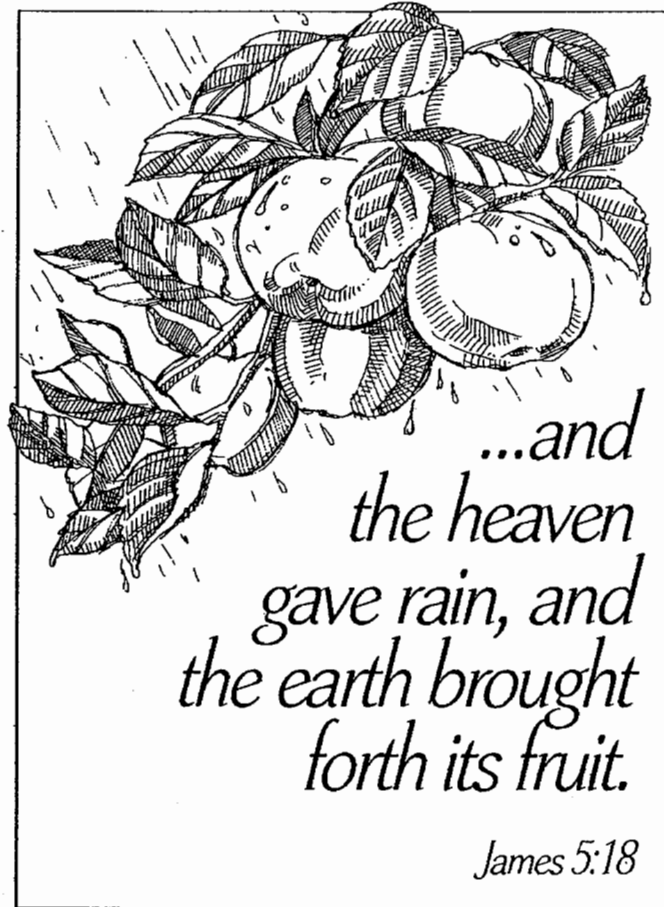


Volume 118

THE CORNERSTONE

July/August
2009



*...and
the heaven
gave rain, and
the earth brought
forth its fruit.*

James 5:18

**SUMMER ISSUE
JULY - AUGUST**

THE CORNERSTONE



Worship for July and August

We will be worshipping in the A/C comfort of Palmer Hall!

<i>July 5 "Sent With Power"</i>	Mark 6:1-13	Kevin Weikel
<i>July 12 "Are We Prepared for Acts of God?"</i>		Jonathan Morgan
<i>July 19 "Come Away and Rest Awhile"</i>	Mark 6:30-34; 53-56	Alison Buttrick Patton
<i>July 26 "A Boy and His Lunch (feeding 5,000 folks out of one lunchbox)"</i>		
	John 6: 1-21	Alison Buttrick Patton
<i>Aug 2 "Bread of Life"</i>	John 6:24-35	Kevin Weikel
<i>Aug 9 Alison Preaching</i>		Alison Buttrick Patton
<i>Aug 16 "Fighting the Good Fight"</i>		Jonathan Morgan
<i>Aug 23 "A Time for New Beginnings"</i>		Jonathan Morgan
<i>Aug 30 Alison Preaching</i>		Alison Buttrick Patton

WORSHIP SERVICES AT FIRST CHURCH

9:30 a.m. One worship service through the month of August

On June 1st, the office summer hours will be: Monday —Friday 9:00 am till 3:00 pm

Cornerstone Newsletter Deadline for September 2009 issue: Friday, August 7th

Dear Friends,

If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it.

—1 Corinthians 12:26

That is what Paul wrote at the end of his famous description of the church as the body of Christ. To Paul, there were a number of implications of the understanding that we in the church are like different parts of a single body. One implication is that if one member is hurting, the rest of the body feels it. Think about it: if you have, say, a sore toe that hurts with every step, you do not say, "Oh, that's just a toe. What has that to do with me?" No, to the contrary, at such a time a sore toe can become the focus of one's whole being.

Whether we are hurting or rejoicing, there are no first person pronouns. There is no "I" or "me," there is only "us" and "we."

As the economy worsens, there are many members (both in the Pauline sense and in the more common sense) of our church who are suffering. Too many have lost their jobs or live with the fear that they will. There are those who are "underemployed," who cannot find jobs that draw fully on their particular skills and experience. There are students who are approaching graduation with anxiety, wondering if they will be able to find a job or whether or not they will find the funds necessary to even finish college. There are also those who have been in the difficult position of having to cut jobs and lay off workers. Some are taking severance packages and retiring earlier than they wanted to, while many others are planning to retire later than they originally planned because their 401(k)s have taken such a hit.

The implication of Paul's understanding that we are one body is that we cannot say that some people in our church are hurting. No, the whole body is hurting.

So, how can we be more responsive as a community of faith? Our president, Susan Orr and I would like to invite you to a discussion about ways we can be more effective as a church in responding to the needs of those who are experiencing hard times. **On Sunday July 12** (after service) we will hold an informal meeting to deliberate how First Church can live out Paul's words more effectively and faithfully. **Please join us in the Parsons' Study** for this important discussion.

Take care and God bless,



South Park Inn

Summer is the hardest time at South Park Inn's shelter for homeless families in Hartford. As many people head off to vacation, the needs of the clients at South Park continue. We would like to make a concerted effort to help meet those needs this summer and would love to have you be part of that. After meeting with staff at South Park Inn, here is a list of things they would love have happen this summer:

- **July 22nd:** Prepare and serve a meal; we need both cooks and servers - you will be blessed!
- **August 31st:** Prepare and serve a meal; Penny Roskin is head cook and would love some helpers to cook and serve.
- **September 25th:** Prepare and serve a meal on - looking for a head cook and some servers to join the Kings.
- Purchase, deliver, and serve an ice cream sundae treats (as many times as we have volunteers)
- Take male clients on a tubing trip out of New Hartford
- Purchase movie passes so families can get out of the heat and into an air conditioned theater
- Provide laundry detergent each month so families can wash their clothing
- Purchase flip flops so showering can be sanitary and comfortable
- Design and build a safe area for young children to play, explore, and learn
- Sponsor a bingo night at both South Park Inn and Plimpton House

If you can set aside some time and resources to meet any of these requests, please call Denise Bell at 651-1974 or email her at sopherbell@aol.com. With your help, we can make summer a better time for some of the people who are struggling at South Park Inn.

REV. KEVIN WEIKEL

Youth & Young Adults (pages 4 & 5)

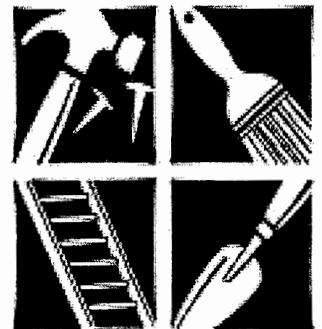
First Church Young Adults joined young adults from churches across the Connecticut Conference in cleaning up weeds and debris at the **memorial for victims of**



gun violence in Hartford. A picture from the event was published in the Hartford Courant on June 5, 2009 (left). Pictured directly in front is **Richie Kremer**, a First Church member and student at UCONN. First Church Young Adults will continue to gather this summer for service projects, fellowship, and preparation for

a possible trip to Uganda in June, 2010. **If you are a young adult (ages 18-30ish), or know a young adult who might be interested in our group, please contact Rev. Kevin.**

32 Youth and 7 Adults will be traveling to **Athens, Ohio, this July 18-26, for a Youth Mission Trip.** Our group will be living at the "Hannah House" on the property of "Good Works, Inc." "Good Works" is an organization that will put our young people in touch with serving the rural poor—fixing roofs, building handicap ramps, mowing lawns, and serving at a rural homeless shelter on the property of "Good Works." Over the past few years, our young people have served in urban settings. It will be exciting to explore, serve, and grow through this experience in Athens, Ohio. **Please keep our group in your prayers.**



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Summertime: Time To Think About Those Fall Adjustments...

In youth ministry, the flow of the year has a lot in common with the flow of the school year. And like most school teachers and principals, by the time summer comes, it's due time to think about the fall. It's during the summer when I find myself asking, "What could we change to make Confirmation better?" "What tiny adjustments could be made that might make a big difference to those involved in Junior Fellowship?" "What worked well in Senior High Fellowship/What didn't work so well?" The best ideas come at the strangest times—mowing the lawn or picking up milk at the supermarket. So, instead of keeping these thoughts rattling around in my brain only, I thought I'd share them with you and ask for your feedback. That's the purpose of this page.



First, let me say that no major changes are in the works, just minor adjustments. I've talked them over with many of our youth leaders and members of the Board of Christian Education. Now, I'd like to fill you in and ask for your feedback. If you have thoughts on the details listed below, feel free to contact me with your thoughts.

- **Confirmation:** We would like to keep the small group/large group format as part of the Confirmation process while adjusting the small group schedule and curriculum. Right now, our small groups meet once per week in the fall and once per month in the winter/spring (with large group meetings in-between). For the sake of consistency, we think it would be nice to have our small groups meet every two weeks for the entire year (with large groups continuing to meet once per month throughout). In addition, having each small group meet on Sunday's from 4:30-6pm, before the 6pm Peace & Praise Worship Service, would provide a great opportunity for our Confirmands to worship together after their small group time. And regarding curriculum, we are looking at replacing the "God Is..." small group journal with the "Making Disciples" curriculum, a resource that gets high marks from those who use it across many different denominations.
- **Junior Fellowship (JF):** With Sr. High Fellowship firmly planted on Sunday nights from 7-9pm, and the movement of our Confirmation small groups to every other Sunday night before the Peace & Praise Service, we would like to move Junior Fellowship (7th and 8th grade Fellowship) to every other Friday after school. The plan would be to pick the JF'ers up at Henry James at 2:15 in the church bus and end our afternoon with parent pick-up at the church at 4pm.
- **Liz Gaines-Guidace,** our lead 7th Grade Sunday School Teacher, has taught 7th Grade Sunday School for the last few years. We've been talking about the possibility of opening 7th Grade Sunday School up to all youth in 7-12th grades. In other words, we would have a "Youth Sunday School" for 7th-12th Graders. We understand that most of our young people would still attend our Sunday evening worship and fellowship, but we like the idea of opening up the youth room to Youth Sunday School on Sunday Mornings as well. Like the 7th graders did this year, this class would meet upstairs for the beginning of church and then head downstairs for Sunday school at the Children's Message time.

After much discussion, we think that the above adjustments will be good for our youth. At the same time, you might have other ideas. I ask you to contact me if you have any "Fall Adjustments" that you'd like us to consider in the area of youth ministry. After mulling over all of our options, an official schedule will be mailed out around mid-August. Peace to you and Happy Summer! ~Rev. Kevin

Church School News

Fall 09 Church School Classes

Students are automatically moved up to the next grade on the class rolls. If your student is going to remain in their current class, please notify the church school office by email:
cindy.cole@1stchurch.org

Church School Mission projects

Collection of .05 Deposit Cans and Plastic Bottles

The students will be collecting .05 deposit cans and plastic bottles in the chapel to support church school mission projects. Field trips will be scheduled for students to recycle the cans and bottles at the local grocery store. The refund money will be used to support the various church school mission projects that the students undertake each year.

K. I. D. S. @ First

Kids Investigating Divine Stories at First Church

Summer Church School @ 9:30

Nursery (3 yrs. Old and under)

The nursery (rm. 20) is available during the service for children ages 3 and under.

Movie and Activities (ages 4 & up), rm. 27

July 5, *The Rest is Yet to Come*: about the meaning of God's commandments – "Do not misuse the name of the Lord your God" and "Remember to observe the Sabbath day by keeping it Holy."

July 12, *A Life and Seth Situation*: about the meaning of God's commandments – "Honor your father and Mother" and "Do not murder."

July 19, *Stolen Jewels Stolen Hearts*: about the meaning of God's commandments – "Do not commit adultery" and "Do not steal."

July 26, *Toying with the Truth*: about the meaning of God's commandments – "Do not testify against your neighbor" and "Do not covet."

August: Students attend church.

Fall Church School Program Volunteers Needed:

The church school is a co-operative program where parents work together to teach their children about their faith.

Pre-K—2 teachers needed

Two Fall teachers are needed for each rotation workshop for grades 1-6 from Sept 13-Dec 14.

Please note: starting Nov 29 – Dec 14, the students are in Palmer Hall instead of the classrooms. One teacher from each workshop will be asked to assist (not teach) the students preparing for the Children's Christmas Service.

Computer room – Kristin Garrison, 1 additional teacher needed

Science room – Kate Bruno, 1 additional teacher needed

Game room – Nancy Dennen, 1 additional teacher needed

Teens are welcome to sign up as classroom or shepherd aides.

To find out additional information or volunteer call or email Cindy Cole, Church School Director at cindy.cole@1stchurchsimsbury.org, 651-3593x17.

Other volunteer projects:

- Cut fringe to prepare tie-fleece blankets which the students will be making this fall for South Park Inn.
- Test a case of markers home or here to determine which markers need to be thrown out.
- Help paint scenery, prepare costumes for fall church school programs.
- Help clean classrooms by washing chairs, organizing closets, etc.

Notes about the Memorial Garden

First Church is grateful to have this beautiful Memorial Garden as part of our care for members, families, and friends of our congregation. It is especially designed to offer a place of serenity, beauty and comfort for all.

Take a walk through the garden on your way to the lower parking. Notice the rock with names of all that are interred there. Also, notice the fountain and the plantings of perennials, annuals, and flowering shrubs. Sit for a moment on the bench or just continue on down the steps that were constructed with the help of the Boy Scouts.

This is A SPECIAL PLACE for all to enjoy.

Memorial Garden Committee

Garden Flowers for Summer Worship Needed!

This summer, **please consider offering flowers from your garden**, or a potted plant to use during our worship services. Bouquets, arrangements, or a flowering potted plant would be a wonderful addition to our worship time in Palmer Hall. We have openings for most Sundays in July and August. Please call Nancy Yannopoulos at 651-7112 or email at Yanno7@aol.com if you can give flowers, or if you might like to contribute to the Flower Fund. Flowers can be given in memory or honor of a loved one, or in celebration or dedication of a special event. **Thanks to all** for your many contributions over the past year!

Fellowship Hour

THANK YOU to those who have volunteered to assist with Fellowship Hour this summer.. We have only two openings left and they are going fast!! If you are looking for a delightful way to enjoy a summer Sunday morning, please consider hosting on July 26th or August 16th. **REMEMBER**, it's only punch and cookies! If you are available and would like to help out with any other Sunday this summer, we always go with the "more is merrier" philosophy, so let me know and I'll add you with the other volunteers. Many hands make light work. Contact Kathy Wildman at wildman-family@comcast.net or 651-9790.



First Church Concert Series

We are planning a terrific season of first-rate concerts for the coming fall. Mark your calendars now for the first one – Sunday, October 11th - a nationally acclaimed virtuoso quartet of women's voices:

Anonymous 4

Not to be missed, they will be premiering a new program here at First Church, which they will take on national tour shortly after our concert. Tickets will go on sale soon. Also upcoming:

Lost and Found – Sunday, Dec. 6

(From the UCC National Youth Event)

Wild Asparagus – Sunday, March 7

Contra-dance, folk and traditional music specialists known country-wide – featuring master fiddle player Becky Tracy, daughter of former parishioner Dick Tracy

Summer Singing

Just because summer is here doesn't mean that choir stops at First Church! In addition to the music offered by our summer soloists, there are places for anyone who would like to be part of our "Summer Choir". If you have ever wanted to be part of the terrific group singing experience here at First Church, but felt that you haven't had the time or ability, or have been just plain shy, this is your chance to discover how great it can be! We invite anyone who loves music to come to Palmer Hall one hour before the service - at 8:30 - on **July 19** and **August 9** to learn two anthems that will be offered during the service. Just come as you are, and be prepared to enjoy singing in an informal setting – no robes, no processing – just the joy of worship through music.

From the Director of Music Ministries -

We are winding up a musically inspiring year at First Church, and eagerly looking forward to the next one. We're already making plans for Christmas and Music Sunday (we are combining with the Methodist Church Choir to sing the Rutter Magnificat) and, believe it or not, even thinking about Easter. I really hope that you'll consider joining one of our many great musical groups – either for a single event or on a steadier basis – because the music program really is here for, and depends on, your participation. If you're thinking about joining us, feel free to drop by to talk with me at any time – or just come to a rehearsal.

I would like to give Joe Campolieta a note of thanks for his leadership of Youth Music for the past two years. Despite the unfortunate lack of funding for a paid Youth Music Director, though, we did want you to know that the Youth Music Program will in fact be continuing next year. I will be holding rehearsals for the Senior Choir (Grades 7 – 12) directly after the 10 AM service each Sunday, and I will rehearse with the Junior Choir (for now: grades 3-6) on a weekday afternoon after school – you'll be hearing from me soon regarding finding the best time and day for the greatest number of kids. We're planning games, singing, snacks, and even exploring the chimes during our rehearsal time. Under any circumstances, I know we'll have fun. Some very able volunteers are working to develop Sunday school musical activities for pre K, Kindergarten, 1st and 2nd graders for Sunday mornings as well.

Music is a joy that touches everyone, and it provides a window through which we can see and experience God in a non-verbal way – with the heart and soul directly. Whether you are participating actively or experiencing through listening, you will know how very special it is to be at First Church.

Music for First Church summer services is being provided by some very talented and dedicated musicians. Here are some:

- July 5 Alex & Kara Auclair
- July 12 Craig White
- July 19 Summer Choir; Jim Martocchio-Saxophone
- July 26 Dawn Meegan
- Aug. 2 Jim Martocchio-Saxophone;
- Aug. 9 Summer Choir
- Aug. 16 Noel Beder & DeeDee Ryerson - Vocal Duet,
 and the Morgan Family – Vocal Quartet

WHAT'S THE LATEST?

Many hands are at work each month handling the services, mission and outreach, programs, facilities maintenance, education and other important work of First Church. In an effort to keep the congregation better informed about the latest activities, updates and developments from our various boards and committees, beginning this month the Cornerstone will feature a summary of the most recent Executive Council meeting. Below is our first installment, prepared by Bill Ketchabaw, Church Clerk. We hope that it is helpful, and we'll encourage you to contact any member of the Executive Council with questions or suggestions. The EC will be on a well-deserved break from its regularly-scheduled meetings during July and August, so look for the next report following our September meeting. Enjoy your summer!!

Susan Orr, President

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

JUNE 1, 2009 MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

President S. Orr called the meeting to order at 7:30pm.

Since this was the initial meeting of the recently approved Executive Council, and the welcoming of new chairpersons, Susan asked all in attendance to introduce themselves and their role at First Church. President Orr informed the meeting that there will be no scheduled Executive Council meetings for the months of July and August.

President Orr introduced the Welcoming Church Ministry Team who proceeded to present an enlightening overview of the thought provoking challenge – “Is First Church a Welcoming Church”. The presentation was accompanied by comments from the members of the team and concluded with a brief discussion of “how the Executive Council views their Mission” and “What we might do as the Executive Council to become more welcoming”. A similar presentation will occur on June 8th at All Boards night.

Reverend Morgan commented that, with leadership provided by Ron Brown of the Connecticut Conference, Alison, Kevin and Jonathan had conducted a retreat to discuss their styles of ministry with an attempt to move together toward improvement. The types of ministries that impact upon Church programs have been mapped and will next be examined for effectiveness. Jonathan spent time informing the meeting of the background and progress to date on the Family Matters Initiative – a program in early discussion stages with selected young family members of the Congregation. We can expect further insight into the program in September. The month of May has been a very strong month for Church programming and special services; he thanked all for their support efforts. Jonathan will be participating in the scheduled Interfaith Dialogue on June 8th at the Public Library.

Reverend Patton commented that the combined Prayer Shawl ministry groups met with the Chaplain of Hartford Hospital. The planned October Back Bay mission trip to Biloxi Mississippi will include Alison and Jonathan as well as members of First Church and other UCC Churches in the area – Farmington UCC and Avon UCC have expressed interest. The “First Church Friends” lay visitation program, with 14 participants, are calling and meeting on members of First Church over the summer months. The program will expand this coming fall with planned education and processes.

Continued next page

Continued (June 1st Meeting)

Reverend Weikel reported that Confirmation was held yesterday on May 31st and as has been experienced in the past he expects fallout to occur by the confirmands – he is searching for ways that will attract those who fallout to return to Church life. A UCC Conference-wide program is planned for June and July for young adults for service projects in Hartford. Discussions are underway concerning a young adult mission trip to Masooli Uganda in 2010. The Peace and Praise service concluded its season on May 31st and was viewed as a success. Kevin is exploring improvements to the program to further build it around youth and related programs.

It was moved; seconded; and carried that the Executive Council confirms the following appointment and nominations:

- Ann Ritson to serve on the Pastoral Relations Committee for Reverend Patton.
- Bill Clark to serve on the Board of Elders.
- Jennifer Filler to serve on the Board of Elders.
- Kristen Garrison to serve on the Board of Mission and Outreach.

Treasurer Jim Trimble presented a preliminary financial report through May. Preliminary pledge income for May is running ahead of budget; expenses are performing well on a seasonal basis. Jim raised concern that no official planning has yet occurred for the Special Appeal budget item of \$15,000 to be conducted as an auction. It is very important to the financial success of our budget for this event to occur – time is running out.

Gordie Howes, representing the Board of Trustees, reviewed the accomplishments and plans for the renovations to the Sexton's house. The carpet for the first floor was delivered May 19th. With contractors scheduled to perform electrical and insulation work the week of June 1st, inspection may then be done so that sheet rocking can proceed during the Fatic family vacation in July. Overall a projected September completion is expected.

Chris Morkan, new Chair of the Board of Elders, informed the meeting that based on recent experiences Elders will be examining the "new member process" that will include defining membership at First Church and the vote or acceptance of new members.

Donna Hopkins, Church Historian, overviewed the Connecticut UCC Historian conference held at First Church on May 16th, very successful, with 32 attendees plus speakers. The occasion marked the 300th anniversary of the Missionary Society.

Meg Gaines, Chair of the Panel of Delegates, informed the meeting that the Delegates had attended the May 9th UCC Conference meeting, the topic of which was Healthcare for All. It was moved; seconded; and carried that Craig Patton will attend the UCC Synod in Grand Rapids, MI, representing both the Connecticut Conference and First Church.

Dick Smith, outgoing Chair of the Committee of Deacons, reported that on June 11th Deacons will again be presenting a \$1,000 scholarship to a graduating student at Simsbury High School. The funds come from both the Deacons Endowment and the Hixon-Beals Fund.

W. C. Ketchabaw, Clerk of the Congregation

June 5, 2009

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SAVE THE DATE

ON YOUR FAMILY CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER 13, 2009

FALL FESTIVAL
AT
FIRST CHURCH



**COME SEE WHAT'S IN STORE AS WE BEGIN A
NEW SEASON AT FIRST CHURCH!**

*Celebrate with your family, with our First Church
Family, and with all friends in faith.*

**WE INVITE YOU TO ENJOY A MUSIC-FILLED
FAIR, SAMPLE DELICIOUS FOOD, AND DISCOVER
ALL THE EXCITING OPPORTUNITIES AT THE
FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST.**

Interested in helping with Fall Festival?

suzysabia@sbcglobal.net