

Christmas Services

*** Christmas Eve at First Church, Simsbury**
December 24, 2017

Puppet Pageant Service 5:00 pm
A wonderful, captivating service for all ages that retells the joyous story of Jesus' birth using larger than life rod puppets. This service is a long-standing memorable tradition at First Church that the entire family will find meaningful.

Service of Lessons and Carols 9:00 pm
A beautiful candlelight service that truly embodies the mystery and awesomeness of the birth of Christ.

Midnight Worship with Communion 11:00 pm
A unique late-night Christmas service that includes traditional, blended with contemporary elements of worship.

THE FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST, SIMSBURY
689 Hogmeadow Street, Simsbury, CT • 860-651-3593 • www.fccsimsbury.org
First Church is an open and affirming congregation of the United Church of Christ. Whoever you are, wherever you are on life's journey, you are welcome here.

Christmas at Avon Congregational Church
6 West Main Street, Avon

Service of Light on the Longest Night, December 21st - 7 pm
A service of reflection and healing.

Christmas Eve, December 24th - 5 pm
A traditional service of lessons and carols for all ages.

860 678-0488 - www.avonchurch.org

Give Thanks For The Greatest Gift Of All

Sunday, December 24
Fourth Sunday of Advent
9:00 AM Holy Eucharist
Christmas Eve
4:00 PM Family Eucharist
9:30 PM Choral Prelude
9:30 PM Festival Holy Eucharist

Monday, December 25
Christmas Day
10:00 AM Holy Eucharist

Trinity Episcopal Church
55 River Road (Rte 179) Collinsville, CT
The Rev. Linda Spiers - (860) 693-8172

Multi-faith vigil held in remembrance of Sandy Hook victims

By Olivia Piper
Staff Writer

AVON — On the evening of Dec. 14 at the Avon Congregational Church, leaders from numerous faith traditions, state representatives and local residents gathered together to remember the 26 lives lost during the shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown five years ago.

The vigil began with a prayer from the Rev. Matt Laney of Avon Congregational Church, who spoke about the sadness that surrounds the events that transpired in Newtown, the devastating impact of gun violence on many communities and the need for all people to come together in peace.

"God, we cry out to you to heal our souls from the scourge of violence and to endow us with the courage

to step down from the pulpits and up from behind our desks to seek your peace in the land. As our leaders debate solutions, grant them wisdom and courage to deliver us from the evil of 'gun-damentalism' and almost unlimited access to weapons of all kinds. Teach us your ways oh God, bless us with the wisdom to put down our swords and be peacemakers," Laney said.

The Farmington Valley League of Light helped to organize the vigil and to bring together all of the evening's speakers, many of whom come from different faith traditions, including Christianity, Judaism, Islam and Buddhism.

"Our mission is to come together in solidarity as a united community to share, understand and act. As a multi-faith, spiritually-focused community, we are aware of and honor our dif-

ferences just as we affirm and celebrate our common humanity, beliefs and the goodness we share," the League of Light website explains.

The evening continued with the recitation of Psalm 23 by Rabbi Rebekah Goldman of the Farmington Valley Jewish Congregation-Emek Shalom in Simsbury, a recitation from the Quran, Chapter 89, by Dr. Khamis Abu-Hasaballah from the Farmington Valley American Muslim Center in Avon and a recitation of the Metta Sutta: Practicing Loving Kindness by the Rev. Bo Gak Sunim from the Dae Yen Sa Temple in New Hartford.

Later, state Reps. John Hampton from Simsbury and Mike Demicco from Farmington spoke at length about the importance of communities coming together during times of strife, and each promised that they

were doing and would continue to do everything possible to be a constant and positive voice for their local communities within the government.

Rabbi Debra Cantor from the B'nai Tikvah-Sholom in Bloomfield and Deacon Art Miller from St. Mary's Catholic Church in Simsbury spoke words of hope at the vigil, each stating how important it is to remember that even when the world seems to be at its darkest, as it was Dec. 14, 2012, that there is always a light to be found in reaching out to others in kindness.

"Some people say hope is a lie, some people don't believe in hope, some think that hope makes no sense, some people destroy hope, beat it and bury it in the grave, but I assure you that on the third day, hope rises. Some hope, some way, we are here because we have hope,



Deacon Art Miller of St. Mary's Catholic Church in Simsbury speaks at the vigil. Photo by Olivia Piper

and our hope can't stay right here in this extraordinary church. Our hope is hope out there. We cannot be the same, we must not be the same. This has to be the beginning of a change and the belief that hope does live, and if it's only in you, then allow it to reach someone

else," said Miller. The vigil drew to close with an extended moment of silence lead by Mike Smoolca from St. Mary's Catholic Church in Simsbury, as well as a candle lighting and a reading of the names and ages of each of the 26 victims of the tragedy.

School district placed on AP honor roll

By John Fitts
Assistant Editor

CANTON — Recently, Canton Public School District learned that it has been placed on the College Board's 8th Annual Advanced Placement Honor Roll.

The district was one of 447 districts across the nation to receive the honor. In the past several years, the district has

worked to increase the number of high school students who participate in AP classes, which are considered college-level curricula, and exams, which, with scores of 3-plus, generally qualify a student to receive college credit for the course.

"One of our goals is to increase the participation rate of students taking AP course and challenging themselves before they leave Canton High School,"

said Dr. Jordan Grossman, assistant superintendent. "We're very pleased and we're excited for our students, our staff and our community. The hard work of all our constituents is

See AP on page 16

Connor and Ryan Dad loves you very much

Gran, Granda, Martin, Glenn, Jen, Alison, Jackie and Matt miss you! Love you!

And wish you a very *Merry Christmas*

The Goldie Clan

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COMMUNITY PUBLICATIONS

**TOWN OF SIMSBURY
PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE
PROPOSED WATER SHORTAGE
ORDINANCE**

Notice is hereby given that the Board of Selectmen will hold a public hearing on January 8, 2017 at 6:00 p.m. in the Main Meeting Room of Simsbury Town Hall, 623 Hogmeadow Street, Simsbury, CT 06070 to receive public comment on the proposed adoption of a new ordinance, Chapter 151, Water Shortage.

The text of the proposed Water Shortage ordinance is available in the Simsbury Town Clerk's office, Town Hall, 623 Hogmeadow Street, Simsbury, CT 06070. A copy of the proposed ordinance is posted on the Town's website at <http://www.simsbury-ct.gov/boards-of-selectmen>. Interested parties may attend the public hearing to voice their comments on the proposed adoption of water shortage ordinance.