

The Old Man's News

Mt. Sinai Congregational, United Church of Christ
233 North Country Road, Mt. Sinai, NY 11766, Office- 631-473-1582,
Fax- 631-474-0556, Website: www.mtsinaichurchli.org, email: msc1@optonline.net

December 2011

Dear Friends,

What if you could recover the Christmas of your childhood? Would it be rapturous and joyful or fraught and dismal?

What if you could have the Christmas of your dreams? Would it start with a home make-over and end with a living room full of gifts for the family? Or would it be something different from any modern "ideal"/idol?

What if you let go the dream of the ideal Christmas altogether and instead instilled wonder into the very ordinary, flawed, and imperfect Christmas you already plan to have? Can you stop looking at the holiday through the eyes of an adult and see it through the eyes of a child? Jesus taught that it is childlike wonder that will bring us to a new realm:

Unless you receive the kingdom of God like a little child, you will never enter it... (Mark 10:15)

The kingdom of God is at hand – it is here, among us – and it will take the eyes of a child to see it and to accept it.

You are called to take the years off of your eyes and return to the innocence, the hopefulness, the wonder of childhood, (maybe not your own!) You are invited to worship with us, to share your burdens and to feel your heart lighten. I hope you will give up the aging, tiring anger and resentment you are carrying and enter into this holy season with hope, grace and childlike wonder.

Praying for you, for peace, for new life,

Rev. Diane

Music Ministry of Mt. Sinai UCC is offering a variety of music experiences during the Advent-Christmas season. Here are a few of the highlights.

On **December 11** at **5:30 pm**, we invite you to take your shoes off and let your hair down in the midst of the holiday hustle and bustle. Come hang out in our sanctuary's *I'll Be Home for Christmas* living room set of the day. Bring your favorite camping chair and a comfy pillow if you want. Yes, even you adults can come in your jammies and slippers; just show up for yourself however you're most comfortable. Prepare to take some deep breaths, have a few laughs and cry a few tears, perhaps, as you light some candles and listen to Lisa Lally and Elaine Kirkland sing and pray with you. Give yourself this gift of an hour in which you might let go of some of the burdens you're carrying and open yourself to God's healing love.

On the Fourth Sunday in Advent, **December 18**, we will celebrate the theme of *Joy!* Choose the service that most fits your taste or your schedule; or dare to go for the variety of the double header. Be sure to bring your friends along. It's a great way to introduce them to our church.

At 9:00 am, the children of our church school, under the leadership of Ms. Caroline, Ms. Brittney and Ms. Emma, will present a Christmas musical for young voices, *The Case of the Reluctant Innkeeper*. Bethlehem court will be in session with the Honorable Judge Jody Justice presiding and you get to be the gallery who witnesses it all! This high profile case will be *The People vs. The Innkeeper*, the same innkeeper who was reluctant to give a certain young couple a room for the night. Sam Shepherd is the prosecuting attorney who's out to get to the bottom of this case by calling key animal witnesses to the stand.

Punctuating this courtroom drama are some familiar carols and some newly composed songs by Ruth Elaine Schram and Mark Cabaniss, all of which bring us around to the unfolding of the Christmas miracle.

At 11:00 am, Chancel Choir, Harbor Bells, guest soloists and instrumentalists will present, *And Let There Be Joy!* – a collection of carols, anthems, poetry and stories highlighting the good news of God's presence right in the middle of the demands of a busy week and the circumstances of your lives. Come to be sung and rung to and to sing some carols yourselves. We will conclude the morning with *Sing Noel*, a rousing arrangement paring an African noel and the familiar, *Go Tell It On the Mountain*. Who knows? You might just find yourself singing your way out of the church and into the blessings of Christmas!

Of course, The Chancel Choir and guest instrumentalists will be a part of our Christmas Eve Services of Lessons and Carols at **9:00 and 11:00 pm**.

However each of you chooses to spend yourself this season, I wish you Love!
Rev. Elaine

From our November Records...**Baptisms**

Andrew McGregor Campbell was baptized on November 20th. His loving parents are Kelly and Michael Campbell.

Weddings

On November 5th Jenn Watz and Michele Margiotta were married by Rev. Dr. Diane Samuels.

On November 13th Eric Lopez and Julio Trujillo were married by Rev. Dr. Diane Samuels.

Generosity Team Reporting...

Wow! Writing this in November in the midst of the annual church support challenge (boringly known as "stewardship drive"), I can't give final tallies, but I do have some impressions from a very encouraging start. We hit the ground running, beginning the program with 11 pledges from members of the boards totally nearly 20% of the goal. After week one, with 32 pledges in, we are 31% to the goal.

Mary Larson and Charlaine Apsel put together an online pledging form that hit the spot with some folks. We had 9 or 10 pledges in lightning speed from them, and at this rate I fully expect we will see many more. There are a few letters yet to be sent out (to long-distance members and some local folks we rarely hear from); I think I will add a note to each of those, giving the link to the online form.

Another innovation this year was the option for people to dedicate their annual "bringing back to God" in honor or memory of a loved one or treasured mentor, pastor, or teacher. The option for doing this was a late inspiration and did not appear on some pledge forms; if you were not invited to do that and want to belatedly designate an honoree, please contact the Generosity Team by a note in the offering plate or through the church office.

Some people have mentioned they feel it is more "spiritual" to support the church anonymously with cash in the plate. Think about the historical origins of tithing to God, with agricultural products or other tangible results of human labor. How would a farmer hide from the community the fatted calves he was driving to the temple? Or the bushels of grain to be delivered? Instead, it is charity we might best strive to do privately, even in secret, but not our support for the community of faith to which we belong. Still, at Mt. Sinai UCC details on individuals' donations are confidential information unless the person wishes otherwise.

Generosity Team cont.

We as a congregation are making such progress in our individual understanding of the role we play in supporting God's work through the church using our gifts of time, treasure, and talent. God's blessings are never-ending. Let us continue to extend our gratitude as far. Kathy Robinson, for the Generosity Team

**From the Dream Fund...**

The Dream Fund is a long-term project, which is seeking to raise funds through planned giving. The purpose of the Dream Fund will be to enhance the work of the Mount Sinai Congregational Church beyond the annual operating budget. The Dream Fund will help us build a legacy for our very special church. If you are considering a "Planned Gift" to our church, please contact a member of our Dream Fund Committee to discuss.

The Dream Fund is also concerned with the education for our congregation; we had our first educational meeting on estate planning October 19th, over 15 people attended. Watch this space for additional events.

submitted by: Rich Winkler, Chair, Lynn Jordan, Dennis Murphy and Bruce Texeira

Christmas Toy and Gift Certificate Drive



From our Board of Christian Outreach

Thank you to everyone who helped us surpass our Thanksgiving Food Drive goal of 150 bags of food. They food was handed out at Island Heart Food Pantry the week of Thanksgiving.

Christmas Toy and Food Certificate Drive

December 4th and 11th we will be collecting Christmas gifts for Long Island Council of Churches to distribute. We will be collecting gift card (or money toward gift cards) for teens and unwrapped toys for toddlers.



Dear Members and Friends of Mt. Sinai Congregational UCC,

Thanks to your incredible generosity we have almost matched the 2011-budgeted amount for pledges. Of the 154 pledges, 41 families have completed their pledge and many of those have continued to give.

We encourage you to complete your pledge before the end of the year. If you are unsure of your balance you can e-mail me at the address below.



Please, if you are able, consider making a tax-deductible end-of-year gift to your Church.

Start the New Year in the warm glow of generosity. Your gift should be postmarked by December 31 to be included in your 2011 Giving Statement.

We understand that many times hearts want to do more than pocketbooks can afford. Following time-honored tradition at Mt. Sinai UCC, current-year pledges not complete by New Year's Day will be "wiped from the slate."

Charlaine Apsel

Treasurer

Treasurer@mtsinaichurchli.org



Thank you to everyone who donated time, items that helped make this fall's Red Barn Sale a success. Please hold off on making donations until we reopen in the spring.

Caring Ministry

If you or a family member are: homebound, in the hospital or struggling with the pressures of the world, call on the Caring Ministry to help and they are available to visit. Contact Mary Larson or speak to one of the caring ministers (they wear red and white name badges). We are here for you. Submitted by Mary Larson

From our Sunday School Coordinator

Thanks to the children of our Church for putting together small hygiene packets in November which will surely delight a gentleman, lady or small family as they travel to Island Heart Food Pantry this Holiday Season.

Our annual Children's Holiday Service will be held at the 9am service on December 18th entitled "The Reluctant Innkeeper".

Please note there will be one service at 11am on December 25 with no Sunday school. We do however, look forward to seeing all the children on January 8th, the first Sunday after Epiphany

With love and thanks, Ms. Caroline



The Youth group meets on Thursdays from September through May from 6:30-8:00pm.

December Schedule

Thursday 1st- Regular Meeting

Thursday 8th- No meeting- Leaders meet

Thursday 15th- Ice Skating for all ages at Port Jefferson Rink, everyone is welcome to bring a friend. We will meet from 6:00pm until 8:00pm. Permission slip can be found on youth page on our website.

Thursday 22nd – Holiday Party for all groups.

Thursday 29th - No Youth Group- Winter Recess

Ongoing Recycling Fundraiser

Do you have clean cans and bottles you keep meaning to redeem (the ones you receive .05 for)? You can drop off your redeemable cans and bottles at the side entrance (by kitchen but away from other recyclables) the money raised helps to defray expenses for the Youth Group.

December 11th- Family Photo Fundraiser

Have your family's Christmas photos taken in front of the fireplace or Christmas tree on our Home for the Holidays "set" in the sanctuary on December 11th between 12-4pm. Sign up for 15 minute time slot and be there in your holiday finery. \$10 per sitting. You will receive 5 photos via email for you to print out or send to your friends. Other printed photo packages available. Contact the [church office](#) to reserve your spot.

This is a fundraiser for the church. ~Rev. Dr. Diane C. Samuels



Christmas

Due at church office no later than
December 11, 2011
Please print clearly

Donor's Name _____

Donor's Telephone Number _____

In Memory of _____

In Honor of _____

_____ Christmas Poinsettias (\$10 each) Amount _____

_____ Island Heart Food Pantry Amount _____

_____ Emergency Assistance Fund Amount _____

_____ Long Island Council of Churches Amount _____

_____ Shalom Interfaith Project Amount _____

Total _____

Taking Care of Body, Soul and Spirit at Mt. Sinai Congregational, United Church of Christ

Bible Studies and Small Groups

Faith Building small group: Healing. This group includes: Bible Study, prayer and sharing. Last meeting December 7th at 7:30pm.

Support

Bereavement Group

If you have lost a spouse or partner, please join us November 30, December 7 and 21st at the church.

Caring Support Group- If you are you the primary caregiver of a family member, you will benefit from the support of a loving community. Please contact [Mary Larson](#) at the church office for more information.

We are meeting twice a month at McDonalds in Miller Place for coffee at 10am. We are meeting **Wednesday** November 30th. In December we will be meeting **Wednesday's** on the 14th and the 28th.

If you are interested in joining an evening group which will start in December, please call Mary Larson in the office for more details.

Social Justice

Justice Task Force Activities

Through the efforts of members of the Task Force, three or four human services groups, including information about Heifer Project actions specifically targeting justice for women, were represented at the bazaar on November 19th.

Between now and the beginning of the new year a few members of the Task Force will meet at the PRC to begin work on a spring "justice for women fair." Anyone wishing to assist in the planning for this event should e-mail Sue Hoff or Tom Lyon. Contact the church office for their e-mail addresses.

Get Moving...

Yoga in The Studio at Mt. Sinai Church

Kripalu Yoga- Wednesday's in the Studio at 10am and Friday's at 7pm. They will be approx. 1 hour and 15 minutes each. Sign up for 1 class per week for 5 weeks for \$50 or sign up for 2 classes per week for 5 weeks at \$100. Drop-ins are welcome at \$12 per class. Led by certified Kripalu instructor Janet Metcalf.

Dates for December:

Wednesdays- 7,14, 21 and 28

Friday's – 2, 9,16, 23 and 30

Vinyasa Yoga- with Susan- Wednesday's- Lower Level at 7:00pm. Beginners are warmly welcomed. \$15 drop in / \$120 for 10 classes.

December 2011

November 27- December 3

Sunday	Worship- (First Sunday of Advent)	9:00am
	Welcome Sunday- (First Sunday of Advent)	11:00am
Wednesday	Men's Breakfast at Rocky Point Diner	7:30am
	Healing Group	7:30pm
	Bereavement Support Group	7:00pm
Thursday	Harbor Bells	5:30pm
	Chancel Choir	7:30pm
	Youth Group	6:30pm-8:00pm
Friday	Kripalua Yoga with Janet Metcalf- The Studio	7:00pm

December 4-10

Sunday	Worship (2 nd Sunday in Advent)	9:00am and 11:00am
Tuesday	Board of Christian Outreach	6:30pm
Wednesday	Bereavement Group	7:00pm
Thursday	Harbor Bells	5:30pm
	Youth Group	6:30pm-8:00pm
	Chancel Choir	7:30pm

December 11-17

Sunday	Sunday Worship	9:00am and 11:00am
	Take a breath during Christmas Season and join us for a inspirational service at 5:30pm.	
Tuesday	Trustees	7:00pm
Wednesday	Lunch Bunch- Hartlin's	12:00pm
	Caring Ministry	7:30pm
	Faith Healing Group	7:00pm
Thursday	Harbor Bells	5:30pm
	Youth Group- Ice Skating at Port Jefferson	6:00pm
	Chancel Choir	7:30pm

December 18-24

Sunday	Worship	The Case of the Reluctant Innkeeper presented by Sunday School	9:00am
		Chancel Choir and more will present, And Let There Be Joy!	11:00am
		Caroling- More details to come	
Monday		Board of Christian Education	7:00pm
Tuesday		Deacons	7:00pm
Wednesday		Bereavement Group	7:00pm
Thursday		No rehearsals	
Saturday		Christmas Eve Services	5:00pm, 9:00pm, 11:00pm

December 25-31

Sunday	Sunday Worship- Only One Service	11:00am
Monday	Offices Closed	
Tuesday	Executive Council	7:00pm

