

THE PARISH POST

THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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Five Grains of Corn

By Dave Buchan, Interim Senior Minister

Thanksgiving will soon be here, and the Buchans have a custom that may be meaningful to you – especially if you'll be with children or grandchildren for the turkey and pumpkin pie.

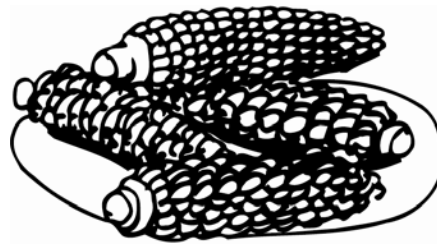
At our Thanksgiving meal, we place five grains of corn beside every place setting. That represents the daily ration for each person – all a person had to eat – in that first hard, cold winter the Pilgrims spent in Plymouth.

Remember the story: The Pilgrims arrived on these shores at the start of a severe winter. They didn't have time to plant crops. Many died. Many became ill.

At one point there were only seven people well enough to care for the others. Their food started to run out, and Native American friends gave them some corn to help them survive.

And toward the end, the daily ration per person was five corn kernels.

Today, those five grains remind us of the courage of the Pilgrims, and all they



had to endure. The grains also remind us of just how much we have to be thankful for.

This Thanksgiving place five little kernels of corn beside each plate. (Popcorn or corn from a grain store can be used.) During the course of the meal, each person, referring to the grains of corn, names five different things he or she is grateful for. Can we think of five special people or opportunities we have to give thanks to God for this year?

We'll celebrate Thanksgiving in our worship services on Sunday, November 23.

In Christ,
Dave Buchan, Interim Senior Minister

Thanksgiving Meals

Once again, our congregation will be putting together Thanksgiving meals for 50 families, clients in the care of the Department of Children & Families. Each dinner includes non-perishable food items and a frozen turkey for a family of six.

The food items donated should be boxed, not bagged, because the canned goods are heavy. Here are some suggestions – only as a guide, as everything offered is much appreciated: Boxed stuffing, packaged mashed potatoes or a bag of potatoes (if purchased right before delivery), canned or fresh yams, canned beans, canned corn, canned cranberry sauce, canned gravy, boxed pie(s), cookies, packaged rolls, olives, nuts, juice, coffee, soda, napkins, and candles.

You may also donate a frozen turkey with a disposable pan in which to cook it (frozen is preferred to fresh, because the food is delivered a few days before Thanksgiving).

The boxes should be brought to the church kitchen by noon on Sunday, November 23. Watch for the sign-up sheet and information on the outreach bulletin board.

This time of year is a time for reflection and thanks. While many of us are surrounded by loved ones and a bounty of food from which to feast, other families are in crisis. Some of the food goes to foster families who have taken several children in, and other meals go to families who barely get by. Food baskets delivered

Worship Schedule For November

Sunday, November 2: Alison McCaffrey preaching. Communion. Food offerings will be received; the food of the month is jelly or jam.

Sunday, November 9: Dave Buchan preaching.

Sunday, November 16: Dave Buchan preaching.

Sunday, November 23: Dave Buchan preaching.

Wednesday, November 26: Ecumenical Thanksgiving Service at FCC at 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, November 30: First Sunday of Advent. Alison McCaffrey preaching.

in the past have been nothing short of amazing. It is clear that God's hand plays a part in these loving preparations made for someone else.

Please call Christine Fitzmaurice at 272-1472 or Beth Ross at (860) 426-0702 with questions.

Watch for more Outreach opportunities; Mission Day, Malawi Concert, Mission to the Gulf Coast, Thanksgiving Meals, Toys for Children at Christmas! Continue the cereal and food when you can.

We are all God's Disciples doing His good works here on Earth.

The Board of Outreach

A Season of Music at First Congregational

Fall Recital

Ray Calderon and Joseph D'Eugenio will perform Sacred Music for the Tenor Voice at First Congregational Church on Sunday, November 9 at 3 p.m.

Ray is a familiar presence as a soloist at First Congregational Church. His travels have led him to appearances nationally and internationally with Connecticut Opera, Berkshire Opera, Jacksonville Lyric Opera, Opera Ischia (Italy), Bardavon Opera, Bronx Opera, American Opera Preview, Connecticut Concert Opera, and many others.

The recital will be held in the Sanctuary. A free will offering will be collected to benefit the First Congregational Church Music Program.



Malawi Benefit Concert

The Fifth annual World AIDS Day benefit concert will be held Sunday, November 23, at 7 p.m. in our sanctuary. The concert will raise funds to benefit AIDS orphans in Nthandizi, Malawi, Central Africa.

Our own Robin Sellati, performer and voice instructor, will be featured. Joining her will be many of her advanced students performing a wide variety of contemporary musical selections. Also performing will be the First Congregational Church Praise

Band featuring youth of the church as vocalists and instrumentalists.

A free-will offering will be taken. Please join us for an inspirational evening.



Candlelight Lessons & Carols

This year's candlelight service of Lessons and Carols will be held on Sunday, December 21, at 4 p.m. It will feature scripture and poetic commentary by parishioner John Afman.

Members of our congregation who participate in a small group to prepare the dramatic readings will tell the story of Christ's birth. Traditional carols, anthems, and hymns will be sung by our Senior Choir and congregation.

Please mark your calendars now to join us in the beauty of a winter afternoon for this candlelight service.

In the Hospital?

If you or a family member is in the hospital, please remember to tell the office at First Congregational Church. We want to minister to you, but because of federal privacy laws, we may not ask hospitals whether you are a patient.

Handbell Choirs Seek Members

Our church's adult and youth handbell choirs are looking for new members. If you love music and want to be part of a friendly team that adds a dimension to our worship, why not try handbells? We will teach you what you need to know.

Both new and experienced players should see Handbell Choirs Director Marianne Beckman, or Martha Lape, or simply join us on Wednesday evenings. Youth rehearse from 5:30 to 6:30, and the senior choir (adults and teens) from 6:30 to 7:30 at the church.



By-Laws Revised

The newly revised by-laws were approved by the congregation at the church meeting on September 21. They will remain posted on the church web site under Publications and Reports, Other Reports. Using Adobe Acrobat Reader, you can print any pages you need. A printed copy is also available in the church office.



Caring Crafts

The Caring Crafts Group will meet on November 24 at 7 p.m. at Donna Mead's home, 15 Conifer Drive, Hamden. Please call her at 248-9576 if you need directions or more information about the group. Hope to see you there.

Adult Mission Trip

Yes, we're going! The First Congregational Church is going on a trip to the Gulf Coast to work on rebuilding homes destroyed three years ago by Hurricane Katrina. We have 20 spots reserved at Camp Coast Care for the third week in March. You can learn more about Camp Coast Care and the work that is being done by the volunteers by visiting their web site, www.campcoastcare.com.

If you are interested in going on this trip and haven't already signed up, please talk with Alison McCaffrey, Robin Sellati, Christine Fitzmaurice or Peggy Allen.

A benefit concert featuring the Trio Volta Percussion Ensemble from the Eastman School of Music is planned for Sunday, January 4 at 7 p.m. to help defray the costs for our volunteers.



'Mark Immersion' Day

Take a day apart as we prepare for Christmas to spend with Mark the Evangelist. We will gather to read and study the Gospel of Mark on Saturday, December 13. This is the shortest of the gospels, so we will be able to read the entire book in one day starting at 9:30 a.m.

What did Jesus say it meant to be his disciple? What is Mark's 'hidden message'? Peggy Allen will lead this group. Please sign up at the table outside the offices at church.

Notes from the Executive Board

At the October Executive Board session, the Church Safety Committee presented information regarding church security, and details for upcoming congregational meetings were discussed. Here are highlights:

Church Safety Committee: At the last Executive Board meeting, there was a discussion of how to deal with security at the church. The Trustees and the Safe Church Committee have been actively working on this, and have contacted a number of sources for information and help. They found that town school buildings and many municipal buildings have security systems installed and that the Cheshire Police Department can provide input and training. They have contacted a security company for a formal safety survey of the church premises, and are following up to formalize a training plan for the church.

Congregational Meetings: For the December budget meeting, details were finalized. Here is the call:

CALL TO A CHURCH MEETING.
A meeting of the First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ is called by the Executive Board for Sunday, December 7, 2008 in the Parish Hall immediately following the 11 a.m. worship service for the purposes of: (1) Hearing the report of the Nominating Committee; (2) Hearing an update from the Senior Minister Search Committee; (3) Approving the proposed budget for 2009.

Sunday, January 25, 2009 was chosen as the Annual Meeting its date, with Monday, January 26 as the snow date. The exact time and format will be decided. One option being considered is a program with pot luck dinner beginning in early afternoon; details have yet to be decided.

Other Items: (1) Work on Church Drive is nearing completion, with only a few items left. (2) The Board of Stewardship provided an update on the pledge drive and donor breakfast held October 26. (3) With the by-laws revisions in place, the positions of Past President and President-Elect have been added to the composition of the Executive Board.



Chorale In Concert

The Greater Middletown Chorale, directed by our own Joseph D'Eugenio, will present a concert at Elim Park's new Nelson Concert Hall on Saturday, November 22, at 7 p.m. The program will feature beautiful choral works including Vaughan Williams' "Serenade to Music" with the Hartford Symphony Orchestra's concertmaster, Leonid Sigal, playing violin; Bob Chilcott's "The Making of the Drum;" as well as Rosephanye Powell's "Sorida" and Peter Bagley's "Didn't it Rain!" with African drumming.

Tickets are \$25 general; \$20 seniors and students; and \$15 for Elim Park residents. Tickets will be sold at the door; reservations may be made by calling 272-7550.

Christian Education in November (and December)

Students in Church School will be studying the story of Ruth in November:

Thou Art, Room 8: This is a cooking workshop where children will explore different kinds of flour, made from grain such as Ruth may have harvested in the fields. They will then use refrigerator biscuits to make jelly biscuits and bake them. While they are baking the children will discuss the Bible story that they read earlier in the lesson.

Red Sea Productions in Room 9: The leader will read the story “Cutting Corners” by Marc Gellman. This story talks about the practice of gleaning and sharing your “stuff”. The children will form groups and create a modern day skit about sharing what we have.

Desert Tales in Room 10: The leader in this workshop will dress in Biblical costume and tell the story of Ruth in the first person. After the story, students will discuss the friendship between Ruth and Naomi.

Gospel Games in Room 11: This workshop uses the computer as well as creating a family tree for Jesus. The children will also begin a family tree of their own families. This is an ideal workshop for someone who enjoys genealogy.

At the end of the rotation, the goal is for students to

- Be able to identify that Ruth was a women who lived in Old Testament times;



- Be able to identify that Ruth was an ancestor of Jesus;
- Begin to understand that God calls us to steadfast love and friendship with others.

Snack & Juice Supply: 3-year olds through 1st graders are served snacks and juice on Sunday mornings. We have found that asking parents to contribute once a year helps us keep within our budget. We welcome all contributions and offer a schedule as a suggested way to remember. In November, parents whose last names begin with E to G are asked to contribute. In December, parents with last names H to J may bring snacks or juice.

Please read labels carefully; snacks should have no nuts, peanut butter, or peanut oil. Some suggestions of cookies which have no nuts are: nut free varieties of Chips Ahoy, Oreos, Teddy Grahams, Vanilla Wafers, and Lorna Doone.

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9:00

Date	Thou Art	Red Sea Prod.	Desert Tales	Gospel Games
Nov. 2	Grades 3&4	Grade 5	Grade 2	Grade 6
Nov. 9	Grade 2	Grade 6	Grades 3&4	Grade 5
Nov. 16	Grade 5	Grade 2	Grade 6	Grades 3&4
Nov. 23	Grade 6	Grades 3&4	Grade 5	Grade 2
Nov. 30	Special Activity	Special Activity	Special Activity	Special Activity

Nov. 30 Shepherds and students will gather in Rooms 8 and 9 for a game of team Jeopardy to review the last three rotations.

11:00

Date	Thou Art	Red Sea Prod.	Desert Tales	Gospel Games
Nov. 2	Worship	Worship	Worship	Worship
Nov. 9	Week Off	Week Off	Grades 2-4	Grades 5/6
Nov. 16	Grades 5/6	Grades 2-4	Week Off	Week Off
Nov. 23	Week Off	Grades 5/6	Week Off	Grades 2-4
Nov. 30	Grades 2-4	Week Off	Grades 5/6	Week Off

Operation Christmas Child: We know the joy it gives us to give gifts to our children. Now, imagine that joy magnified tenfold as a child who never has received a present, a child who has suffered because of war, natural disaster, poverty, illness, or neglect, receives a shoebox filled to overflowing with gifts. This is the impact your family can have through Operation Christmas Child on a needy child somewhere in the world.

Operation Christmas Child is the unique project of a Christian relief organization Samaritan's Purse. This group delivers your gift of a shoebox filled with small gifts to a hurting child. They also find ways through books and stories to tell the children about God's greatest gift, Jesus.

Again this year our Caring Crafts Group has made small teddy bears to go in each of our boxes. Please leave room in

your box for a bear. Remember to either buy a plastic clear shoebox or wrap a regular cardboard shoebox separate from the lid and put an elastic around it. This way we can put the bears into the boxes.

Families will receive a brochure about this exciting project through the church school soon. Shoeboxes are due back on Sunday, November 16. Please bring your box to the Sanctuary and place it by the Communion Table. If you can't be there on that Sunday, you are welcome to leave your box in the Christian Education Office. All boxes must be in the church by noon on November 16.

Deb Gravell is seeking families who would like to deliver the shoeboxes to Gateway Bible Church in Oakville on that afternoon. We can be a small part of bringing joy and hope to millions of

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children around the world again this Christmas. Please contact Debbie at 272-5323, ext. 16, if you can help.

Jesus Dolls: Our Jesus dolls and journal will be making the rounds in our families this year. Children will receive the doll and journal to bring home for a week. Parents are asked to help the children journal prayers and conversations that the young children have about having Jesus visit their home.

We encourage you to pray with your child and Jesus. Read to them from the Bible and talk about the stories. The following week please bring Jesus and the journal back to church so another child may take them home.

Christmas Pageant: This is a casting call for all teens and children for auditions For Grades 2-8. When: Sunday, November 2, 10:30 sharp in Room 10.

The pageant itself will be Sunday, December 14, at 4 p.m. The dress rehearsal will be the previous day, Saturday, December 13 from 9:45 a.m. to noon.

Line rehearsals will be held November 9, 16, 23, and 30, and December 7, all Sundays, at 10:30. There will be signups in November for younger angels, shepherds and sheep.

Adults are needed to help with rehearsing the speaking roles and helping the younger children on the day of dress rehearsal and the play. Please speak to Debbie Gravell if you are able to help.

Youth Group News

Pot Luck Open House: Thanks to all the parents and adult volunteers who made the open house a success. Having so many people willing to step up to help where needed makes things a lot easier.

Cooks needed: We still need volunteers to cook a meal for one of our Sunday meetings. We supply the money, so all you need to do is shop and cook. Menus are available. If anyone from our church family is interested in helping our program by cooking, please talk to Roger Olander or Carol-Lynn Murphy.

Lock-in: On November 21 – 22, the Yutes will enjoy an all-night “Lock-In” at the church. We will meet at 7:15 p.m. on Friday and be picked up at 11 a.m. the next day. You’ll need a permission slip; they are available on our website: www.yutes.org. You can’t attend without one. This will be a great night of fun, friends, and faith, so plan to be there. Bring a pillow, a sleeping bag and a snack to share. We all will participate in the Church leaf clean-up the in the morning! Bring a rake and some sturdy shoes.

Summer Mission Trip: We looked at many destinations this year and realized that there is plenty of need right in our own back yard. Our Summer Mission Trip will be to Groton, Connecticut and will run from July 19 to 25. Because the short distance will save us some costs, our family contribution will be much less than last year. There are only 24 slots available, however, so if you want to go, please get a deposit of \$50.00 in as soon as possible.

Our Pledging and the New Senior Minister

In these days of intensity for the Senior Minister Search Committee, it's appropriate to consider the 2009 pledge drive from the perspective of this new minister, who in effect will be responsible for making this church thrive. If she or he were already here, what would this person want to see?

Probably, any new senior minister wouldn't want this time of self-examination and renewed commitment to be a disruption to our regular mode of worship. We should preserve a sense that it is a regular part of our lives of faith, and not something that is at all traumatic or cathartic. It wouldn't be a good idea to really pull out the stops and ramp up the rhetoric as a step toward preparing for the new minister.

What a new senior minister would really want to see is a church where everyone is doing his or her part – not relatively few big pledgers bankrolling the operation and a lot of others not pledging at all, or very little. Some may be in extraordinary hardship or crisis and could not pledge, especially in this difficult economic environment, but everyone else who could be contributing, would be.

People who are on fixed incomes (retirees, or even students) might be expected to contribute at a consistent level from year to year. But everyone whose income is increasing with the cost of living, or faster, should make some incremental increases in pledges from one year to the next. The goal is not to give as

much as one possibly can, but to recognize that we must move forward in our faith in order to keep it alive.



When you take out a mortgage, you often stretch to be able to make the payments in the early years – but as your income rises, the same level of payments will become easier and easier. Some of us have similarly grown into comfort with our pledges – the same amount year

after year – and a new senior minister would probably not want us to be too comfortable in this way.

Most of all, the new senior minister would want us to pledge as an expression of our faith – not as a concession to pressure from Stewardship, not because this is what we always do, not because we'll look bad if we don't put our pledge cards into the plate when it comes around on Pledge Sunday. But rather, because it renews our connection to God, because it is an expression of the thankfulness that we feel from our souls, and because it is the means by which we can help bring about the kingdom of God on earth.

Please do your part to enable the new Senior Minister to be successful when he or she arrives among us.

First Congregational Church

Christmas Fair

Saturday, December 6

10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.



SERRV (handcrafted gifts) is back!

New this year: Artwork by First
Congregational Church artists

If parishioners can donate baked goods, candy, jams, jellies, handcrafted items, or gift baskets, it would be most appreciated. Please bring to the church from 9 to noon on Dec. 5 or at 9 a.m. on Dec. 6.

All proceeds from the fair will
be used for outreach.



Help is needed: If you can give an hour or two to help Friday morning or Saturday, please sign up in the lobby or call Martha Lape at 272-9327 or email her at mlape@aol.com

Parish Care in September

Here is what the Parish Care Committee and its volunteers did in September:

Bereavement: Three people were sent the Bereavement Series booklets and invited to join the bereavement group which meets once a month on the last Thursday of the month in Room 11 at 7 p.m. **Cards:** Nineteen cards were sent. **Caring Christians:** It was decided at the Parish Care meeting to change the name of this ministry. It will now be called 'Caring Visitors,' to better reflect what this ministry is. If you would like to start visiting one of our many older, homebound members, please call Donna Mead at the church office or email her at donna.mead@comcast.net. **Caring Crafts:** The first meeting for the year was on September 29. Four baby blankets and two shawls were added to the church's inventory.

Chores: A lawn was mowed. It was discussed at the Parish Care meeting that Outreach volunteers may be available to do chores for some of our members on Mission Day. Details are still be worked out. **Meals:** Nine meals were delivered. There are now three meal coordinators – Jackie Cole, Bobbie Porter and Marianne Eagleson. They will work on a two-month rotation schedule. Please note the Sunday Bulletin to see who has the current month. **Prayer Pagers:** Three of the six pagers are being used. **Stephen Ministry:** A total of 25.75 hours were spent with care receivers by 10 Stephen Ministers.

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Telephone: Thanks to five volunteers who signed up at the Parish Life Expo, the Telephone Ministry is being reinstated in November. We are still looking for seven more volunteers so that each person would be assigned one month of the year to make calls. Please call Donna Mead at the office or email her at donna.mead@comcast.net.

The Parish Care Coordinator spent a total of 45 hours in September.



Photos on the Web Site

There are plenty of new photos on the church's web site, www.cheshirecongregational.org. They show the fun of Homecoming Sunday and other church activities. Check them out!

Simply go to the web site, and on the home page go to "Church News" at the upper right and select "Photo Galleries" or "Link to the Blog."

Milestones

In the Life of our Church Family

Baptisms

Reese Adeleine Ludwig, daughter of Mark Jon Ludwig and Devon Stecker Ludwig, was baptized October 19.

Deaths

Brenda Parmelee, mother of Anna Hannen, died October 3.

Giving Thanks

To all my wonderful friends, thank you for helping me celebrate my 88th birthday. You made me feel very special. Bless you all!

Ruthe Sperzel

I cannot begin to explain how grateful I am that I was selected by the Board of Deacons to receive one of the four scholarships made possible by the All Saints Fund. To everyone in the church who has made a contribution to this fund, thank you so much. As the cost of college rises, it becomes increasingly difficult to afford higher education, despite its importance in today's working world. Due in part to the generosity of the church and its members and committees, I am able to attend Eastern Connecticut State University; and in four years, graduate from college. Thank you all again for your continued kindness and support.

Stephanie Canada

Bill and I want to thank the church staff for honoring our 50th anniversary with a card individually signed by all. We also wish to thank our church family for the beautiful autumn bouquet of flowers delivered by Jackie Cole. We enjoyed Jackie's visit. It was special to be remembered.

Marilyn & Bill Gordon

I'd like to give a big thank you to Dick Ziegler and Ken Euerle for all their help in doing odd jobs around my house. Keep up the good work!

Wilson (Bill) Grime

New Church Library Books

This is a continuation of the list from last month of new books in our church's library.

Neff, David, Ed. – “Tough Questions Christians Ask”

Osbeck, Kenneth W. – “101 Hymn Stories”

Page, Susan – “Now That I’m Married, Why Isn’t Everything Perfect? The 8 Essential Traits of Couples Who Thrive”

Sider, Robert J. – “Completely Pro-Life”

Smedes, Lewis B. – “Sex for Christians”

Strobel, Lee – “The Case for Christians”

Tilleraas, Perry – “Circle of Hope”

Tutu, Desmond – “God Has a Dream: A Vision of Hope for Our Time”

Wakefield, Dan – “The Addict”

Walker, Ellen – “Smoker: Self Portrait of a Nicotine Addict”

Walsch, Neale Donald – “Conversations with God”

Wilson, Dorothy Clarke – “Twelve Who Cared: My Adventures with Christian Courage”

Wright, Chris – “User’s Guide to the Bible”

Yancey, Philip – “The Jesus I Never Knew”

“Landmarks of Old Cheshire”

Lectionary for November

Sunday, November 2: Joshua 3: 7-17; Psalm 107: 1-7, 33-37; Micah 3: 5-12; Psalm 43; 1 Thessalonians 2: 9-13; Matthew 23: 1-12.

Sunday, November 9: Joshua 24: 1-3, 14-25; Psalm 78: 1-7; Wisdom of Solomon 6: 12-20; Amos 5: 18-24; Psalm 70; 1 Thessalonians 4: 13-18; Matthew 25: 1-13.

Sunday, November 16: Judges 4: 1-7; Psalm 123; Zephaniah 1: 7, 12-18; Psalm 90: 1-12; 1 Thessalonians 5: 1-11; Matthew 25: 14-30.

Sunday, November 23: Ezekiel 34: 11-16, 20-24; Psalm 95: 1-7; Psalm 100; Ephesians 1: 15-23; Matthew 25: 31-46.

Sunday, November 30: Isaiah 64: 1-9; Psalm 80: 1-7, 17-19; 1 Corinthians 1: 3-9; Mark 13: 24-37.

**What’s happening
at our church?**

**Check the Calendar
on our web site!**

Go to
www.cheshirecongregational.org

Then select “Calendar”
at the top of the first page

It’s all there!

Oberammergau 2010

Once Every Ten Years, Once in a Lifetime

Plans are underway for a trip to the 2010 performance of the Passion Play in Oberammergau, Germany. We are working with King Travelways Travel Agency and Collette Tours to plan this 11-day trip that will take us to Italy, Switzerland, Austria and Germany.

In the year 1634, the villagers of Oberammergau made a promise to God in the face of the overwhelming death from the bubonic plague sweeping through Europe: If God spared them, they would perform a passion play every 10 years. The village, as it turned out, was spared.

The play is now performed in years ending with a zero, and involves over 2000 actors, singers, instrumentalists and technicians, all residents of the village. Our itinerary also includes a ride on the famous Glacier Express train; a 7½ hour railway journey across 291 bridges, through 91 tunnels and across the Oberalp Pass.

An information meeting will be held on Thursday, Dec 4 at 7 PM, led by a representative from Collette Tours and by Jean King, owner of King Travelways. The meeting is preceded by a potluck dinner at 6:30. Anyone who is interested in the trip and anyone who wants to learn more about the play, even if you don't plan on participating in the trip, is invited and welcome to come to this gathering.



A detailed itinerary will be available by late October, but here are the details as we know them:

- Trip Dates: June 29- July 9, 2010... 11 days
- Total cost: \$5,595. (includes airfare)

Paid by schedule:

- Deposit of \$500 (and optional trip insurance of \$350) due Jan 20, 2009
- Second payment of \$1,000 due June 15, 2009
- Balance of payment by Feb 14, 2010

Trip leaders are Sue Chatfield and Alison McCaffrey. We have 32 spaces reserved and can add more, if needed. We would welcome friends, family, and members of other churches to join us.

Please let us know of your interest as soon as possible, and please ask any questions.

Don't Compare

(Submitted by Martha Lape)

But when they measure themselves by one another, and compare themselves with one another, they do not show good sense. – 2 Corinthians 10:12

By Christina Villa

It's hard not to compare ourselves with others, and judge ourselves accordingly. We all have areas in which we can't help doing this. It's not very progressive or feminist, but my particular sensitivity is in the area of housework. Entering someone else's spic-and-span home makes me feel less than great about my own untidy house.

We compare and rate everything: career success, the schools our kids go to, the size of our homes, even our cars. In church, we can compare ourselves unfavorably to the bigger church in the next town, or the one with the better landscaping.

But all of this comparing says everything about our own insecurity and nothing about the person we're comparing ourselves to.

While we're focused on what the other person has, we forget that there's no such thing as perfect. In the grip of insecurity, we senselessly ignore the fact that everyone is occasionally insecure about something.

We forget that, more often than not, most everyone is dealing with some kind of problem or tough situation that no

great car or big house is going to make better. Maybe while we're preoccupied with our own feelings of insecurity, the other person is hoping for a kind word or some understanding from us. Those are things we all have to give.

Prayer: God, let me be sensible and not compare myself with others but instead treat them in ways that would please you. Amen.

Christina Villa is Minister for Stewardship Resources, Local Church Ministries, United Church of Christ, Cleveland, Ohio.



Fall Clean-up Day

Come join our church family to help clean up our church grounds.

All groups and all ages are invited to



participate. Bring your rakes, blowers, tarps and other tools for the removal of leaves.

Here are the details:

When: Saturday, November 22, from 9 a.m. to noon. The rain (or snow!) date is the following Saturday, November 29.

Please join in!