



The Copper Hill Connection

December 2015

Pastor's Postings

by Rev. Dr. Kelvin S. Jones

Christmas Carols: Story in Song

One of the things I associate most with this season is Christmas carols. When I was growing up, Christmas carols were commonly heard in the store, on the radio, and at church.

Now, traditional Christmas carols like "Angels We Have Heard on High" or "O Little Town of Bethlehem" are becoming less well known.

Who can forget the excitement and power of "Joy to the World," or the quiet peace of singing "Silent Night" with candle in hand at the close of the Christmas Eve service!

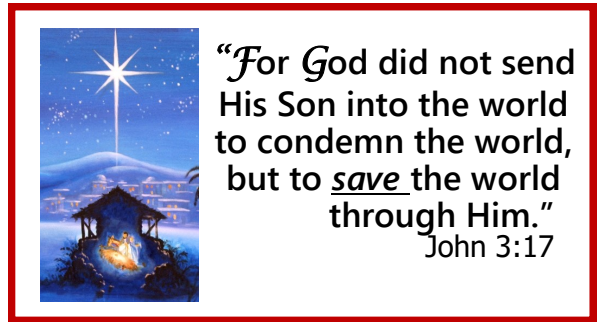
The exhilarating "O Come, All Ye Faithful" is a call to worship that anticipates the joyous celebrations to which we look forward.

Carols are such valuable storytellers! As a group, their purpose is to retell and unwrap the original Christmas story. They were written to help people remember and celebrate different parts of the Bible's record of the birth of Jesus.



Take "The First Noel" as an example. It tells the story of the angel's visit to the shepherds, of the unusual star that appeared, and of the visit of the three Wise Men. A few carols also teach basic theology. For example, verse two of the Charles Wesley carol, "Hark the Herald Angels Sing," could serve as a lesson on the divine and human natures of Christ in theology class.

This year during the Advent Christmas season, I have chosen to feature one of the carols of Christmas in each of the messages that I bring. We will sing the carol during the service, along with others, and then reflect together about the meaning and message of the carol. I believe this will enrich our understanding of Jesus' coming as well as helping to pass Christmas carols on to another generation.



"For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him."
John 3:17

CHRISTmas Celebrations

Christmas Caroling at Meadowbrook

One of our Christmas joys is sharing the Christmas story in song with those who are not able to come out to our celebrations. We will again meet at Meadowbrook at 2 PM, Saturday, **December 12**, to carol to the residents.

Christmas Sunday

A highlight of the season is "The Hanging of the Greens," when our children tell the story of Christmas on Sunday, **December 20** at 9:30 AM.

Each child has a part in bringing beautiful ceramic figurines, bells, and greenery to decorate the altar. It reminds us that the Christ Child is a gift for all ages, for all time.

Following the program, we will gather in the Fellowship Hall for refreshments.

Choir

Music marks a special part of Christmas. Our choir will sing of joyful bells ringing and angels singing in Michael W. Smith's classic song, "Christmastime" on Sunday, **December 20** in the 9:30 AM service.

Our men's group, on Christmas Eve, will present "Sing Noel," an upbeat piece interwoven with familiar Christmas carols.

Christmas Eve Service

We would love to have you join us on **December 24** at **5 PM** for our Family Christmas Eve Service. The service will include Celtic harp music, the men's quartet, and our candle lighting tradition.



Ministries of Our Church

Food Pantry Support



Since the beginning of 2015, we have donated more than 750 pounds of food and personal care items to the food banks we support in three towns: East Granby, Granby, and Suffield.

The collection box has been moved to the kitchen for the colder months.

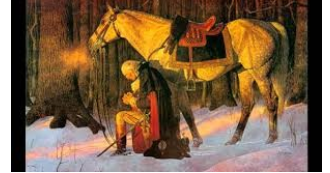
As you do your regular grocery shopping each week, try to pick up an item or two for those in need. Unfortunately, the need never goes away!

United Methodist Women

The **UMW** will hold a potluck meal on Tuesday, **December 8** at 6:30 PM, in the church fellowship hall. The *men of the church are invited* to join us as well. We will again have our \$5 charity drawing. Each person who wishes to participate will donate \$5 and submit the name of their favorite charity. One charity name will be drawn, and the entire collection will be sent there.

GRASSROOTS PRAYER FOR AMERICA

Powerful praise and prayer was the theme on the evening of November 15, as we gathered with other churches at Copper Hill UM Church to offer prayers of confession and intercession for our county and government leaders. The invitation went to all Granby-area churches, and representatives from at least six churches were present. A combined choir sang "If My People Medley," based on 2 Chron. 7:14. There was a wonderful spirit of unity and fellowship.



"Goings On" at Our Church

Activities you may have missed



Winter Picnic

Everyone needs a break during the winter "blahs." We are planning our 3rd annual **Winter Picnic** for **Saturday, February 20** at 4 PM. We will provide hamburgers and hot dogs, and everyone can bring a salad or side dish, and a dessert. There will be activities for all ages. Plan to join us in your summer attire for a fun time!

On October 25, a *Kid's Hayride and Costume Party* was enjoyed by the children of our church, along with a number of their friends. There was a costume parade with prizes and a hayride, followed by a hot meal with macaroni and cheese, mini hot dogs, veggies, and desserts, along with hot and cold beverages.

We served our *Turkey Dinner* on November 7, with a "full house" for the one seating and lots of take-out meals.

The UMW's *Holiday Bazaar*, held on November 20 and 21, was once again a big success, with a soup and sandwich luncheon served on Saturday

On Sunday, November 29, we *decorated the Sanctuary* for the Christmas season and shared in a *potluck lunch*.



Christmas

is most truly Christmas when we celebrate it by giving the light of love to those who need it most.

Gift Cards

As we have done for several years, we are collecting gift cards for those in need in our area. Donations go through the Emergency Aid in Suffield, and Social Services in East Granby and Granby. The cards may be in any amount and should be for one of the large "chains" such as Walmart, Target, Big Y, Stop & Shop, or Geissler's. Cards are due by Tuesday, December 15.

Returnable Bottle Collection

We continue to collect returnable/deposit bottles to help with church expenses. Bring your deposit bottles to the church and place them in the barrel in the kitchen marked "Returnables."



Dedication of New Worship Technology

Thanksgiving worship was especially exciting on Sunday, November 22 as Copper Hill UM Church dedicated to God three new advances in technology for use in the worship services: a video projection system, a new sound system, and a new keyboard.

The three projects began separately, but dovetailed together during recent months. Bob Stewart launched the video projection system into reality by giving the projector—the single most expensive part—in memory of his late wife, Sallie Stewart, a long-time member of the church. The previous sound system had been aging and was inadequate to handle the requirements of choir and instruments. Bringing the new sound system in now rather than later would also allow for integration of sound and visual capabilities. With a new sound system coming, it was now possible to replace the old organ with a modern keyboard rather than attempt an expensive repair.



Each part was presented for dedication by a key person: the projection system by Bob Stewart, the sound system by trustee chair Ron Prevost, and the keyboard by our instrumentalist and choir director, JoAnne Jones. Pastor Kelvin Jones, Lay Leader Bob Loomis, and Council Chair Judy Holcomb then led the congregation in a prayer of dedication sanctifying all three items for the service of God in our church.

Vision 2020 Plan Approved

At our annual charge conference on October 28, members officially approved the Vision 2020 Plan. The congregation has been putting it together for about two years, first in a long-range planning committee, then in the council, and finally through congregational discussions. The planning involved both ministries and facilities while keeping financial considerations in mind. The plan is divided into three sections, each with a key word.

1. **Enhance:** The first part of the plan has involved making improvements to our ministries and existing facilities. Children's ministry and prayer events have been amplified. By direct mail and new events, we have made our church more visible in our community. With new storm windows and more insulation overhead, we can heat our sanctuary more economically and feel warmer. We will also be able to use our sanctuary through the winter for the first time.

2. **Develop:** The next section plans for increases in capabilities over the next few years. It proposes adding two rooms which would provide improved children's space on Sundays, as well as an adult meeting room during the week. The plan also sets a goal to increase small groups and to send a short-term missions team to assist in ongoing Sandy recovery efforts in CT.

3. **Transform:** The last part contains longer-range planning. It seeks to envision the growth of the church past the seating capacity of the current sanctuary.

Parsonage Open House

Dec. 19, 20

Pastor Kelvin and JoAnne invite you to stop by anytime between the hours of 1—3 PM on Saturday or 2—5 PM Sunday to enjoy some holiday goodies and to see Pastor's train village. Children especially are welcome. Bring your friends!





Copper Hill United Methodist Church
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Copper Hill Connection

the Newsletter for Members and Friends of
Copper Hill United Methodist Church

27 Copper Hill Road, East Granby, CT 06026
Editor: Judy Holcomb Assistant Editor: JoAnne D. Jones

 You're Invited! 

Dec. 12—2:00 PM Christmas Caroling at Meadowbrook

Dec. 20—9:30 AM Christmas Sunday
“Hanging of the Greens” Children’s Program
Christmas Choir
Coffee Hour

Dec. 24—5:00 PM Family Christmas Eve Service
Celtic harp *** Men’s Quartet
Traditional Candle Lighting



Join us every Sunday morning for our Family Worship Ser-

Find us on the **web:** www.CopperHillChurch.us

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