

# THE PARISH POST

THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH      CHESHIRE, CONNECTICUT  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST      [www.cheshirecongregational.org](http://www.cheshirecongregational.org)  
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## Time to Replace That Spark Plug!

**By Dave Buchan**  
**Interim Senior Minister**

Spring is here, and the lawn will soon need cutting. It's time to change the oil and the spark plug in the mower for the new season. The car is also due for an oil and filter change. The bushes need to be trimmed. I've got to remember to replace the filter in the furnace and the light bulb in the bathroom.

Wouldn't it be great if the grass grew only several inches and stayed at that level all summer – or if crabgrass and weeds stayed dead all season? Wouldn't it be wonderful if one tank of gas or oil change lasted a lifetime?

Wouldn't it be great if one religious experience or one time at worship were all it took for a full Christian life?

I don't know if that would be great or not. But it's not the way life is. As Phillips B. Smith has put it, we wear out, run down, break down, and are in a constant state of change and renewal. Why then do a lot of people think they can

“make it” spiritually on only one tank of fuel in a lifetime?

A good lawn or mower or car or house takes a lot of loving care to be at its best. The same is true of our spiritual lives. St. Paul says that we are to grow “until all of us come to the unity of the faith... to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ” (Ephesians 4:13).

Weekly attendance at Sunday worship is one way we can care for our spiritual growth. This spring our services continue at 9:00 and 11:00 a.m. Sunday School is held at each hour. See you in church.

*In Christ,*  
*Dave Buchan*

**The Worship Schedule,  
formerly on Page 1  
of *The Parish Post*,  
may now be found on Page 2.**

## You Are Invited To The Emmaus Coffee House

In the weeks after Jesus' resurrection, the first disciples gathered together in homes for conversation and meals and Jesus would often be present with them. Let us, too, gather together in these weeks after Easter. The meetings are called "The Emmaus Road Coffee House: Sharing Common Ground."

You and your friends – all people, church members or not – are invited; children will need to bring a parent.

This is a seven-week Eastertide "coffee house" that started in April and continues to May 31. It's a time to gather in fellowship. Bring your favorite musical instrument. Join a Bible study of the scriptures of the season where Jesus



appears to his disciples at the most unexpected times. Join in prayer at the end of our evenings. Coffee and tea will be served.

The Emmaus Road Coffee House will be held in the church parsonage, 85 Church Drive, right next to the church, Thursdays from 7 to 9 p.m. The dates in May are May 3, 10, 17, 24, and 31. For more information, please ask Alison McCaffrey by calling the church at 272-5323, ext. 12, or by e-mailing her at [amccaffrey@CheshireCongregational.org](mailto:amccaffrey@CheshireCongregational.org).

## Worship Schedule

Services are at 9:00 and 11:00 a.m. Child care and Church School are provided at each service.

**Sunday, May 6 – Fifth Sunday of Easter.** Dave Buchan preaching. Communion will be celebrated and food offerings will be received.

**Sunday, May 13 – Sixth Sunday of Easter. Confirmation Sunday.** Dave Buchan preaching.

**Sunday, May 20 – Seventh Sunday of Easter. Children's Sunday.** Worship will be led by the children of the church; the theme is "Parable of the Talents."

**Sunday, May 27 – Pentecost.** Alison McCaffrey preaching.

## All About Prayer Net

Prayer Net is an e-mail Prayer Chain ministry. When a prayer need arises, members of Prayer Net are e-mailed with a confidential prayer request and the need is prayed for. Anyone can bring a concern to Prayer Net for prayer. Simply e-mail Alison McCaffrey (see below) or let her know, and she will pass the request on to the Prayer Net members. If you would like to be a member of Prayer Net, contact Alison, and she will fill you in. Call 272-5323, ext. 12, or e-mail Alison at [amccaffrey@CheshireCongregational.org](mailto:amccaffrey@CheshireCongregational.org)

# Notes from the Executive Board

## Staff Search Update

The three active staff searches – settled Senior Minister, Director of Youth Ministries, and Parish Care Minister (previously known as the Associate Minister for Parish Care) – were the main topics of discussion at the April Board meeting. Input from four prior meetings helped to identify concerns, gather the appropriate constituents and formulate responses:

- At the leadership retreat on March 17, members of the Executive Board and representatives of committees and three search teams met and identified topics for further discussion.
- At a follow-up meeting on March 24, members of the three search teams, Deacons, Board of Christian Education, and Personnel met to more fully discuss the concerns and identify follow-up steps and actions to be taken.
- At the Outreach Board meeting on March 27, the Board discussed funding for the Parish Care Minister position.
- At the Deacons' retreat on March 31, the Deacons discussed changes to clarify staff titles, the appropriateness of the salary and benefit package for the Director of Youth Ministries commensurate with the responsibilities, and funding for the Parish Care Minister position.

Some of the concerns discussed were:

- The number of positions and the specific responsibilities of each position.

Are all three positions necessary, or can some combining of responsibilities be done?

- The timing and options for hiring. Is a permanent position preferable or can an interim be effective?
- Salary and benefit packages. How appropriate are they in regard to the market? What would the impact of increases mean to the budget?

While not all actions are completed on these items, here is the progress being made:

It was determined that all three positions are necessary to support the many church programs and that all three positions should be filled as soon as possible with permanent staff, as opposed to making any positions interim. The search for Director of Caring Ministries will be reactivated. Funding of this position during the current budget year would be supported through the Board of Outreach. Funding for this position as well as any necessary increases for other staff positions for 2008 would be planned by the Budget Committee and supported by the Board of Stewardship.

It was agreed that titles of various staff positions will be changed to clarify the responsibilities. The title of the Associate Minister for Parish Life (currently Alison McCaffrey) will be changed to Associate Minister, as her role is broader than the title implies. The Associate Minister for Parish Care position will now be titled the Parish Care Minister.

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There was also some discussion about changing the person to whom the Director of Youth Ministries should report..

A proposal for responsibilities specific to Confirmation is being worked on by the Board of Christian Education. Work is currently underway to review and update job qualifications and responsibilities and then establish competitive compensation packages.

Discussion also took place on the planning process currently underway. It was determined that the next step in the process is to hold a churchwide meeting to provide for further discussion by members regarding the future planning for the church. The Planning Team and the Settled Senior Minister Committee agreed to sponsor such a meeting. (It will be held on May 4.)

E-mail addresses are being requested for churchwide communications. These addresses will not be shared outside of the church. Input from all friends and members of the church on this issue is welcome. Those with thoughts or suggestions are asked to contact Susan Hostage or any members of the Executive Board: Christine Albrecht, Debra Bond, The Rev. Dave Buchan, Kathy Duffendack, Bob Giddings, Mark Hall, Dennis Lape, Ruth MacDonald, Addie Marx, The Rev. Alison McCaffrey, Howard Murphy, Bob Porter, Beth Ross, Walt Ryan or Ted Wright.



## May 4: A Church Supper That Looks Forward

What do we want our church to be like 10 years from now? What are we looking for in a new Senior Minister?

You're invited to explore these two related questions at a church supper, followed by conversation, on Friday, May 4, starting at 6 p.m. in the Parish Hall. The event is co-sponsored by the Envision Strategic Planning Committee and the Senior Minister Search Committee.



Both committees want to hear everyone's ideas concerning worship; Christian education (for all ages); outreach;

fellowship; membership and stewardship; music; and other aspects of church life.

The search committee will also deliver its first update, and will seek more congregational advice on the characteristics desired in the new senior minister.

All members and friends of the church are strongly encouraged to attend. Child care will be provided (so please call the church office to let us know your specific child care needs). This is not a pot luck supper; the two hosting committees will provide the food. Contact the church office with any questions.

## The Question of Paying a Settled Senior Minister

How much should we pay the Senior Minister of the First Congregational Church?

Chances are that unless you're on the Personnel Committee or the Executive Board, you haven't pondered that much. All of us tend to think of clergy as men and women of God, doing the Lord's work, preaching, administering the sacraments, presiding at weddings and funerals, and helping us all grow spiritually. Considerations of such commonplace things as salary and benefits don't seem entirely appropriate when talking about ordained people!

But ministers, like everyone else, must buy groceries and clothes, send their kids to college, plan for their retirement, take care of aging parents, and in many other ways behave like anyone else who draws a salary. They need to be paid appropriately.

As we begin to think about calling a new senior minister, we must necessarily think about salary. We not only want to be fair and equitable; we want to attract the best person possible. Although we are just at the beginning of the search process, it is likely that our church will want someone with several years' experience; someone well regarded by congregations she or he has served; and someone with experience with a church as large as ours, with the kind of diverse program we provide.

To be blunt, that sort of minister doesn't come cheap. So what should we pay someone to be the lead ordained person at a church like ours, in this area?

One way to examine that question is to look at what other churches more or less like ours pay their senior ministers. The Board of Stewardship has undertaken a small survey of nearby Congregational Churches of approximately our type, with these results.

**Glastonbury:** Base salary \$77,000, with housing and other benefits \$131,000.

**Madison:** Base salary \$50,000, with housing and other benefits \$120,000.

**Southington:** Base salary \$35,000, with housing and other benefits \$115,000.

**Wallingford:** Base salary 47,000, with housing and other benefits \$106,000.

Our church, by comparison, presently pays the senior minister much less:

☛ **Cheshire:** Base salary \$46,000, with housing and other benefits \$91,000.

If a salary, housing, and benefits package totaling \$91,000 seems like a lot to you, chances are you haven't been involved with compensation issues for quite a while. Please remember two things: This is 2007, and this is Connecticut. \$91,000 is not a lot. In fact, it is thousands of dollars less than what comparable churches pay.

The bottom line is that at First Congregational, we have been accustomed to paying a senior minister considerably less than the "going rate." As we enter the search for a new settled senior minister, we must offer a salary that is roughly comparable to that offered by our peer churches.

*The Board of Stewardship*

## NEWS ABOUT CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

### Stepping Stones Youth Group (5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grades)

*SAVE THIS DATE:*

Friday, May 18, 2007

Parish Hall from 7 to 8:30 p.m.

Watch your mailbox for a  
postcard with details.

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### Bible Journeys (Grades 2 through 6)

Sunday May 6, all 11:00 children (PS3-6<sup>th</sup> Grades) will be in Church School, not in the worship service. Please plan to be in attendance to help children prepare for Children's Sunday.

The May rotation will be different. We will be preparing for Children's Sunday (May 20) using the Parable of the Talents Rotation. We need all children in our church school, especially our Bible Journeys children, to attend each week so we can prepare to be worship leaders.

On May 6, all children will meet in Rooms 8 and 9 to organize the worship service and break into worship service Preparation Teams. Teachers of the workshops will be the team leaders for preparation and Shepherds will choose where they want to help. Children will choose from these preparation teams:

**Thou Art** – Put together the “Well Done Good and Faithful Servant” Board and Scripture Reading

**Red Sea** – Sermon – Acting of the parable

**Desert Tales** – Children's Story using the Max Lucado book

**Gospel Games** – Reflections on the sermon – children who will share their experiences of raising money for Heifer Project. These will be children who wrote or will write about what they did with the money they were given.

On May 13, preparation teams will continue to work and finalize their parts in the service.

The dress rehearsal for Children's Sunday is Saturday, May 19. All children, teachers, shepherds and helpers are needed at the rehearsal (preschool – 8<sup>th</sup> grade).

The 9:00 church school will rehearse from 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. The 11:00 church school will rehearse from 11:00 to noon.

On May 20, Children's Sunday, the children in our church school will all participate as worship leaders. The theme will be “The Parable of the Talents.”

Children will be worship leaders based on where they were in the planning groups after the three weeks of rotation.

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### Grades 2-6 Heifer Project

Children in these grades were given a “money talent” envelope on April 1 as a part of our Parable of the Talents rotation introduction. The money is a “talent” entrusted to the child by the church for them to invest and grow for God.

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The money they “grow for God” will go toward purchasing, through Heifer Project International, an animal or animals. The money needs to be returned on Sunday, May 6. Children also need to write the story of how they ‘grew’ their money. Those who want to will be invited to share their stories on Children’s Sunday in the worship service.



### **Silver Lake Summer Camp**

Even though summer isn’t here yet, it’s time to start thinking about sending your child to a session at our United Church of Christ camp, Silver Lake, in Sharon, Conn. This is an overnight camp for children going into 4th grade through high school. For more information, consult the Christian Education bulletin board in the parlor or visit <http://silverlake.ctucc.org>.

There will be a Silver Lake open house on May 6 from 2 to 4 p.m. For more information, speak to Debbie Gravell.

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### **Summer Church School**

The theme of this summer’s church school will be “Galilee By the Sea.” The church school is for children age 3 through 2nd grade. Youth helpers are in 5th grade and up.

The dates are May 27 through Labor Day weekend. (Please note that we will hold services at 9 and 11 a.m. in June, but in July and August we will be on the single-service schedule.)

In the summer church school, children will experience how Jesus lived in the Galilee region. What did Jesus Do? What kinds of foods did he eat? What did he learn and teach?

Volunteer Teachers will be needed each week. If you are interested in joining us with your gifts of teaching, please contact Emilee Ziolkowski at 755-3390 (Waterbury). Please consider volunteering for a Sunday in the summer.

### **Confirmation Update**

Confirmation Sunday is May 13, which is Mother’s Day. It has been the tradition for years in our church to confirm then.

There will be a Confirmation picnic and rehearsal for families and mentors on the previous Friday, May 11, at 6:30 p.m. behind the church – weather permitting. (Otherwise, indoors.) Families of Confirmands are asked to bring a salad, a main dish or a dessert to share. We will have meat and drinks. Please note that the mentors will be our guests.

### **A Note from Lori Bates**

I have been accepted by the Department of State, Foreign Service, as a career management specialist. After my training they will select from my 'bid' list an Embassy or Consulate where I will be posted for two or three years. Nigel is also excited. JD will continue to reside on campus at CCSU (he plans on being a secondary education science teacher) and I am hoping he will come for winter break and for the summer to whatever country we are living in.

## UCC General Synod To Vote on Resolutions

Several resolutions will come before this year's General Synod (national meeting) of the United Church of Christ, which is meeting in Hartford in June. A delegate from our church will vote on those resolutions. Here is some information about them.

Our delegate to the General Synod is **David Brunetti**. If you have comments to make on these resolutions, please talk with him.



A decision on which of these 12 resolutions will actually come to a floor vote will be made only at the General Synod; it is therefore possible that some of the resolutions listed here will not be voted on. The wording may also be changed somewhat before the vote.

Several of the resolutions address similar issues in slightly different ways. Three resolutions involve immigration. Two call on the UCC to reverse the approval of same-sex marriage voted by the last General Synod. Two express concern for the UCC's liberal stance. Specifically, the dozen resolutions call for:

- The United States government to recognize “the blockade strategy of border enforcement as a failure and to seek a more productive, humane and just immigration system;”

- A worldwide “ban on the production and use of depleted uranium weapons, and on the United States’ giving or selling them to other countries;”

- The General Synod to “vehemently affirm that marriage is to be understood as a God-ordained relationship exclusively between one man and one woman;”

- The General Synod to “affirm with the ecumenical and historical Christian Church that marriage is to be understood as a God-ordained relationship between one man and one woman;” (These are two different resolutions with almost identical wording.)

- The General Synod to “encourage congregations and pastors of the United Church of Christ to pursue and advocate for a more humane and Biblically based immigration policy;”

- All local churches of the UCC who “have contributed at least one dollar per member to Our Church’s Wider Mission Basic Support or Special Support for the previous two years have one lay person for every 400 members from a local church be a General Synod delegate;”

- The General Synod to declare “its opposition to any legislative efforts that seek to criminalize undocumented workers and their families;”

- A terminally ill, mentally competent adult to “have a legal right to request and receive medication from a willing physician to hasten death if the patient finds his or her suffering to be

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unbearable;”

- The General Synod “to address the concerns of congregations that may be considering withdrawal from the United Church of Christ by reaffirming our classical and centrist theological heritage and by explicitly including in our extravagant welcome those members and churches considering themselves to be evangelical, conservative, orthodox, or traditional in theological outlook.”

- The General Synod to address the problem of the Tar Creek superfund site, involved with mining operations in or near Kansas, Missouri and Oklahoma;

- The UCC to “develop a ministry of support for rural congregations that will empower and resource small membership rural congregations in the basic areas of church life;” and

- The UCC to scale back “mottos and marketing materials [that] emphasize only a very liberal theological perspective, causing some conservative congregations to feel alienated if they remain with the theological heritage of the church.”

The full text of resolutions is found at [www.ucc.org/synod/resolutions/](http://www.ucc.org/synod/resolutions/) or by going to [www.ucc.org](http://www.ucc.org), selecting “General Synod” from the left-hand column, then selecting “Proposed Resolutions.”

**Volunteer to work at the  
UCC General Synod  
In Hartford June 22-26**

## Freezer Food Needed

We have been providing several families’ meals on a regular basis, and it is a great help to be able to deliver a fresh meal and a frozen one for later. But the freezer is currently empty! We need some willing souls to replenish the stock. If you are making soup or a casserole and would be willing to share a portion with First Church, we would really appreciate your donations. Call Lynn Ryan at 271-3931 to arrange for drop-off.

In an additional effort to stock the freezer, on May 3 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., anyone who is willing and able may come to the church kitchen for a mass “cook-in” to make meals. Please bring some of the ingredients (for example, a pound of ground beef, chicken for soup, veggies, pasta, etc.) and disposable containers. We will have lunch together and a good time helping others. Call Lynn at 271-3931 if you think you can help out.

## Women’s Bible Study

“Angels” is the present topic for Women’s Bible Study, held Wednesdays at 10 a.m. in the parlor. The group is looking into God’s word to discover about angels. Did you know that 34 of the 66 books in the Bible talk about angels?

All women are welcome to attend. The cost of the study book is \$5. Babysitting is available. Each week stands by itself; attend when you can, and be away when you must. For more information, see Debbie Gravell.

## Meet Our Church's Newest Members

Ten new members were welcomed into the church family on March 18. If you have not already done so, we hope you will introduce yourselves to these members when you see them. Their photos are now on the bulletin board outside the Parish Hall.

**Adeline Arumainayagam** has lived in Cheshire for three and a half years with her husband, Sivakumar and their 6-year-old son, Suchir Sivakumar. Adeline is employed by Unilever in Trumbull. She enjoys gardening and helping in her son's church school classroom. Adeline joined the church to be a part of God's house; she considers the church a house of the living God in its fellowship and church activities.

**Michelle and Chris Barbour** have lived in Plantsville for three years with their two children, Abbie, 5, and Noah, 3. Michelle is a nursing student and a stay-at-home mom. Chris is employed by Petra Construction in New Haven and is a volunteer firefighter in Cheshire. After Michelle graduates from nursing school, it is their hope to find a home in Cheshire, which is where Chris was born and raised. Michelle enjoys movies, reading, knitting, crafts and cooking. Playing with her children and studying (of course) are at the top of her list of interests. Chris is a fan of NASCAR racing and enjoys firefighting, home improvement projects, boating and "eBay-ing". Michelle and Chris came to join the church because they found it to be a place where they both could feel at home based on their religious upbringings. They

also love the family-feel and youth-oriented atmosphere.

**Traci and Jaime Fanning** have lived in Cheshire for 12 years and have three children: James, 7, Colin, 7, and Caitlin, 11 months old. Jaime is employed by Helm and Helm, P.C., in Wallingford, and Traci is at home with the children. Jaime and Traci enjoy traveling, participating in outdoor sports and activities, and gardening. Traci and Jaime came to join the church because they felt the time had come to find a place to formally worship the Lord. After visiting and considering some of the many options in the area, they felt most welcomed at First Church. Traci and Jaime are also excited about the available opportunities for their children and themselves to grow in their faith.

**Jeannine Heavens** lives in Cheshire with her husband, Glenn, and their infant son, Raymond, who was recently baptized here. Jeannine is employed by AT&T in the customer service area. She enjoys photography and reading and considers herself a beginner knitter. Jeannine intended on joining the church previously when her husband joined, but was unable to join until now.

**Kathena Nenninger** has lived in Cheshire for eight years. She has three grown boys: Justin, 27, Jason, 24 and James, 22. Kathena works for Home Depot. She enjoys dog training, hunting, hiking and painting. Kathena says she

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joined the church because it is a comfortable place for her. Kathena has plans to marry at the church this summer.

**Arleen and Tom Reid** have lived in Hamden for more than 25 years. They have four grown children: Beth, Mike, Pam and John. Tom and Arleen are both retired teachers. Tom was a reading teacher; Arleen taught English. Tom enjoys sailing, sports and travel. Arleen spends her time reading, attending plays and working as a literacy volunteer. The Reids became members because they felt the church was an active, vibrant church with a welcoming and friendly congregation.

**Irlind (Irma) Stronkowski** has lived with her husband in Prospect for 38 years. They have two adult daughters: Sandra and Patricia. Irma spends her retirement days enjoying dogs and dog training and her husband enjoys model railroads in his retirement. Irma joined the ranks of the church membership because her husband is a member.

On May 14, the Membership Committee will host an evening meal with the new members and their families, their shepherds, staff members and other church individuals.

If you know someone considering church membership, please feel free to have them contact the church office for detail on joining our church.



## News from the Deacons

The Deacons attended their annual retreat, led by Dave Buchan and Allison McCaffrey, on March 31. The meeting focused on Christian leadership and the five essential ingredients necessary for change: Vision, Industry, Perseverance, Service, and Discipline. The sharing of ideas as well as scripture, and prayer was insightful and heartfelt.

Other news from the Board of Deacons:

We are still looking for a Youth Deacon to come on board. The names of a couple of young people were suggested, and they will be asked if they would like to join us.

More help is needed in videotaping the Sunday morning services. Please see Don Lee or Ray Pritchard if you are interested.

Joy Deegan is working on ideas to recognize the 50-year members of the church.

*Submitted by Robin Sellati*

### Memorial Music Sunday Encore

For those who missed Brahms' *German Requiem* on Memorial Music Sunday, there's another opportunity to hear this magnificent work. On May 6, the Senior Choir and the Greater Middletown Chorale will again sing the Requiem at Xavier High School in Middletown with full orchestra. The time is 4 p.m.

## Support Blanket Day

Amanda Roke, a young person being confirmed this month, and Lisa Canas, her mentor, invite you to participate in this year's Church World Service Blanket Day Offering. Although its' traditionally collected on Mother's Day; we would like to move the offering up by one week to May 6, so Amanda's full attention may be on her Confirmation. There was a short demonstration of the blanket's use on April 29. Envelopes for the \$5 offering will be available to you in the church pews and at our display at coffee hour May 6.

## Got Old Notes? We Need Them!

Do you have minutes, letters, or other information left over from when you were on a board or a committee at church? How about Sunday bulletins dating from before 1999? Don't throw them out! Bring them to the church so the History Committee can see if they may be added to the church archives. Please put them in the slot marked "Historian" in the parlor.



**THANKS** to Roger Olander, who produced the posters and flyers for Memorial Music Sunday, and to the choir members who paid for the ad in the Cheshire Herald.

**FOR INFORMATION** about Relay for Life (see right column), please contact Carol Ploch at 272-5959, Rich Grudzias at 272-2483 or Betsy Adams at 271-1872.

## Relay for Life

Relay for Life, to support the American Cancer Society, takes place on June 8 and 9 at Cheshire High School. The goal of team SteepleChase (that's us) is to raise \$11,000. Last year, we raised just over \$10,000. As a team we are doing the following to raise money:

- We will again be making a quilt with the quilt squares available between services. Last year's quilt is being raffled off with tickets available, also between services.
- A tag sale is planned for May 19 beginning at 8 a.m. in front of the parsonage.
- You are invited to tea in the Parish Hall on Sunday, June 3, from 1 to 3 p.m. There's a suggested donation of \$15 per guest, and all donations will benefit Relay for Life. Questions? Contact Karen Gravino at 272-1067.

During the relay, a representative from our team will always be out on the track walking while other members camp out along the track enjoying entertainment, activities and camaraderie. You are invited to come and visit. A hot dog supper will begin around 6:30 Friday night at our site. You are also invited to our Sunrise Service on Saturday morning. We ask you to pray for and with us, and if you are able, help us make the \$11,000 goal a reality. You may make checks out to American Cancer Society and drop it off between services at the RFL table in the parish hall.

## Summary of the Leadership Retreat

Members of the Leadership Group (the Executive Board, plus representatives of committees and search teams and staff) took part in the annual leadership retreat on March 17 at Gaylord Hospital. The meeting involved review of the previous year as well as planning for the upcoming year. Here are highlights:

### Status Reports and Year in Review

Each board and committee gave a status report on its activities. Much of the discussion centered on the three open searches – settled Senior Minister, Director of Youth Ministries and Parish Care Minister. To more fully discuss the many aspects of how these searches relate to each other and also how they relate to different Boards and Committees, it was decided that a follow-up meeting should be held. (Susan Hostage facilitated this meeting on March 24, and results were discussed at the April Executive Board meeting.)

### What is a Church?

Martin Copenhaver, in his book *Life Together as God's People*, gives the five tasks of a Christian church as: Proclamation, Worship, Teaching, Service, and Christian Community. Dave Buchan led discussion using text from the book, asking, "How well does First Congregational Church do on these tasks?" The resulting discussion helped to identify priorities of the church, whether they are stated as priorities or not. This discussion fed into the next topic:

Planning for the Future.

### Looking Ahead

Bob Mead, Chair of the Planning Team, provided a presentation on the steps in a strategic planning process. For First Church, it begins with the UCC Statement of Faith as a foundation, and includes steps to review and accept, clarify or change the church's own Purpose and Vision statements. Activities focused on identifying and setting priorities. In addition to the new Envision survey, the Planning Team will continue to gather information from the congregation.

Questions or comments are welcome and can be directed to any member of the Planning Team: Bob Mead, Matt Glatt, Bill Gordon, Martha Lape, Ruth MacDonald, Donna Mead, Bob and Bobbi Porter, Al Worden, and Ellen Wright.

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## Transitions

in the life of our church family

### Births:

April 13, Jeremy Plaster, son of Jim and Jeannine Plaster

### Baptisms:

March 25, Raymond George Heavens, son of Jeannine Asselin and Glenn George Heavens

### Deaths:

March 27, Betsey English

April 11, Peter Behuniak (Joe Behuniak's father)

April 11, Rial Peck Ogden (Perry Stevens' cousin)

## A Request from the Senior Minister Search Committee

WE NEED YOU! Please help us understand the direction you'd like our church to take in the future. We invite you to discuss with us the characteristics you feel a Senior Minister should possess in order to lead us toward that future.

The Committee has met with Kent Siladi, our Connecticut Conference Minister / Advisor and with our own Church Leadership. We now begin our most important meetings: listening to you, the members of the congregation.



We will be developing a church profile based on your input. The church profile will be our guide as we look at Senior Minister profiles and seek to find a match.

Come and share a meal and your opinions with us, the SMSC and your Planning Committee, at the Church Dinner on Friday, May 4 at 6 pm. We look forward to seeing you there!

Your Committee: Harry Black, Ford Cole, Joy Deegan, Patti Dickinson, Regine Hahn-Selzer, David Hostage, Amy Webb-Mower, Jack Sellati, and Kirsten Sullivan.

## Lectionary Readings

**Sunday, May 6:** Acts 11: 1-18; Psalm 148; Revelation 21: 1-6; John 13: 31-35.

**Sunday, May 13:** Acts 16: 9-15; Psalm 67; Revelation 21:10, 22-22:5; John 14:23-29 or John 5:1-9.

**Sunday, May 20:** Acts 16: 16-34; Psalm 97; Revelation 22: 12-14, 16-17, 20-21; John 17: 20-26.

**Sunday, May 27:** Acts 2: 1-21 or Genesis 11: 1-9; Psalm 104: 24-34, 35b; Romans 8: 14-17 or Acts 2:1-21; John 14: 8-17 (25-27).

## Letters of Thanks

Thank you so much for your cards, phone calls, prayers, and offers of help during my recent illness. Elsa Bradford brought a beautiful flower arrangement; I enjoyed getting to meet and visit with her. I also appreciated the hospital visit from Pastor Buchan. We had a nice getting-to-know-you chat. It is so comforting to have so many church friends that I can call on if needed. Thanks for everything.

*Mona Coley*

Thank you for the lovely Easter lily. It fills my rooms with the fragrance that reminds all of us of Easter and its meaning. I'm sorry I was not here to chat with the person who brought it.

*Blanche McKeagney*

How blessed I am! I just received a

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beautiful spring bouquet from the church. How exciting to be remembered in this way. My thanks to all.

*Marge Beard*

Thank you to Susan Mancinelli for the delivery of an Easter lily. It was very thoughtful of everyone concerned, and much appreciated.

*Mr. & Mrs. Frank Harrison*

Our thanks for the lovely Easter lily delivered to our home on Easter Sunday by Tony Farina. It was a very thoughtful gift from a very thoughtful church.

*Ann and Joe Madden*

May I take this opportunity to express my thanks and appreciation for the beautiful Easter lily that was delivered to me by a member of the Board of Deacons on Easter Sunday. I am enjoying it immensely. It is beautiful and in full bloom; it truly brings with it the joy and spirit of Easter. It was very thoughtful and so very much appreciated.

*John W. Dewey*

## **Audio Bibles Available**

The church now has audio cassettes of the Bible for anyone who is visually impaired. They are in the library and can be borrowed. If you would like to borrow them and are unable to come to the church, please call the church office and we can bring them to you.

## **Towels Collected**

*Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him. – John 13:5*

A word of thanks from the Board of Outreach and its clergy liaison, Alison McCaffrey: We collected 68 bath-size towels as part of the offering during the Maundy Thursday service. The towels are given to all Columbus House residents as they prepare to move out and live on their own. These towels are always needed and are very much appreciated by Columbus House. Many thanks to all our servant leaders for your gift of these towels.

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## **A Goodbye to Judy Monarca**

It was with deep regret that the Board of Trustees at its April meeting accepted the resignation of Judy Monarca, our church administrator, effective June 29. We thank Judy for her work among us and ask for God's blessings on her future endeavors.

If you, or someone you know, are interested in applying for this position, please speak to a member of the search team: Robert Mead, Bill Gordon, Sara Buell, Martha Lape, Ken Stevens, and Robert Porter.

The Trustees also want to welcome Judith Hines, who has been hired to fill a part-time Office Assistant position. Judith is in the office from 9:30 to 1:30 weekdays. Stop by and say hello!