

# THE PARISH POST

THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

CHESHIRE, CONNECTICUT  
[www.cheshirecongregational.org](http://www.cheshirecongregational.org)

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## No Idle Tale

By Dave Buchan  
Interim Senior Minister

*"...but these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them."  
Luke 24:11*

An idle tale. That is what the disciples thought of the women's report of Jesus' resurrection on that first Easter morning.

They could not believe that Jesus was alive. But soon Jesus broke through their initial doubts. The risen Christ himself came knocking on

the door of their lives. And they knew the living Christ first hand.

Today, Christ continues to touch our lives just as he did those of the first disciples. And when he does, life can never be the same for us. Then we know the amazing wonder and power of Easter ourselves. Christ is active and at work in this world – even now.



***He is Risen!***

In Rock Creek Cemetery in the Petworth neighborhood of Washington, D.C., there is a famous statue by Gutzon Borglum, the man who carved Mount Rushmore. Mary Magdalene is portrayed looking into the empty tomb on Easter morning. And though Berglum's medium is bronze – cold, hard metal – he has made Mary's face shine bright with warm hope.

The Jesus she thought was within the tomb is not there. The sculptor has captured something of the happiness and hope of Easter.

Easter says that God has the last word. His love has broken the power of death, hate and fear. This is no idle tale. It is good news, tremendous good news. Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!

Come celebrate Easter with us on Sunday, March 23. Services are at 8:00, 9:30 and 11:30.

In Christ,  
*Dave Buchan*

## Lenten Worship and Activities

Here's a listing of the various opportunities at First Congregational Church this Lenten season:

**Palm Sunday, March 16:** worship at 9 and 11 will include the telling of the Passion Story by members and friends in the ancient oral tradition. Anyone interested in taking part in this Scripture By Heart project is welcome. We meet Mondays at 7:15 p.m. in the sanctuary to help each other learn and perform our scripture texts. Please see Alison McCaffrey with any questions.

**Maundy Thursday, March 20, 7:30 p.m. worship in the sanctuary:** Worship service with communion. Worshippers are invited to bring a new white bath towel as part of our offering. These towels will be given to the shelter residents at Columbus House. This service will include hand or foot washing, communion, and the traditional stripping of the paraments in preparation for Good Friday. Alison McCaffrey will preach.

**Good Friday, March 21:** Two services, Noon and 7:30 p.m. (Tenebrae service with the Senior Choir singing). Dave Buchan will preach at both services.

**The Silent Vigil: Good Friday to Easter Sunday** in the Sanctuary.  
You are invited to keep watch for the coming resurrection in quietness and prayer in our sanctuary from Good Friday evening through early Easter morning. You may sign up for one hour time slots,

every hour around the clock beginning at 9 pm after the Good Friday service ending at 6:00 am on Easter morning. The sign up sheet for the Silent Vigil is posted on the Parish Life bulletin board on the ramp to the Parish Hall.; detailed instructions will be mailed to participants.

**Easter Sunday, March 23:** Worship services at 8, 9:30, and 11:30 a.m. Join us as we celebrate the glorious resurrection of Jesus. Communion will be celebrated at all three services. Dave Buchan will preach.

## Worship Schedule For March

**Sunday, March 2:** Memorial Music Sunday. One service only, at 10 a.m. Communion Sunday; food offerings will be taken. Food of the month: Canned hash.

**Sunday, March 9:** Connecticut UCC Conference Minister Davida Foy Crabtree preaching. Services at 9 and 11.

**Sunday, March 16:** Palm Sunday. Alison McCaffrey preaching. Services at 9 and 11.

**Sunday, March 23:** Easter Sunday. Dave Buchan preaching. No Church School for grades 3-8. Services at 8, 9:30 and 11.

**Sunday, March 30:** Dave Buchan preaching. Services at 9 and 11.

# Notes from the Executive Board

The Executive Board is busy this winter season; here are highlights:

The Annual Meeting was held on Sunday, January 27. Outgoing President Susan Hostage gave a review of 2007 and plans for 2008, and the following resolutions were made:

- The Annual Report for 2007 was accepted.
- The 2008 Nominating Report was accepted.
- Approval was granted for the Treasurer to use reserve funds, if needed. In addition, a list of priority, unbudgeted items was compiled by means of congregational input.

Reviews of the Revisions to Church Bylaws are continuing, with joint meetings scheduled between the Executive Board and the Bylaws review committee. Current Bylaws require two congregational meetings to finalize the revisions – one to review the revisions and a separate meeting to vote on them.

Informational sessions will be set up prior to the vote for interested congregational members.

On Sunday, March 9, UCC Conference Minister Davida Foy Crabtree will conduct services at First Congregational. Planning is underway for a reception, with details to come.

The Congregational Districting Project has mapped active members and friends of First Congregational, showing the main

concentration in the towns of Cheshire, Southington, Meriden and Wallingford, but with some people coming from as far away as East Haven and West Haven, Avon, Hartford and Killingworth. (Out of state attendance was not charted.)

The next step is to divide the whole into “caring districts” and create a network to know and care for each other. Please contact the Rev. Alison McCaffrey if you have ideas or would like to help her with the project.

The status of recommendations from the Response Team continues to be monitored, with active work in progress on those remaining open.

Fund-raising requests have been drafted in a Calendar of Giving, the purpose of which is to provide the annual giving picture for the church.

The Board of Outreach will update the calendar and expects to have more hands-on activities this year. Executive Board continues to review individual requests on an as-needed basis until this topic comes up for a full discussion.

Your thoughts and ideas to improve our church are always welcomed by the Executive Board. You may contact any member of the Board if you would like to provide feedback or comments.



## ‘T-Bone’ To Perform

Singer Tom “T-Bone” Stankus, from Bristol, will perform on Saturday, March 29, in the Parish Hall as a fund-raiser for the First Congregational Preschool and Daycare. The show will be at 10 a.m.

“T-Bone” has performed for thousands of families throughout the United States since 1972. Before his audiences realize it, they are clapping, singing and dancing at his shows. This is ‘full contact entertainment!’ Tickets can be purchased in advance at the preschool between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m., or at the door. The cost is \$5 per person or \$20 per family.

For more information, contact Dawn DeFeo at 699-1169.



## Meet the Women Of the New Testament

The Women’s Bible Study group is looking at “Women of the New Testament.” The group meets Wednesdays at 10 a.m. in the parlor. Participants use a study guide from the Life Guide Bible Study series. It costs \$5.

The group explores different scriptures and different women each week, as members walk through this series. You are welcome to study with us when you can, and be away when you must. Each week stands by itself. All women of the church are welcome. The sessions are led by Debbie Gravell.

## One Great Hour of Sharing

On March 2, the One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) special collection will be received at both services.

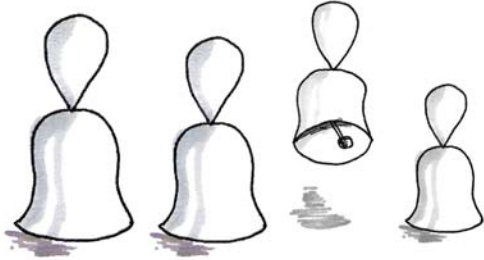
OGHS is an ecumenical disaster and poverty relief mission supporting people in need both in the United States (mostly from natural disasters such as floods) and around the world (mostly in poverty relief). The United Church of Christ, our denomination, participates in OGHS with seven other Christian denominations, including Episcopalians, Methodists, and Presbyterians.

Money is disbursed through local churches in the disaster areas. It’s our first response as a denomination to help those that other resources don’t. Over 60 percent of the One Great Hour of Sharing offering is utilized to build sustainable communities. The primary areas of emphasis are education, health care, agricultural development and micro-credit.

One Great Hour of Sharing offers an opportunity for each of us to share with people in need around the world, giving them much more than a handout. When we share our resources, we help to ensure that ill children not only receive treatment, but enjoy the benefits of a community made safer with proper sanitation and clean sources of water.

When we share our resources through One Great Hour of Sharing, we make a difference in the lives of others.





## Handbell Choirs Are Seeking Members

The church's Senior and Junior Handbell Choirs are still looking for both new and experienced players, minimum age 8 years old.

Both choirs rehearse on Wednesday evenings. The Junior Handbell Choir rehearses from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m., and the Senior Handbell Choir (teens and adults) rehearses from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Both choirs provide music for services on one Sunday each month, as well as at Christmas and Easter.

Being in the Handbell and Chime Choirs is not only a worthwhile ministry, it's also fun and rewarding! Don't worry if you have never played handbells or chimes before ... we will teach you!

If you'd like to join either choir, or to obtain more information, please see Handbell Choirs Director Marianne Beckman or Martha Lape, or simply join us on a Wednesday evening at the church.



## Covenant to Care Thanks You!

Thank you to Tracy Bloschichak and Elaine Daly for their donations of size 5 girls clothing. The assortment will certainly carry this little girl through the chilly remaining months of winter. Outreach monies provided clothing for both an 18- and 24-month-old girl in foster care, as well as assorted diapers and snack items for office distribution.

Thanks as well to Lucinda Orsini and Joy Deegan for a collection of girls clothing (to go to two girls being placed in foster care) and a number of toiletry items that will go to the Department of Children and Families office in Waterbury as well as area shelters.



## Caring Crafts Ministry

The Caring Crafts Ministry will meet on Monday, March 31, at 7 p.m. at Donna Mead's home, 15 Conifer Drive, Hamden. If you need directions or want more information about our group, feel free to call (203) 248-9576.

**Have you remembered  
First Congregational Church  
in your estate planning?**

# This Month in Christian Education

## Special Schedule for March 2

On Sunday, March 2, there will be one single worship service at 10 a.m. Here is what will happen with Church School:

For Preschool 3 through 2nd grade, we will show the movie “Veggie Tales: The Prodigal Son” in Room 10. Popcorn will be served. Teachers and helpers scheduled for that day are asked to help with the special event. Please bring your attendance folders. Grades 3-6 will have a presentation on summer programs at Silver Lake Camp and Conference Center, to be held in the Whiting House.

## Bible Journeys For Grades 2-6

New this year is the Bible Journeys Herald, a monthly elementary church school newsletter that will be emailed to families as well as posted on the church website.

Grades 3-6 go to class when dismissed from the church. Watch the Sunday bulletin for when children leave for class. Grade 2 at 9:00 service only leave for Chapel in the early part of the service. After Chapel they go with their Shepherd to their Bible Journeys workshop. Parents may find their children in the classroom listed in the bulletin at the end of Church School.

## For March: Resurrection To Pentecost

Thou Art, Room 8: Jerusalem Tours takes the children to the Pentecost Festival Fairgrounds in Jerusalem on this leg of the

journey. They follow the disciples to Jerusalem where they wait for God’s gift of the Holy Spirit. As bubbles float around their heads, they experience the joy of the Holy Spirit, as the disciples must have on Pentecost. Through bubble art they blow bubbles to create spirited art.

Red Sea Productions, Room 9: Jerusalem Tours takes the children on a road trip to Emmaus. As they travel down the road to Emmaus, they experience the disciples’ feelings of sadness and disappointment. While sharing their own personal experiences, children will remember times when they have felt keen disappointment. As they put on their trip sunglasses, they learn that wearing sad eyes limits their ability to see Jesus and his plan for them. As they act out the story of the road to Emmaus, their “sad eyes” will fall away when they see Christ for who he is.

Desert Tales, Room 10: Jerusalem Tours takes the children to their main tourist office in downtown Jerusalem to view an excellent video that highlights their Holy Land Trip and prepares them for their journey. As they view the video, *He Is Risen*, they follow along on their Jerusalem Tours Trip Map. The map traces a route from Golgotha to sites where Jesus appeared to his disciples. Their map leads them to the final destination – Jesus’ Ascension.

Gospel Games, Room 11: Jerusalem Tours takes the children back to Jerusalem

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### 9:00 Church School

Date	Thou Art	Red Sea Prod.	Desert Tales	Gospel Games
Mar. 2	Assembly	Assembly	Assembly	Assembly
Mar. 9	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grades 2 & 3	Grade 6
Mar. 16	Grades 2 & 3	Grade 4	Grade 6	Grade 5
Mar. 23	Easter	Easter	Easter	Easter
Mar. 30	Grade 6	Grades 2& 3	Grade 5	Grade 4

### 11:00 Church School

Date	Thou Art	Red Sea Prod.	Desert Tales	Gospel Games
Mar. 2	Assembly	Assembly	Assembly	Assembly
Mar. 9	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grades 2 & 3	Grade 6
Mar. 16	Grades 2 & 3	Grade 4	Grade 6	Grade 5
Mar. 23	Easter	Easter	Easter	Easter
Mar. 30	Grade 6	Grades 2 & 3	Grade 5	Grade 4

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to a place where the disciples hid behind locked doors after Jesus' death. Children learn that Jesus appeared to the disciples many times after his resurrection. Children meet Thomas and listen to his story of doubt. Through the game "I Doubt It" children learn to recognize Gospel truths about Jesus' resurrection. Teams of children will take turns providing answers about biblical events as the other team determines whether the answer is "Gospel Truth" or "I Doubt It." Answers that are "I Doubt It" are looked up in the Bible. Picture cards help children see the appearances of Jesus as

they are placed on the Jerusalem Tours Trip map.

#### **Lenten Mission Project**

Sunday, March 2 ends the February Mission Project for Malawi. Children have been collecting cans and bottles and recycling them for money that they bring to church school to help support school children in Malawi. Any families who have not turned in their money are asked to turn it in to Debbie Gravel.

Lenten Mission Project For Preschool 3-1st Grades: Resurrection Ark money is due back to the church school class on

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Sunday, March 30. Teachers and children are selecting what animal their class wants to raise money to buy. Kindergarten at 9:00 has reported they want to buy flocks of chicks which are \$20 per flock.

### **Confirmation News**

Friday March 7 – Sunday March 9. Information packets have been sent to all Confirmands. If you did not receive one, please contact Debbie Gravell.

Leaders for the retreat are Debbie Gravell, Emilee Ziolkowski and Roger Olander.

We will be joined by the Confirmation group from Woodbridge led by our own Joellyn Jason, Woodbridge Director of Christian Education.

Our Confirmation group has been meeting monthly as a whole group and frequently throughout the month with their mentors.

They are in the process of planning a group mission project to buy water pumps for villages in Africa. Watch the bulletin and signs around the church for details.

Members of the group along with their mentors went to worship at St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Cheshire to participate in a different setting for worship.

Mentors and Confirmands are invited to attend the Kol Ami Synagogue worship on Saturday, March 1 meeting at Kol Ami at 9:30 a.m. Confirmands will receive more information through their mentors.

## Youth Group News

February programs concentrated on exploring the meaning of sin and the blessings of forgiveness and redemption. We enjoyed an evening of fellowship and bowling on the last Sunday in February.

One major new development for the Yutes is the formation of a praise band, which will make its debut on Youth Sunday, April 27. This band (which is still unnamed) will perform contemporary worship songs from the Christian Rock repertoire. (Yes, there will be drums and electric guitars in church!) The Youth are busy learning the music and harmonies to three new songs. Thanks to Gary Warner and the entire Warner family for their vision and the energy to help make this happen.

Regular meetings with dinner will be held for both Middle School and High School groups on March 2, 9 and 30 from 5 to 7 p.m. in the Parish Hall. March 16 will be a special night for Middle School ONLY. The High School group will have a bread-making Lock-In on Friday March 14. Permission slips are available online. Middle school Yutes will have their own Lock-In on April 4th with more information to follow.

The second installment for the Summer Mission Trip in Wilmington, Delaware from July 20 through 26 is now due. If you plan to come, please let us know now.

Things sometimes change quickly, so please check the website [www.yutes.org](http://www.yutes.org) for last-minute updates.

## Small Groups Study 'Questions of Faith'

Over the course of our lives, the basic questions of belief and meaning come to us again and again. Using the Questions of Faith video series as a springboard for



discussion, participants are invited into thoughtful discussion of these questions.

Produced by EcuFilm, the Questions of Faith series presents in 20-minute segments contemporary Protestant, Jewish and Roman Catholic thinkers ranging in vocation from priests to psychotherapists to Old Testament scholars to evangelists to preachers to sociologists.

They share their thoughts on such questions as: Who is God? Who is Jesus? What Good is Prayer? What's the use of the Bible? How Do We Right the Wrong? What Gives You Faith? What Happens After Death? What's God Got to Do With Evil?

There are two opportunities each week to meet. Nancy Brunetti hosts in her home on Tuesday evenings, and on Thursday evenings we will meet at 7:30 p.m. at the church (the specific locations vary each time).

Tuesday dates are March 4, 11, 18, and 25. Thursday dates are March 6, 13, and 27. Come to one session, or come to all.

## Have You Seen Our Church Web Site's New Look?

If you haven't recently visited our church's web site, located at [www.cheshirecongregational.org](http://www.cheshirecongregational.org), it's time to take a new look.

Thanks to the hard work of our talented webmaster, Carolyn Brown, the site has a new home page, and there have been many improvements to other parts of our Internet presence.

Right now, for instance, there are lots of photographs of December's Christmas pageant; a complete Holy Week schedule; copies of the Parish Post going back to mid-2006; the last four Annual Reports; and much more.

Please visit the site, and if you have suggestions for improving it, let us know. You may send e-mail to Henry McNulty, chair of the Communication Task Force, at [hmcnulty@aol.com](mailto:hmcnulty@aol.com).

And coming soon, a brand-new web Calendar will keep all of us up-to-date on the many happenings at First Congregational Church!

## Hospitalized?

If you or family members are in the hospital, please tell First Congregational Church. We can no longer obtain this information from the hospital.

## Conference Minister To Preach Here

On Sunday, March 9, the Rev. Dr. Davida Foy Crabtree, Conference Minister for the United Church of Christ, will preach at both services at First Congregational Church.

Dr. Crabtree has been Conference Minister of the Connecticut Conference of the UCC since July 1966. Brought up in Connecticut, she has degrees from Marietta College, Andover Newton Theological school, and Hartford Seminary.

For those unfamiliar with the setup of the UCC, the title “Conference Minister” may be a bit confusing. One way to explain her position is this: We Congregationalists do not have bishops, but if we did, Dr. Crabtree would be ours. She is in charge of the Connecticut UCC’s five regional ministers, including the one for our region, Michael Penn-Strah of the South Central Region of the UCC.

Her visit to our church provides a rare opportunity to hear and to meet a person of great importance in our denomination.



### Can you Host a Coffee Hour?

We have a few “free” Sundays available for hosting the coffee hour. You can add your own special touches. Please contact June Webster at 272-5163 for more details. It’s both easy and fun!

### Lectionary Readings for March

**Sunday, March 2:** 1 Samuel 16: 1-13; Psalm 23; Ephesians 5: 8-14; John 9: 1-41.

**Sunday, March 9:** Ezekiel 37: 1-14; Psalm 130; Romans 8: 6-11; John 11: 1-45.

**Sunday, March 16 (Palm Sunday):** Matthew 21: 1-11; Psalm 118: 1-2, 19-29; Isaiah 50: 4-9; Psalm 31: 9-16; Philippians 2: 5-11; Matthew 26: 14-27 and 27: 11-54.

**Sunday, March 23 (Easter Sunday):** Acts 10: 34-43; Jeremiah 31: 1-6; Psalm 118: 14-24; Colossians 3: 1-4; John 20: 1-18; Matthew 28: 1-10.

**Sunday, March 30:** Acts 2:14, 22-32; Psalm 16; I Peter 1: 3-9; John 20: 19-31.



### Milestones In the Life of our Church Family

#### Baptisms

February 17, 2008: Anthony Charles Napolitano, son of Andrew Michael Napolitano and Elizabeth Ann Napolitano. Elle Marie McCauley, daughter of Tyler David McCauley and Jennifer Lynn McCauley

#### Deaths

Elizabeth (Betty) Shaw - February 8, 2008