christmas Season as we follow
the Light of the Star to Bethlehem.

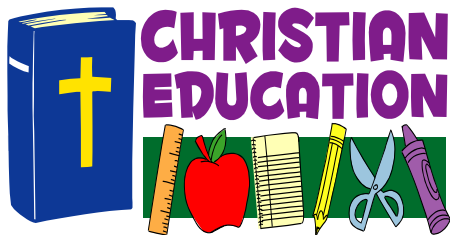
**MAY YOU HAVE A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A BLESSED NEW YEAR 2011!
REV. ESTHER AND KEVIN THOMPSON.**



BOARD OF DEACONS

Our Annual Christmas Caroling Event will take place on December 18th, and all are welcome to join in the fun. We bring cheer to many every year and this year will be no exception. We will meet at the church at 4 PM, organize ourselves into groups and then go forth to sing. Caroling books will be supplied. Afterwards, we will gather at the Chaffee's home, at 650 Pleasant Street, Bridgewater, for some food, fellowship and to warm up. I thought this year we might share a hot meal after we finish caroling along with our hot chocolate and goodies. If you would like to make some chili or soup, or some goodies, please let me know. I will be making some macaroni and cheese. So mark your calendar and practice your "jingle all the way home." For questions or more information, please email me at galchaffee@msn.com.

Caroling Carol



The Christian Education Board invites you and your family to:

“The Night of the Stars and the Star of Bethlehem” A Christmas Pageant!
Four stars are ready, ready for the big day!
They are not complete till they come together!

Please join us in celebrating Christ's birth at
Christmas Eve Family Service
5 p.m.

**Please join us for our Traditional
“Christmas Eve Candlelight Service”
10 p.m.**

The CE Board hosted its annual Advent Workshop on Saturday November 27. Thirty five people of all ages enjoyed a moment of reflection followed by a pot luck dinner and craft activities. Those attending created Advent wreaths, sparkly snowmen and beaded candy canes to the sounds of Christmas music. During a moment of reflection, people shared their hopes for the season on sticky ornaments they placed on a cut-out Christmas tree in the vestry. Please check out their posted expressions of hope for the health, love and faith of family and friends.

All are invited to participate in the CSCC Christmas Pageant during the 5:00pm service on Christmas Eve. Children will have the opportunity to wear costumes and join in the telling of the Christmas story. This meaningful tradition will bring Jesus' birth to life and be a Christmas highlight for many.



Youth Page

Dec. 3rd, 7:30- 11:30 pm Ice Cream Social and Faith Santa Christmas Shopping at Wal-Mart. Bring \$6.00 and meet at the church at 7:30 pm. We will drive to Friendly's in Middleboro to enjoy ice cream and socialize. Then, we will head to Walmart to buy Christmas presents for teenagers for Operation Santa in Bridgewater. Each youth will be driven home. Parents do NOT need to pick up. Permission slips are required. Coordinator: Donna O'Neil 508-697-3408 or 508-269-6889

Dec 12th and **26th** Teen Forum; Dec 12th Average Joe Meeting 11:30 am after church. Pick-up time 1:30 pm

Central Square Congregational Church on the Internet

Remember that you have several options for getting information about the church and its activities available to you 24/7.

Use the website – www.cscucbridgewaterma.org – to see the current church calendar, current and past Steeple Sounds, contact information, copies of sermons, weather-related alerts, and more.

“Friend” or “like” the church on Facebook, and get regular reminders of upcoming activities, Sunday themes, and news. Just search “Central Square Congregational Church”, or use the link on the church website. And suggest it to your friends, near and far – all are welcome to see what our church has to offer!

Have an idea of how we can better use electronic means to communicate with you, or something you’d like to see us do? Contact Diane Sheibley at diane@despop.com.

It was a "Super Saturday"

On Saturday, October 2, 2010, The Mass Conference of the United Church of Christ held a full day of workshops and networking around best practices for Church leaders. The day was referred to as “Super Saturday”. As a member of the Board of Deacons, I attended this event and participated in both a morning and afternoon workshop. Reverend Esther and Kevin Thompson also attended on behalf of Central Square Congregational Church.

After an energy filled opening worship service, I participated in a workshop called "Discipleship and Small Groups". The workshop was led by Reverend Jean Lenk of the Stoughton Congregational Church. The discussion centered on the changes and challenges being faced by churches of all denominations during the past 20 years; decline in membership, worship attendance, pledging and stewardship decreasing, and not enough people to do the work of the Church. Sound familiar?

These alarming trends have Church leaders rethinking how the Christian Church must change to stay relevant in the post-Christendom, pluralistic, secular 21st century. This was an eye-opening experience for me to learn that we here at Central Square are not the only Church facing these challenges. It was also encouraging to hear some of the new ideas and concepts being put into practice in many Churches across the country to combat these adverse trends. More to follow on these concepts.

During the afternoon I attended a workshop called "Transforming the Relationships between the Pastor, Staff and Congregation". As with the morning session, there was open discussion between the facilitator, Reverend Dr. Beverly Prestwood-Taylor, and all the attendees. There were a number of Churches represented at this workshop and many of them were struggling with how to effectively develop and maintain a strong working relationship with their Pastor. Communication techniques and relationship building were offered and debated as solutions to these issues. This workshop was perfect for members of a Congregations PPRC team.

When I was not in a workshop I was able to interact with a number of people from various Churches in the Eastern Mass area. I met some wonderful people that Saturday, and it was truly amazing to learn that a number of Churches were in an interim period experiencing the same challenges that we are at Central Square.

The day demonstrated to me the value of being affiliated with the United Church of Christ. The opportunity for fellowship with members of other Congregations, as well as the Mass UCC leadership, was rewarding. The information that was provided in the numerous workshops was structured to empower Church leaders with solutions to our present and future challenges.

I encourage the members of our Church leadership to attend next year's conference. It was a "Super" day and time well spent.

Rich Sullivan

A Message from Growth

A name tag is one of the simplest ways of doing mission. It is our willingness to share our name with a neighbor as we fellowship. Let's all wear our name tags!!! If you need a name tag, please indicate *so on the* fellowship pad.



Women's Guild and Fellowship

Women's Guild and Fellowship Communion Service and Christmas Gathering on 12/1/10

All women of the church are very welcome to join us for our Christmas celebration meeting. We will have a beautiful Communion Service with Rev. Esther in the upper parlor at 7:00 PM, followed by a brief meeting, refreshments and a "Yankee Swap" (bring a \$10-15 gift to exchange). We will also bring donations for Mainspring House and our Christmas Stockings for Soldiers project. Please join us as we begin the joyous Christmas Season.



Bridgewater Food Pantry

We are continuing our mission to provide nonperishable food and paper goods to the Bridgewater Food Pantry at the Bridgewater Senior Center. Thank you all!

December 2010: Simple Gifts

Written by Doreen and Michael McFarlane
December 1, 2010

*Serve God with gladness! Come into God's presence
with singing! Psalm 100:2*

When the two of us headed to China for the first time, in 2006, we understood it would likely be for one year and possibly two. As it turned out, we lived and worked in China for four years, and we can say with all our hearts that we have been deeply blessed! It is our hope that we too have been a blessing.



We spent three years as visiting professors at the Nanjing Union Theological Seminary, then last year, took on new assignments, this time in the magnificent city of Shanghai at Shanghai University and at the YMCA. Our work in Shanghai had one aspect that was very different from that at the Nanjing Seminary; most of our students and the people we interacted with were non-Christians and even atheists. In most cases it was not that they had chosen to be "against" religion but only that they did not have a religion! Learning this brought immediately to my mind an old hymn we used to sing as children in Canada. Its second verse went like this.

*How kind was our savior to bid these children welcome.
But there are many thousands who have never heard His
name. The Bible they have never read. They know not
that the Savior said:
"Suffer little children to come unto me."*

In Shanghai, we were living among the people, and seeing them as gentle and kind and giving – but without any religion, many never having heard the name of Jesus. We were not permitted to proselytize, as the Chinese government does not allow it. Still, there was no reason why could not talk about Christianity and, maybe even more importantly, to try to model in as simple and sincere a way as possible just how a Christian behaves. It was easy to love and serve the Chinese people, as they were always so good to us. This gave us pause to think about who we are and what we need to do as Christians in the world.

Let us pray, that in this season of giving we remember what a blessing each individual gift of service and love is to others.

Doreen and Michael McFarlane served as visiting professors at the Nanjing Union Theological Seminary. Doreen taught Biblical Hebrew and Greek, and Biblical interpretation, while Michael served as choir director and taught western sacred music. Later, in Shanghai as visiting professor in the history department of the Shanghai University, teaching American Culture and American Religion, and Michael as choir director and concert coordinator of the newest branch of the Shanghai YMCA.



Christian Outreach

The weather will be getting really cold soon, and we want to be prepared to help the homeless who are out on the streets in the bitter cold. So continuing with Christian Outreach Committee's program of "Warmth in Cold Places" we will start collecting warm clothing soon. If you can start now by looking for sales on things as white socks, gloves, hooded sweatshirts, hats etc., we will be prepared to distribute these things when the first really cold spell hits. The committee has put a box in the Narthex to collect the items.

Thanks for your help!

Linda Sharland
Outreach Committee

Christmas Ingathering:

We will be collecting non perishable foods to make up Christmas food baskets to be distributed on Saturday, December 18th. If you wish to contribute, please bring your items to worship on the December 12th. If you forget to bring them in on Dec. 12th you can drop them off at the church up until Friday, December 17th.

Thank you very much.
Your Christian Outreach Committee

A Reminder From the Church Office:

According to the Church Bylaws, "the Chairperson of each Committee shall submit an Annual Report to the Church Secretary not later than December 31 of each year, to be included in the Annual Report of the Church."

A Message From Stewardship

What a great start it has been for our 2011 Stewardship Campaign! It looked like everyone who attended worship at our church on Stewardship Sunday enthusiastically pledged their support to our congregations work for year 2011. Then, the following week, several more people pledged their support for the upcoming year. It is no surprise that our church community has made a statement that Gods message is a priority in our lives, and that we will keep CSCC a strong force for Gods ministry. Thank you for caring.

Our campaign is just beginning. We need a 25% increase in overall church giving in 2011 in order for us to reach our goals. With Jesus leading us we can't fail?

If you have not yet pledged your support, we ask you to do so. Share the passion with others about the good things that we do at CSCC. Encourage people who do not attend our church to get involved (again, why keep this joyful work to ourselves). There is no shortage of people to feed or to support. There are people in crisis who need our help. Our youth will need our direction. God is counting on us to be good stewards of his house. You know we won't let God down.

With all of us helping to lift the load we will be ready for the challenges of 2011. Thank you for your support!!

It is going to be an awesome year at CSCC!!!

CSCC Stewardship Committee

Daily Lectionary Scripture References

December 2010 (Year A)

Wed., Dec. 1

Psalm 124
Isaiah 54:1-10
Matthew 24:23-35

Thurs., Dec. 2

Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19
Isaiah 4:2-6
Acts 1:12-17, 21-26

Fri., Dec. 3

Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19
Isaiah 30:19-26
Acts 13:16-25

Sat., Dec. 4

Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19
Isaiah 40:1-11
John 1:19-28

Sun., Dec. 5

Second Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 11:1-10
Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19
Romans 15:4-13
Matthew 3:1-12

Mon., Dec. 6

Psalm 21
Isaiah 24:1-16a
1 Thessalonians 4:1-12

Tues., Dec. 7

Psalm 21
Isaiah 41:14-20
Romans 15:14-21

Wed., Dec. 8

Psalm 21
Genesis 15:1-18
Matthew 12:33-37

Thurs., Dec. 9 Psalm 146:5-10

Ruth 1:6-18
2 Peter 3:1-10

Fri., Dec. 10

Psalm 146:5-10
Ruth 4:13-17
2 Peter 3:11-18

Sat., Dec. 11

Psalm 146:5-10
1 Samuel 2:1-8
Luke 3:1-18

Sun., Dec. 12

Third Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 35:1-10
Psalm 146:5-10
or Luke 1:46b-55
James 5:7-10
Matthew 11:2-11

Mon., Dec. 13

Psalm 42
Isaiah 29:17-24
Acts 5:12-16

Tues., Dec. 14

Psalm 42
Ezekiel 47:1-12
Jude 17-25

Wed., Dec. 15

Psalm 42
Zechariah 8:1-17
Matthew 8:14-17, 28-34

Thurs., Dec. 16

Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19
2 Samuel 7:1-17
Galatians 3:23-29

Fri., Dec. 17

Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19
2 Samuel 7:18-22
Galatians 4:1-7

Sat., Dec. 18

Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19
2 Samuel 7:23-29
John 3:31-36

Sun., Dec. 19

Fourth Sunday of Advent Isaiah
7:10-16

Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19
Romans 1:1-7
Matthew 1:18-25

Mon., Dec. 20

1 Samuel 2:1-10
Genesis 17:15-22
Galatians 4:8-20

Tues., Dec. 21

1 Samuel 2:1-10
Genesis 21:1-21
Galatians 4:21—5:1

Wed., Dec. 22

Luke 1:46b-55
Isaiah 33:17-22
Revelation 22:6-7, 18-20

Thurs., Dec. 23

Luke 1:46b-55
2 Samuel 7:18, 23-29
Galatians 3:6-14

Fri., Dec. 24

Christmas Eve
Isaiah 9:2-7
Psalm 96
Titus 2:11-14
Luke 2:1-14 [15-20]

Sat., Dec. 25

Christmas Day
Isaiah 62:6-12
Psalm 97
Titus 3:4-7
Luke 2:[1-7] 8-20
Isaiah 52:7-10
Psalm 98
Hebrews 1:1-4 [5-12]
John 1:1-14

Sun., Dec. 26

First Sunday After Christmas

Isaiah 63:7-9
Psalm 148
Hebrews 2:10-18
Matthew 2:13-23

Mon., Dec. 27

Psalm 148
Proverbs 8:22-31
1 John 5:1-12

Tues., Dec. 28

Psalm 148
Isaiah 49:13-23
Matthew 18:1-14

Wed., Dec. 29

Psalm 20
Jeremiah 31:15-22
Luke 19:41-44

Thurs., Dec. 30

Psalm 20
Isaiah 26:1-9
2 Corinthians 4:16-18

Fri., Dec. 31

Psalm 20
1 Kings 3:5-14
John 8:12-19

December 2010

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 Women's Guild 7:00 BSU choir – Sanctuary 7:30-9:30 Bella Voce 7:30 Parlor	2 Staff meeting 9:30 Holiday Grief Group 6-7:30 Parlor Horizons Homeless Children 5:30-7:45 upstairs parlor Brownie Troup LL 6:00	3 GS 73502 LL 6-7:30	4
5 Communion Pack #35 bake sale on front lawn BSU Alumni Choir 3:00	6 CE mtg 7:00 Women's Guild Servicemen's project Deacons 7:30	7 Outreach mtg 7:00 Growth mtg 7:00 Bella Voce 7:00 Sanctuary and Parlor	8 Trustees 6:00	9 Stewardship mtg 7:30 Dens 1&5 LL 6:00	10 Kids of the Kingdom 6:00 -7:30 Single Parents 6-7:30	11
12 Christmas Ingathering Teen Forum Youth Group after church 12:00	13	14	15 Cabinet mtg 7:00 Den 2 LL	16 Holiday Grief Group 6-7:30 Parlor Brownie Troup LL 6:00	17 Pack #35 6:30-9:00 Vestry GS 73502 LL 6-7:30	18 Caroling
19 Music Sunday	20	21 Brown Group Vestry 3:30-6:30	22	23	24 5:00 Service Pageant 10:00 Service	25
26 Group Sunday School Teen Forum	27 Mother's club Nursery 9:30	28	29	30 Holiday Grief Group 6-7:30 Parlor	31	

January 2011

						1 New Year's Day
2 Communion Sunday Heifer Project	3 CE Mtg 7:00	4 Bella Voce 7-9 Sanctuary	5 Women's Guild Den 2 LL	6 Holiday Grief Group 6-7:30 Youth Group Planning Mtg and Pot Luck supper 6:00	7 Pack 35 Vestry 7-10 pm GS 73502 LL 6-7:30	8
9 Heifer Teen Forum Youth Group Youth and Parents Mtg 12:00 after church	10	11 Outreach Mtg. 7:00 Growth Mtg 7:00 Bella Voce Sanctuary 7-9	12 Trustees Mtg 6:00	13 Stewardship Mtg 7:30 Dens 1&5 LL 6:00	14 Kids of the Kingdom 6-7:30 Single Parents 6-7:30 Parlor	15
16 Heifer Budget Mtg after church	17	18 Brownie Group 3:30- 6 Vestry	19 Cabinet Mtg 7:00 Den 2 LL	20	21 Pack 35 Vestry 6:30-9	22
23 Heifer Teen Forum Youth Group	24	25 Bella Voce Sanctuary 7-9	26	27 Dens 1&5 LL 6:30	28 Women's Retreat	29
30 Heifer Celebrate 50 years as UCC Member Dine w/ 9	31 Mother's Club Nursery 9:30 am					