

DEC 2011

# Wilton Presbyterian Church

Wilton, Connecticut



## Monthly Newsletter



A few words from our Clerk

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Dear WPC members and friends:

If you are anything like me, you are probably wondering where the year has gone? It is hard to believe that Christmas is already upon us and that in a few short (and no doubt hectic) weeks, we will be leaving 2011 behind. For many, saying goodbye to this year can't come soon enough - any way you look at it, it's been a year that will be hard to forget in the life of WPC and in our personal lives too. Not only has it been a year of transition for the church (new pastor, new courtyard, new clerk even), but also a year of economic challenges for our community and for our world and incredible weather events here in Connecticut that have really tested our patience, our character and perhaps even our faith. Earthquakes, hurricanes, almost a foot of snow for Halloween and day after day after day without power! For all that, as I look around today, I would have to say that if this was a test of some kind, then we have passed with flying colors.

As you know the last couple of months has been a particularly busy time for WPC. Since our last newsletter was published in October, we have hosted not one, but two spectacular fundraising events as well as an all-day mission project. We have planted and dedicated the 'Sanctuary Elms' in celebration of David Graybill's time with us, and in conjunction with our Episcopal brothers and sisters across the way, we have celebrated the completion of our new courtyard and worked together to tidy up the grounds in preparation for winter. In addition, we have had the opportunity to 'get to know' Stewart and Jane MacColl in small group gatherings and to participate in focus groups as part of our Mission Study effort. This of course does not begin to address all of the other wonderful things that continually take place in the normal course of business in the life of this church!

There are too many people to thank for their efforts in bringing all of this to fruition, but I would like to recognize Courtney Kleeman, Linda Rost, Patty Connor and my wife Claire, for the hours and hours of planning and preparation that helped to make our fundraising events so successful. The 'Blow Your Hurricane Blues Away' event raised more than \$27,000 for our church and our inaugural 'Music for Mission' evening with Ellis Paul in the Sanctuary contributed almost \$1,000 to our mission budget. Sincere thanks also to Tim Cummins for helping to coordinate the 'Stop Hunger Now' project in conjunction with other religious denominations from around the area. Despite mother nature's best efforts to disrupt the proceedings by dumping almost a foot of snow on Wilton, 77,000 meals were assembled that day, which actually surpassed the original goal. I would also like to thank Beth Mason and Nancy Gorkin for their work in making sure that our Sanctuary Elms were well taken care of through the summer and installed in front of the church in time for the dedication the other week. What a beautiful day it was, and a glorious occasion to welcome David and Susan Graybill back home if only for a short while. Finally, I would like to thank Steve Connor for leading the WPC charge on WEPCO clean-up day, and to Amy & Steve Roberts for their inspiring leadership of our 2012 Stewardship pledge campaign.

And so to Christmas - that very special time of year when we celebrate the birth of our Lord and savior, Jesus Christ. I would like to wish you, and all those dear to you, a wonderful Christmas and most importantly in our ever-so-busy lives, the time and space to just be at peace and to discover or rediscover, the true meaning of the season!

'Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest'.  
Christmas blessings!

Geoff

# Youth Activities



## YOUTH EVENTS DECEMBER 10-16

### **Saturday, December 10**

8<sup>th</sup> Grade Confirmation Mentor Luncheon,  
11:30am  
at Tom E Toe's

### **Sunday, December 11**

High School DC Mission Trip Orientation #2,  
11:30am-1:00pm  
*(Mandatory for all team members—any absence  
must be excused in advance.)*

### **Wednesday, December 14**

8<sup>th</sup> Grade Confirmation Class, 6:00-7:30pm  
With special guest, Rev. Stewart MacColl !!

### **Friday, December 16**

High School "Reindeer Food" Sale at Village  
Market, 3:30-6:30pm

WPC is part of a 3-church partnership known as the **Joint Youth Ministries**. Our middle school and high school youth, along with youth from St. Matthew's Episcopal and Zion's Hill United Methodist Churches, come together to build community, deepen faith, and put that faith into action through service to others. If you are a family with a student in middle or high school, but are not receiving our email reminders or snail mail schedules, please let Jane Field know, 203-762-5514 or [jane@wiltonpresbyterian.org](mailto:jane@wiltonpresbyterian.org) and she will be happy to add you to the mailing list.

## CASTING CALL FOR CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

All children in grades K-5 are invited to sign up to participate in this year's Christmas pageant which will be performed at the early Christmas Eve service at 4pm. A sign-up form was emailed to every WPC family, and can also be downloaded from the church website ([wiltonpresbyterian.org](http://wiltonpresbyterian.org)). On the form, your child can indicate his or her top three choices for a part s/he would like to play. Forms are due by Dec 13.

There will be one meeting in early December for costume fitting, and just one rehearsal on Friday, December 23, at 2pm. There also may be an opportunity for those children who wish to sing to participate in a cherub choir (stay tuned for more info).

This year's pageant will be based on the traditional carol "The Friendly Beasts." Each child will have one, brief spoken line to which the entire congregation will respond with a refrain. The pageant will be performed at the very beginning of worship so that children can sit with their families for the rest of the service, which will include lots of Christmas carol singing, some Christmas stories told by our interim pastor, Rev. Stewart MacColl, and the traditional singing of "Silent Night" by candlelight.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact Director of Spiritual Formation, Jane Field, or volunteer pageant directors Margret Greene and Jen Reese.



## CHRISTMAS MUSIC & FLOWER FUND CONTRIBUTIONS



Don't you just love the music and flowers in the Sanctuary at Christmas time? Many people don't realize that the Sanctuary decorations and Christmas music are not funded by the operating budget (aka the pledges); they are strictly underwritten through their own separate funds. You have an opportunity to contribute to either fund In Memory Of/Honor Of a loved



one by making a donation in their names. Names will appear in the church bulletins at the 4PM and 9PM services on Christmas Eve. Please have your contributions (of any amount) to the church office no later than December 15<sup>th</sup>. Remember to include your name as well as the names of those people you wish to be remembered AND stipulate either the Flower Fund or the Music Fund.



## Small Groups/Adult Spiritual Ed.

**GET READY FOR SMALL GROUPS, 'CAUSE HERE THEY COME!!**

The Adult Spiritual Formation Committee and WPC's Session and staff are encouraging every member of our church to try at least ONE small group for a condensed, "cabin-fever" season of January-February-March. So prepare to dip your toe in by choosing at least one group and then committing to attend just three meetings between January and March, to meet new people, try new things, get a new perspective on faith. Here is a brief description of the groups you have to choose from:

- † **Back To Nature** – hikes, bird-watching, gardening, environmental preservation activities
- † **Good Book** – read a novel or non-fiction book and come together to discuss it (see article below for a more detailed description of the titles selected for this year—copies of all the books will be available for purchase after worship beginning December 18)
- † **Dinner and A Movie** – Enjoy yummy potluck suppers, films with faith-related themes, and great discussions afterward over dessert. Preview of Coming Attractions: "Lars & The Real Girl," "Creation," "The Painted Veil," "Under the Same Moon," "Saint Ralph."
- † **Game Night** – Spend a cozy Friday night with a group that spans the generations, from grade schoolers to grandparents, playing tech-free games like bingo, poker, or board games—great prizes for the winners!
- † **Hands to Work, Hearts to God** – a handcrafters group for those who sew, knit, bead, or crochet.
- † **Current Events in the Light of our Faith** – a discussion group that meets weekly before worship to consider the connections between headline news and what we believe.
- † **Two By Two Dinner Group** – couples meet in each other's homes for dinner and conversation.

So start thinking about which group(s) you would like to try this winter, and then keep an eye out for the registration and publicity to follow later this month. This is a great way to beat those winter blues, and to build up our family of faith through strengthening the ties that bind us together in love. As Amy and Steve Roberts put it so well in this year's stewardship campaign: there is no "US" without "U!" So please plan to join us—it wouldn't be the same without U!

## The Good Book Club



### FOR THOSE WHO LIKE TO READ AHEAD...

Most of the groups in WPC's Small Group Ministry don't require any preparation for participants—just show up and enjoy. But "The Good Book" group does involve reading the selected book ahead of time so you can participate in the lively discussion about each title's faith-related themes. So if you'd like to get a head start, or if you're looking for something good to read, or you want to add a book or two to your Christmas wish list, here are the titles "The Good Book" group will be reading:

#### For January:

**The Kitchen House, by Kathleen Grissom.** This suspenseful, page-turner novel about slavery and race in America's pre-Civil War south was chosen as a companion volume to the Adult Education class taking place January 8, 22 and 29 right after worship, when we will watch and discuss the documentary "Traces of the Trade," a film that chronicles the experience of a Rhode Island family who discovers their ancestors were the largest slave traders in U.S. history

#### For February:

Two short memoirs will be the featured titles in February: **To End All Wars, by Ernest Gordon** a memoir of the WWII Japanese prison camp survivor who went on to be chaplain of Princeton University (and whose experiences were the basis of the famous movie "Bridge Over the River Kwai"), and **An Invisible Thread by Laura Schroff and Alex Tresniowski**, the true story of a successful NYC corporate executive and the homeless, eleven-year-old panhandler she meets on a city street. Discussion of these two books will focus on the ways in which seemingly arbitrary events in our lives can end up having a profound impact on our faith and our relationship with God. If you can only manage to read one of the two memoirs, that's OK—still come to talk about the book you did read, and to learn more about the one you didn't.

#### For March:

**What's the Least I Can Believe and Still Be A Christian?, by Martin Thielen**, a theology professor and pastor's look at what really should be the foundation of our faith. This title has been chosen for a new initiative: "The Church Reads"—WPC and our sister congregation, St. Matthew's, will be encouraging all members to read this short and engaging book during the month of March, and then to come together for small group discussions about those doctrines and beliefs the author tosses out, and those things he embraces, as the basis of a modern Christian faith.

All of these books will be available for purchase after worship beginning on Sunday, December 18. Good quality used copies can also be purchased on-line at amazon.com for a reduced price.

So put on your reading glasses, pour yourself a cup of tea, and settle in for a great read!

## CHURCH SCHOOL NEWS

Sunday, December 18<sup>th</sup> will be a **Family Service Sunday** for children in second grade through seventh grade in order for them to enjoy the wonderful Advent music service. Children in Kindergarten and First Grade will begin in worship with their family and then go to the Upper Core for a special Advent Godly Play lesson taught by Sharon Pearson. After the lesson, children will return to worship.

There will be the usual classes for 3's and Pre-K's as well regular Nursery care.



There will be childcare in the Nursery for the 4:00 pm **Christmas Eve** service for infants through 3 year olds but there will not be childcare for the 9:00 pm service.

## After-Worship Documentary Film & Discussion Series

DON'T MISS THIS ONE!!

**THREE Sundays, January 8, 22 and 29, at 11:15am**

***“Traces of the Trade: A Story From the Deep North”***

In the feature documentary from the acclaimed PBS series “P.O.V.,” **Traces of the Trade: A Story from the Deep North**, seminarian and filmmaker Katrina Browne discovers, much to her horror, that her New England ancestors were the largest slave-trading family in U.S. history. The film follows Browne and nine fellow family members on a remarkable journey from Rhode Island to Ghana to Cuba and back to Rhode Island which brings them face-to-face with the history and legacy of New England’s hidden enterprise. Upon their return to America, the family confronts the thorny topic of what to do now. In the context of growing calls for reparations for slavery, family members struggle with the question of how to think about and contribute to “repair.” Meanwhile, Browne and her family come closer to the core: their love/hate relationship with their own Yankee culture and privileges, and the healing and transformation needed not only “out there,” but inside themselves. The issues the DeWolf descendants are confronted with dramatize questions that apply to the nation as a whole: What, concretely, is the legacy of slavery—for whites, for blacks, for others? Who owes whom what for the sins of the fathers of this country? What history do we inherit as individuals and as citizens? How does Northern complicity change the equation? What would repair—spiritual and material—really look like and what would it take?



**Please plan to stay after worship on January 8, 22 and 29 as we join together with members of St. Matthew's to watch and discuss this important film.** Each Sunday we will watch a 30-minute segment of the film, and then spend time talking with one another about what we've seen. Discussion will be facilitated by clergy from both churches.

If you need more inspiration, read what the critics have said about this movie: “powerful”... “a work of poetic introspection” ... “essential viewing, particularly in New England” ... “a remarkably insightful experiment that provokes honest dialogue” ... “has important things to say about the bone-deep American discomfort with our shared history” ... “[the] film refuses to rush in to the safe harbor of white guilt or to disown the acts of the forefathers”...

You can also go to the film’s website to view a trailer: [tracesofthetrade.org](http://tracesofthetrade.org). Then put this not-to-be-missed adult education series on your January calendar!

### **DRIVING SAFETY Please use the lower driveway to exit the property.**

The entrance at the stone walls is just that, an entrance only. WEPCO has added directional arrows and will be adding more signage as reminders.

### **PARKING Please park all the way back in the “North 40”.**

The back parking lot is bigger than most parishioners realize. When you drive straight back the pavement ends but there is parking space that is graveled/grassy along the whole row of pine trees. Take a look next Sunday morning and please use those spaces during the busy Christmas season. As a kindness, please park as far from the building as you are able. Enjoy a walk with your family.

### **PARKING PART TWO The small circular drive is for drop-off or brief parking.**

Church ushers are available to move your car for you, should the circle be the safest way for you to park and enter the building.

### **LOST & FOUND:** Have you ever taken home the wrong black coat from an event? Have you ever gone to grab your coat after an event only to find it missing? Welcome to December, when coat mix-ups are most frequent!

Are you missing a hearing aid, car keys, a bag of knitting, platter, bowl, umbrella, gloves or coat? You may have left it here at the church complex! **There is a lost and found box on the coat rack in the hall near the Discovery Room.** You may also check the china closet in the Kitchen and the coatroom near the Gathering Space. Sandy Muschler in the WEPCO office will be happy to help you hunt for lost items of all sorts.

WEPCO

Announcements



In the spirit of the season of Advent, a time when we reflect and prepare for Christ's coming, we offer you the chance to spread hope for others through the **Gift of Christmas.**

**Catalog,**

This is an opportunity for you to share in the true meaning of Christmas.

Honor a loved one or a friend and help out a person in need by purchasing one of 219 gift items selected by 31 local, national, and international non-profit agencies.

A star ornament and a written description of the gift will be provided for each donation. If you didn't get your catalog in the mail, you can check it out on our website: [www.wiltonpresbyterian.org](http://www.wiltonpresbyterian.org)

Please contact Carol Rowe if you have any Questions- 762-9766

# Nominating

Did You Know...That the church **Session** guides the operational & financial life of the congregation? And the **Deacons** are the congregation's lay pastors caring for each and all?

Nominations are now being accepted for the next class of Session leaders & Deacons for our church. If you have someone in mind that you would like to nominate, please complete a Nominating Form and turn it into the office by Dec. 15th. Forms are available in the Narthex and the church office.

## LOOKING AHEAD TO DECEMBER WORSHIP AND A JANUARY BEGINNING

### Sunday, Dec. 11<sup>th</sup> Third Sunday in Advent - The Candle of Joy

Sermon: Trial by Jury (the congregation)

The innkeeper of Bethlehem gets a chance to justify his seemingly hard heartedness in putting a desperate couple in a barn. A drama sermon

### Sunday, Dec. 18<sup>th</sup> Fourth Sunday in Advent - The Candle of Love

The celebration of the Christmas through music led by our distinguished music maestro, Al Galletly and his merry bands of singers and ringers

### Christmas Eve Candlelight Services:

4:00PM Family Worship with a short Christmas Pageant & Christmas memories by Stewart MacColl

9:00PM Christmas Celebration - Carols, Anthems, Readings, Meditation

### Sunday, Dec. 25<sup>th</sup>- Christmas Day worship of carols, readings, and sharing

### Sunday, January 1 New Year's Day Coffee Time and Worship in the Parish

Hall Coffee Time First - caffeine, cocoa, donuts, muffins

Come sober up, then bring the food and drink to worship and celebrate A Year Ending, Year Beginning Worship of Praise and Pondering.



## Stewardship

Remember the Four "R's":

REFLECT on God's generosity

RETURN on your Stewardship investment

RESPOND to God's generosity

REACT ASAP

The 2011 Stewardship Campaign is winding down. If you have not already turned in your **Pledge Card** or your **Time and Talent Form**, please do so by Dec. 12 as Session needs to plan for the 2012 budget. There are extra copies in the Narthex or you may download a form from our website. Place your pledge in the offering plate, mail to the church office Attn: Chip Mason or e-mail to: [ewmason815@gmail.com](mailto:ewmason815@gmail.com).



## Al's Notes From the Choir Room

Music has always been a major part of the Christmas season, and this year will be no different at WPC. Since late October, our choir has been working on some outstanding music for our annual Advent Music Sunday. There will be some familiar material and some "new stuff."

(New stuff is always good since it keeps the choir members actively involved in the rehearsal process.) So please mark your calendars for Sunday, December 18<sup>th</sup>. And, what the heck, bring along a friend, a neighbor, a business colleague, a WPC member you haven't seen for a while, and certainly your entire family. Let's fill up the pews and caned chairs.

I'm confident you'll be rewarded with a wonderful morning of rafter-raising music. And afterward, you will definitely feel ready for the week ahead leading up to that very special day on our church calendar.

Here's looking forward to seeing all of you there.

Al

### Save The Date For The Joint Festival of Children

February 12, 2012



In St. Matthew's Nave

Our Children from WPC and St. Matthew's will lead all of us in worship and the Sermon Play entitled "**The More Excellent Way**" (written by Steve Hudspeth) will be presented by the 6th/7th grade class.

The students work very hard on the Festival of Children every year so we hope that you'll be able to join us.

## Celebrations, Prayers & Concerns



We hold in our prayers **Gladys Hyatt** who is receiving Hospice Care at Connecticut Hospice, 100 Double Beach Road, Branford, CT 06406. Claudia Halsey is Gladys' Deacon. We extend our Christian Sympathy to **Jim & Jane Neighbors** at the death of Jim's sister, **Tina Hardenbergh** on Saturday, November 19, 2011. We ask for your prayers for Jim & Jane, Tina's husband, Mark, and their family. We extend our sympathy to **Jane Field** and **Sophie Paddon** at the death of their beloved "Auntie Jay," **Jeanette Freeman**, in Wilton, Maine, on Sunday, November 27. We keep in our prayers, **Claire Brown** and her two sisters as they remain beside with their father, **Art Pelster**, in Arizona. Art has been in and out of the hospital recently and is dealing with pneumonia and pancreatic cancer. Preparations are underway to move him to hospice care. We pray for **Laura Schwemm**, along with her daughters **Molly** and **Nora Hoch**, who will be in Chicago the weekend of Dec. 10th for the memorial service of Laura's uncle **Jack Schwemm**. Please pray for her cousins Kari Gies and Cathy Schwemm, who also lost their mother in September.

Congratulations to **Tim & Jen Dolnier** at the birth of a daughter, Payton in mid November. The proud grandparents are WPC members, **Nancy & Karl Dolnier**.

## Wilton Presbyterian Church

### Contact & Staff Information

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Rev. Stewart MacColl, Interim Pastor, e-mail: [stewart.maccoll@wiltonpresbyterian.org](mailto:stewart.maccoll@wiltonpresbyterian.org)

Rev. Jane Field, Director of Spiritual Formation, e-mail: [jane@wiltonpresbyterian.org](mailto:jane@wiltonpresbyterian.org)

Al Galletly, Music Director, e-mail [agalletly88s@gmail.com](mailto:agalletly88s@gmail.com)

Sheri Richards, Church School Coordinator, [gscwc@aol.com](mailto:gscwc@aol.com)

Patty Connor, Office Administrator, [wpchurch@wiltonpresbyterian.org](mailto:wpchurch@wiltonpresbyterian.org)



New Church Directories are being published in January.

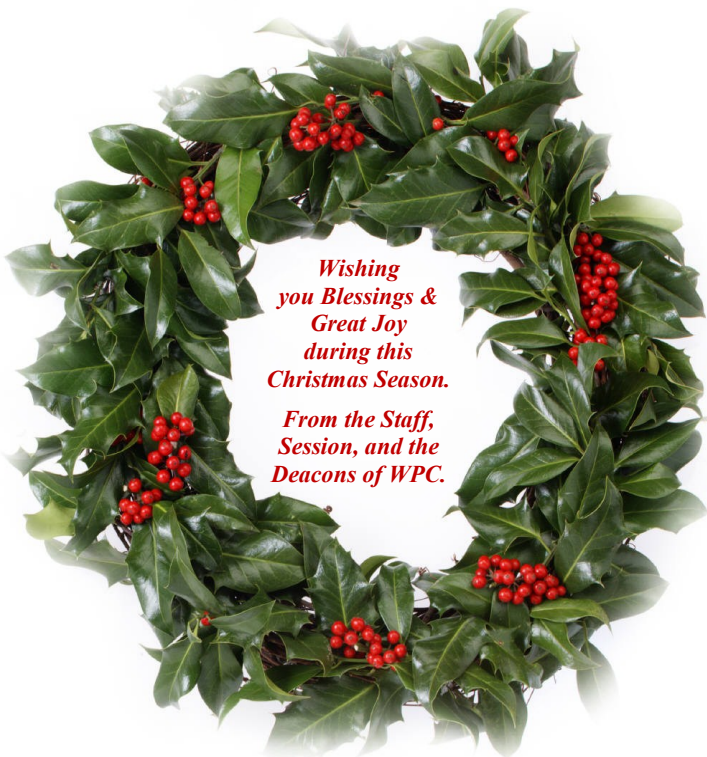
If any of your contact information has changed since last year, please e-mail your changes to Patty at the church office:  
[wpchurch@wiltonpresbyterian.org](mailto:wpchurch@wiltonpresbyterian.org)

Humor is Good For the Soul!

CHURCH OF THE COVERED DISH by Thom Tapp



"I have one correction for today's bulletin, we are having a 'deacon' election, not a 'demon' election."



*Wishing you Blessings & Great Joy during this Christmas Season.*

*From the Staff, Session, and the Deacons of WPC.*

Did you miss church once or twice in the last few months? We'll you're in luck! All of Rev. Stewart MacColl's sermons are posted on our website!

[Www.wiltonpresbyterian.org](http://www.wiltonpresbyterian.org)

You may also print off or view past issues of the News from the Pews weekly newsletter as well as the Monthly Newsletters and other important info about WPC.

So check it out when you have time and see what you've been missing!

