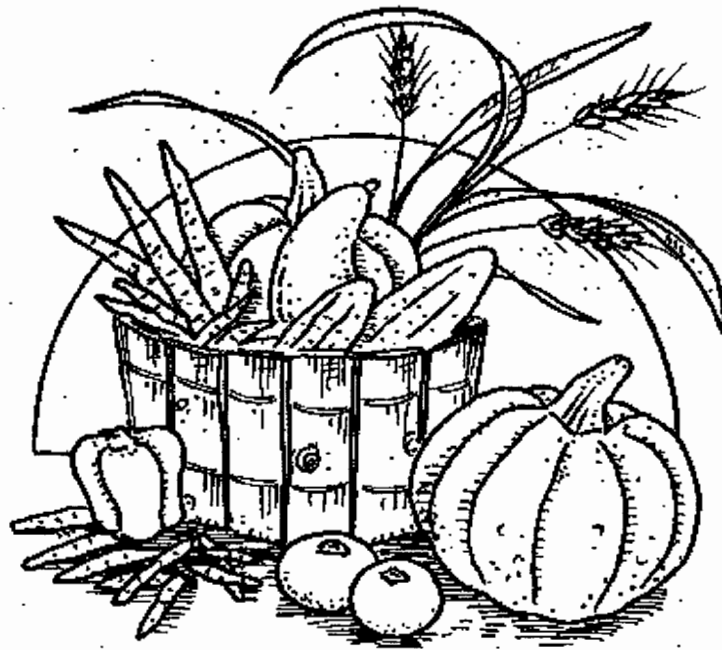


First Church of Christ, Simsbury

Volume 120

THE CORNERSTONE

October 2009



OCTOBER

THE CORNERSTONE



Sundays in October:

October 4: World Communion Sunday

Kevin preaching all three services

(10 am Baptism, Madelyn Elizabeth Wright)

6:00 pm Uncommon Worship

October 11: 8:30 and 10 am *Mission: "Why we do it and why it Matters"*

Jonathan preaching

Worship led by *Back Bay mission trip participants*

(10 am Baptism, Michael Duke Granger)

3 pm *Anonymous 4* Concert in the Sanctuary

October 18: 8:30 and 10 am: "*Forging a Sustaining Faith in an Anxious Time*"

Jonathan preaching on Hebrews 5: 1-10

(10 am Baptism, Owen Zachary Witt)

6:00 pm Uncommon Worship

October 25: 8:30 and 10 am: *Alison preaching*

Second Hour guest missionary: Lydia Bartholomew,

UCC Global Mission Intern to Jerusalem

For the children: Purim Festival in Palmer Hall following 10 am worship

WORSHIP SERVICES AT FIRST CHURCH

Worship at 8:30 a.m. in Palmer Hall with "Fun Rug" for preschool children and 10 a.m. in the Sanctuary, with Sunday School and child care

Uncommon Worship at 6 pm on October 4th. and October 18th in Palmer Hall

Dear Friends in Christ,

By the time you read this letter, we will be on our mission trip to Back Bay Mission, our UCC mission agency in Biloxi, MS. This time we have 20 participants from our church, and from the churches of Granby, Farmington and Avon. Please keep us in your prayers as we continue the work that still needs to be done in that region.

One of the blessings of these trips has been our ability to witness the remarkable faith of our brothers and sisters on the Gulf Coast after such devastating destruction. Many lost everything in the storm. 30,000 homes were completely destroyed and over 100,000 homes sustained severe or significant damage. Street signs, land marks, businesses were wiped off the map leaving the citizens of that region reeling from the blow. Yet... what struck us when we first went down there after the hurricane, and what strikes us still, is how these people have pulled together as a community by leaning on their faith. A faith in a God who did not forget them and would never let them go. Honestly, *they* provided us hope and a deeper understanding of what it means to live by faith. As Alison has said of our trips, "*We did not bring God with us... for God was already there!*"

Now, we haven't experienced such massive devastation here in the Farmington Valley. Our homes remain standing, our schools are still filled with children, and our community looks as picturesque as ever. But, you and I know that we are experiencing difficult and challenging times. Livelihoods are at risk. Families are struggling. Many are working harder and feeling anxious about the future. These are challenging times to be sure. And there is **no greater time than now to lean on our faith:** a sustaining faith in a God who will support us and show us the way.

So, let us be deliberate in our efforts to come together as a community of faith. Let us strive to support one another in Grace-filled living. (We must be cautious not to allow our anxiety to turn into hurtful frustration.) Let us seek the presence of the Spirit in this Holy place for the living of these days. Let us always be mindful that the ministry and mission of Jesus Christ continue to be our call and it is what binds us together in love. And may we always reflect the love and strength of our living Lord that more may know of God's grace.

Let us be the Church *in* and *for* these challenging times!

God bless,



NOT SO SIMPLY MATH

One of the partners in my former law firm would regularly remind his fellow partners of the importance of working together to accomplish our goals and to grow the firm's business. His usual catch phrase was "1+1=3". It wasn't that he was bad at basic math; it was simply his way of reminding us that by joining forces, we can accomplish more as a team than each of us could accomplish individually.

His adage comes to mind when I look at what we have been able to accomplish over the last year with our ministerial staff leading the way. Only this time the math might better be described as "2+1=4 (or 5!)". Our staff of three ministers has been reaching out to our congregation, our region, and our contacts nationally and internationally in a way that has affected countless lives and greatly expanded our collective ministry. Here are just a few of the new things that they, and we, accomplished in the last year.

- Support of First Church in-care seminarians who are considering the ministry
- Caregiving courses with 20+ participants training in lay ministries of care
- Conducting programs on "Food and Faith" and on missions in Africa
- Setting up a Bible study 8-week course for this fall
- A women's retreat nearly double the size of the prior one, and very well-received!
- Leadership in a national UCC youth event
- Launching of the Welcoming Church initiative, to ensure that we offer a welcome atmosphere and growth opportunities to all who grace our doors
- Creation of a lay ministry team and pastoral care advisory committee to broaden our caregiving ministries locally
- Hosting Tim Rose, a UCC missionary, as a speaker at First Church
- A weekly prayer list of those whom we need to remember in prayer

In addition to these accomplishments, we continue to assist Back Bay Mission in Biloxi, Mississippi and the Faith Mulira Health Care Center in Masooli, Uganda; to conduct two well-attended youth groups and an outstanding and demanding confirmation program; to hold two morning services each Sunday and a popular evening "Uncommon Worship" (formerly Peace & Praise) on selected evenings; to interface with the Greater Hartford Interfaith Council for Equity and Justice, Hands on Hartford and other local missions and advocacy groups; to conduct missions trips near and far; and to go about the business of weddings, funerals, baptisms, memorial services and other church work all the while, and with a smile.

It is an exhausting pace, and an impressive list! The next time you see Jonathan, Alison or Kevin, be sure to say "thanks". They make a great, and effective, team!

Susan M. Orr

FIRST CHURCH PRESENTS...

LOST AND FOUND in concert!

with special guest "The Uncommon Worship Band"

Sunday, December 6, 2009 at 4pm in the Sanctuary



LOST AND FOUND is Michael Bridges (guitar) and George Baum (keyboard). Their music is organic and fun, their lyrics are about life, faith, travel and relationships, and their personalities bring humor and meaning.

Tickets: \$10 in advance, \$12 at the door

For information and tickets contact Craig White at 860-651-03336 or lostandfoundfc@comcast.net
For more on the band see www.speedwood.com

UNLEASH YOUR SPIRIT AT...

THE UNCOMMON WORSHIP SERVICE

The Uncommon Worship Service blends traditional with contemporary.

It is spirited, inclusive, and contagious. All are welcome.

October dates... Sunday's the 4th and 18th at 6pm in Palmer Hall

YOUTH & YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY

PLAY, DISCUSS, WORSHIP, GROW, SERVE, LOVE...

JUNIOR FELLOWSHIP (for 7th and 8th graders)

JF takes place every other Friday after school (see dates below). The church bus will be in front of Henry James at 2:10pm on these days to pick up anyone and everyone wanting to come to JF. After an afternoon of fun, fellowship, and a brief devotion, parent pickup will be at 4pm in front of Palmer Hall. Contact Rev. Kevin with any questions about JF.

- Friday, October 9th, 2:15-4pm
- Friday, October 23rd, 2:15-4pm

CONFIRMATION (for 8th graders)

The Confirmation process is an exciting opportunity for young people to explore what it means to be Christian. Through small group gatherings, mission/service work, large group programs, experiencing worship together, and going on retreat together, the Confirmation process prepares young people to affirm their Baptism and officially join the church. It has been the tradition at First Church for 8th graders to go through the Confirmation process. However, Confirmation is open to all who are in 8th grade or above who have not been Confirmed. Contact Rev. Kevin if you would like more information.

- Sunday, October 4, 4:30-6pm, Confirmation Small Group (Getting Acquainted)
- Sunday, October 18, 4:15-6pm, Confirmation Small Group (The Bible)
- Sunday, October 25, checks are due for the Nov. 3rd trip to Heifer International Overlook Farm.

PILGRIM FELLOWSHIP YOUTH GROUP (for 9th-12th graders)

PF Youth Group is a safe, nurturing, and fun place for high school teens. We play games, build relationships, discuss important topics, and serve others.

- Sunday, October 4, 7-9pm in the youth room.
- Sunday, October 11, No PF (Columbus Weekend)
- Sunday, October 18, 7-9pm in the youth room.
- Sunday, October 25, 7-9pm in the youth room.

YOUTH SUNDAY SCHOOL (for 7th through 12th graders):

All 7th-12th graders are invited to sit together in the balcony for the beginning of the 10am service before heading down to the youth room after the children's time for fellowship and discussion at Youth Sunday School. Liz Gaines-Guidace, Mike Hogan, and Katie Woessner will be leading this class.

YOUNG ADULTS (ages 18 through 30ish)

We are looking for young adults at First Church to join up with young adults from Bethel AME Church to mentor Hartford teens. A mentor is an adult friend, confidante, teacher, guide, supporter, cheerleader, and listener for someone who may not have someone to look up to. Interested? Talk to Rev. Kevin for details.

Church School News

Church School Needs the following items: 6 pkg. microwave pop-corn, bags mini-pretzel twists, 6 jars of fruit jam or preserves, 12 pkgs. of ready made sugar cookie dough and glue sticks.

Teacher/Shepherd Orientation Breakfast for the Esther Unit, Parlor, Oct 4th, at 9:40. Your children are welcome to join us for breakfast as we review the background information and lessons for the Esther Unit.

Join the Word in Motion liturgical dancers

Rehearsal in the sanctuary after church school on Sunday morning. Email ashley.e.cole@gmail.com for further information.

Recognition for achievement: Has your elementary school student received an award, recognition, or special achievements in school, sport, or other activities. Please email cindy.cole@1stchurchsimsbury.org so it can be acknowledged

K. I .D. S. @ First

Kids Investigating Divine Stories at First Church

Nursery (ages 3 & under)

The nursery (rm. 20) is available during the worship service for children ages 3 and under. In October the children will be learning about the Creation story and

Pre-K Class (ages 3-4)

The Pre-K class (rm. 38) will be learning that God gives us families in a unit titled "Baby Moses" by doing crafts, playing games, and singing in the month of October.

Kindergarten Class

The Kindergarten class (rm. 37) will be learning that nothing is impossible with God. They will be hearing the stories, doing activities and playing games to learn the story of Balaam's donkey talks, David defeats a lion and a bear, God sends ravens to feed Elijah, God protected Daniel in the lion's den.

Rotation Program for Grades 1-6

Making choices: Jonah rotation unit will continue until October 18th.

The Esther Rotation Unit begins on October 25th.

The Esther unit uses the Bible story included in the book of Esther. Throughout the Bible we hear stories of people such as Esther, who was faithful and stood up for God. Her story can inspire us to learn more about who God wants us to be.

Scripture: Book of Esther

Bible Verse: Who knows, perhaps you have come to royal dignity for just such a time as this. (Esther 4:14)

By the end of this unit children will: 1) become familiar with the story of Esther; 2) discover that each of us is born to do something for God; 3) learn that God has special plans for each of us; 4) find that, like Esther, God wants us to be faithful and stand up for God; 5) explore their ability to make choices for God even when it is hard to do; 6) learn about and experience some traditions of the Jewish festival of Purim.

Bible Program - the Sunday afternoon meetings are canceled. Instead, some of the activities will be incorporated into the Sunday morning schedule (see dates & activities). The Bible information will be incorporated into the computer room, science room and game room activities. The students will continue to learn the rotation story in the cooking room, art room, and movie rooms. Due to the limited class time (the Bible program = 8 hours) and inability to use the entire church building, we will not be able to do some of the fun activities (i.e. church wide scavenger hunt, 3-d relief map of Israel and mapping activities, making Bible book marks and covers, and learning about Biblical culture) that past classes have participated in. Students who attend the classes on a regular basis will be given Bibles on Bible Sunday March 7th.

KINGS, QUEENS, HEROES, & VILLAINS

**PURIM (HALLOWEEN) FESTIVAL
OCT 25,
11:15A.M. IN PALMER HALL**

DRESS AS A PRINCESS, QUEEN, MUSTACHED VILLAIN, KING OR BIBLICAL COSTUME AND WEAR YOUR COSTUME TO CHURCH, COME AND PLAY GAMES, MAKE CRAFTS, AND HAVE LUNCH.

A PURIM TRADITION IS TO GIVE FOOD TO OTHERS. WE WILL BE COLLECTING CANNED GOODS FOR THE SIMSBURY FOOD BANK.



Special thanks to all the Fall Teachers!! Without you the church school program would not be possible.

Nursery: Ashley Cole, Christina Skeels, Cheryl Robucci, Stefanie Mueller, Krista Heffernan

Pre-K: Dawn Medve, Christina Skeels, Erin Naspo, Christine and Andy Granger, Christine Mueller and Nate Medve

Kindergarten—Pattie Scanlon, Jackie Brooke, teen aide Elena Wartens

Rotation Program:

Computer room - Kristin Garrison, Craig Patton

Cooking room - Heather Bobinski, Yolanda Wilde, Brenden Stephen

Art room - Ann Marie Prabu-los, JoAnn Hogan, Kaleigh Heffernan

Science room - Kate Bruno, Game room - Nancy Dennen, Susan Mueller

Movie room - Kariena Grieten, Linda Peach

Shepherds

1st grade shepherd— Tricia Laubscher, teen aide, Sarah Medve

2nd grade shepherd - Aynsley Hodges, teen aide Allie Woodruff, Mia Capobianco

3rd grade shepherd - Kim Tawney, Mary Paterson, Sam Capobianco

4th grade shepherd - Karen Randall, John Capobianco, Ethan Pandolfi

5th grade shepherd - Bryan Tawney, Charmaine Arena

6th grade shepherd - Ann Ritson, Marcie Sullivan

Church School Mission Projects

Tied Fleece Blankets for South Park Inn

Most of our children have a blanket or stuffed animal that offers comfort in times of stress. The students at First Church will be making blankets for the children at South Park Inn, a homeless shelter in Hartford, to help comfort and keep them warm. Student offering from September through December will be used to purchase fleece for the blankets. Volunteers are needed to cut the blanket fringe that the students will tie.



UNICEF

Students will be learning about UNICEF in the movie room and how it helps children and poor nations by providing food, education, clean water, sanitation, and medical care. They will be given UNICEF collection boxes. They can either put the boxes on the table and earn the money for the boxes in the weeks leading to Halloween, and/or collect money from neighbors while trick or treating.



FESTIVAL OF THE ARTS @ First

On Saturday evening, November 14th, from 6 – 10 p.m., First Church will be holding an art extravaganza known as FESTIVAL OF THE ARTS @ FIRST! This wonderful event will include art for sale and exhibition, silent/live auction and gallery boutique. The committee is currently seeking painters, potters, photographers, floral designers, woodworkers, textile artists and culinary cuisine artists of *ALL* ages to participate.

The “Gallery Boutique” at FESTIVAL OF THE ARTS @ FIRST will be a “shop” for sale of artistic items that have been donated with 100% of the proceeds going to First Church. The committee is currently looking for individuals to donate items to this shop. Items the “boutique” is looking for include *handmade pottery and seconds, salable artwork, handmade crafts, floral arrangements, photography, textiles, children’s artwork, handmade jewelry, woodwork, jams/jellies or canned homemade food items*. All artwork should be matted or framed and any other items should be packaged and labeled and ready to sell.

Music will fill the halls and tasty hors d’oeuvres will be served throughout the evening. The event is open to the public and tickets will be sold in advance and at the door. If you would like to sell or exhibit your art and/or help out behind the scenes, please pick up more information after worship in Palmer Hall.

Pricing of the items will be at the discretion of the Gallery Boutique committee; however input from the donor is greatly appreciated. The boutique will be open during the show/auction and Sunday morning following worship and will be manned by Committee or First Church members. For questions, please contact Sara Blaskowski at 651-5232 or blas-kot@att.net *All donations are required to be delivered to the First Church office by November 1st.*

FESTIVAL
the of ARTS



@FIRST

4th Wednesday Study Group

We will meet Wednesday, October 28 at noon in Room 28. Your assignment is to read chapters three and four in Part One of Peter Gomes’ *The Scandalous Gospel of Jesus: “The Risks of Non-Conformity” and “What Would Jesus Have Me Do?”* It’s not too late to join us if you are interested!

Two Wider Church Guests to Speak at First Church:

Lydia Bartholomew to lead Second Hour (11:15 am – 12:15 pm), October 25, 2009:
Global Mission Intern Lydia Bartholomew recently completed a one-year term with the Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center and B'Tselem: Israeli Information Center for Human Rights (sent by the United Church of Christ and Christian Church – Disciples of Christ). She will join us after worship on October 25th to share experiences from her time living and working in *Jerusalem*.

The Rev. Delle McCormick to guest preach and lead Second Hour, November 8, 2009:
The Rev. Delle McCormick is the Executive Director of BorderLinks, whose educational programs focus on issues of immigration, community formation, development, and social justice in the borderlands between *Mexico and the U.S.* and beyond. Delle, an ordained minister of the United Church of Christ, was previously Pastor and Director of the Cuernavaca Center for Intercultural Dialogue on Development (CCIDD) in Cuernavaca, Mexico, an organization committed to building bridges of understanding and solidarity across the border. She has also served as a UCC missionary to Chiapas and as a local church pastor in Rhode Island.

Stewardship is...

- supporting and celebrating God and grace
- spreading the word of the great works of our church to our friends—we are a community of love
- giving God thanks for all God has lent to us
- using what we own responsibly
- understanding that the best thing we can receive is the joy that comes from giving



This is what stewardship means to some members of our congregation. Please consider what stewardship means to you, and how you plan to support the mission and life of our church. Together we can recognize and share our abundance, giving to the church as praise for its spirit, and in doing so, praising God for the abundance of life.

We look forward to working with everyone in our church to celebrate all we have to offer and share.

The Board of Stewardship

Leonard Clough, David Hoople, Bob Lauben, Susan Stover, Tyler Westcott, Peter Wildman

Simsbury Friends in Need

Were you aware there is a place where you may turn for help during these difficult economic times? Our Committee of Deacons is there to assist where they can. The Deacons have limited funds to help Simsbury families in need. There is an application process and the Committee, at monthly meetings, or more often as required, reviews the applications and decides how to allocate their funds. In the case of a church member, confidentiality is assured. Peter Kalika is chairman of the Committee, but any of the five members of the Committee can serve as a contact, via the Church Office.



The Welcoming Church Ministry Team (WCMT) is currently seeking long term and new church members to join this dynamic and motivational team. Since biblical origins of welcoming are many and the practice of hospitality is at the heart of the biblical faith, we are looking for people who will help us find room for the God who comes to us as neighbor, friend, stranger and outsider. Please consider joining us and help us embrace our mission statement “As God welcomes us, we are called to welcome and seek Christ in one another. Therefore we strive to create and foster a sense of welcome at First Church by nurturing engaged involvement in church life and by building spiritual and personal connections – learning from each other and growing in faith.” The work of this committee includes, but is not limited to, envisioning physical changes to our worship and fellowship space, unifying materials and brochures, and assessing how our worship times and practices are welcoming to all. Meetings are generally held during the week at noon (brown bag lunch!) If interested, please call the church office or seek out one of the individuals below for more information.

Rev. Alison Buttrick Patton Jane Costello Dane Woodberry
Kris Barnett Patrick Greiten Kathy Wildman

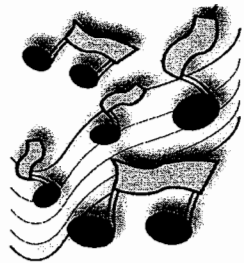
So what is this “Just Practice?”

Jesus said, “The reign of God is in your midst.” (Luke 17:21). So maybe, just maybe, building God’s beloved community “just” takes practice, persistent, prayerful— even playful—practice. And really, everything we do is “just practice”. We may never get it exactly right, certainly not without the intervention of God’s Holy Spirit. Nonetheless, we give it our best shot. We practice. Sometimes we stumble. But we get back up and try again. We pray for the Spirit’s participation in our efforts. We keep practicing, *together*, just because God who loves us calls us to this sacred labor.

(see page 16 - for you to practice)

Music at First Church

The autumn is off to a running start musically here at First Church. The **Chancel** and **Women's Praise** Choirs sang at the First Church Festival, and the **Choral Bell** Choir has begun rehearsing with some new members, not only for Sunday morning presentations, but also for a new Simsbury-wide bell festival planned for late winter. The **Occasional Choir** is expanding, and we have solid plans for the **Festival Choir** to sing John Rutter's Magnificat on Music Sunday, combining with the choir from Simsbury United Methodist for this event.



I want to particularly mention the youth choirs. We have begun rehearsals for the **Senior** (grades 7 thru 12) and **Junior** (grades 3 thru 6) Youth Choirs. Both are showing promise, and we have some great music planned, as well as some other activities that are going to be fun. There is always room for more, and I definitely urge any kid to try it out – no matter what they think that their singing ability might be.

I want to remind you about the **Anonymous 4** concert on October 11th, at 3 PM. This group is great; known internationally, and it is an absolutely wonderful thing that they are coming to First Church. Be there, not only to experience this terrific group, but also to support the concert season here so that we know that you would like it to continue.

Music at First Church has been a long-standing tradition, and we have a place for all, no matter what your musical taste or ability. Anyone who is interested in being actively involved in shaping First Church's worship experience, and who enjoys the marvelous creativity of making music, is invited to become part of our program. Our focus is not only on singing; it's on fellowship; on enjoying ourselves while we fill our spirits with the gift of music. Take a look at our rehearsal schedule, and please feel free to come to any group, even if just to watch, listen and enjoy:

Occasional Choir: Thursday evenings at 6:30 in the music room

A group that sings a bit more than once a month, doing music that is on the lighter side: from jazz to contemporary to classical.

Chancel Choir: Thursday evenings at 7:30 in the music room

The largest and longest-lived singing group of our music ministry. They provide choral music for most regular services; special services, and they present at least one major work a year. The group presents music of many different styles, from Medieval and Baroque to early American and Contemporary. (High school age and up)

Women's Praise Choir: Wednesday afternoons at 4:00 in the music room

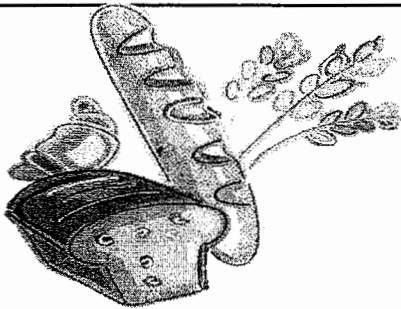
This is a close harmony, three to five part treble choir, which not only sings contemporary compositions, but gospel, contrapuntal and classical music as well.

Choral Bells: Thursday evenings at 6:15 in room 29

This is a delightful handbell choir directed by Jeannie Boehner, that not only presents service music throughout the year, but also participates in two area bell festivals.

Senior Youth Choir: Sundays at 11:15 in the music room. Grades 7 through 12.

Junior Youth Choir: Tuesdays at 4:15 in the Music room. Grades 3 through 6.



CAN YOU SMELL THE WARM BREAD BAKING IN THE OVEN?

In celebration of Worldwide Communion Sunday on October 4th, we are asking members of our congregation to bake or purchase a loaf of bread for this special Sunday. We welcome loaves from your ethnic background but we are also looking for "this is my *favorite* bread!" Both the 8:30 and the 10:00 a.m. services will be honoring these wonderful gifts displayed beautifully and used during the time of Communion. Following the 10 a.m. service, the breads will be served for Fellowship Hour with some tasty spreads and jams. Elders will be available prior to each service to accept your bread and place on the Communion Table. Any kind of bread is welcome, but please make breads with **NO NUTS (Tree and Peanut)** as we have some members of our congregation who are allergic. If you have any questions please call Kathy Wildman at 651-9790 or wildmanfamily@comcast.net

SUPPER CLUB

Mark your calendars and make your reservations as

Supper Club starts its new season

Friday evening, October 16th !

At 6 pm ~ In Palmer Hall

The evening will kick-off with a sumptuous dinner catered by

Harvest Café

Followed by an exciting presentation on

"Introduction to the New Connecticut Science Center"

by

Mr. Hank Gruneer, V.P. Programming

Price \$ 15.00/ person

MEMORIAL INSERTS FOR THE NEW HYMNALS

Many members of the congregation have inquired about placing memorials in the new Hymns of Truth and Light. Our donor has no objections and concurs with our plan to use this opportunity as a fundraiser for First Church. Beginning on Fall Festival Sunday and continuing for the three succeeding Sundays, members of the Board of Music Ministries will be available in Palmer Hall following each service to assist with the order forms. Completed order forms and accompanying check may also be put in Sunday's collection plate. A suggested donation of at least \$20.00 per memorial will be appreciated. Checks should be made out to "First Church of Christ" with the notation line "HTL Memorial". **Cash donations should be the exact amount.** During the week, an envelope with the appropriate forms will be in the church office and the staff has graciously agreed to take the money as well (hence the request for the exact cash amount.) We hope you will take this opportunity to honor or memorialize someone close to you and to support First Church as well.

HYMNAL DEDICATION FORM

To insure accuracy of your dedication information and to facilitate tracking of our donors for appropriate acknowledgement, please fill in the information requested below. THIS INFORMATION WILL BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL.

Donor Information

Name: _____
 Address: _____

 No. Street Apt / Unit

 City/Town State ZIP
 E-Mail: _____

Voluntary Donation

Donation per Hymnal: \$ _____
 N^o of Hymnals to be inscribed: _____
 Total Donation: \$ _____
 Cash (Y/N) _____ Paid (Y/N) _____
 Check N^o _____

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>This hymnal is inscribed in honor of</i></p> <p>_____</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>This hymnal is inscribed in loving memory of</i></p> <p>_____</p>
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EXECUTIVE COUNCIL UPDATE

Following are the highlights of the Executive Council meeting held September 8, 2009:

1. Reverend Morgan commented that the Pictorial Directory is in the final stages of preparation and should be available for distribution in the October timeframe.
2. Reverend Patton commented on the very successful Vacation Bible School held this past summer with our partners from St. Albans and Simsbury Methodist churches.
3. Within the Mission and Outreach activities of the Church, Reverend Patton has invited a UCC missionary to speak at the Second Hour on October 25th and a guest preacher on November 8th, to be followed by a Second Hour program.
4. The First Church Friends summer visitation program, with 14 participants, successfully called on members of First Church over the summer months.
5. Reverend Weikel reported that Confirmation for the forthcoming program year will revolve around the new book that he created for the program. The JF program has moved to Friday meetings. Diann Bailey will be assisting Kevin with this program.
6. Rob Cushman was approved as a new member of the Pastoral Relations Committee supporting Reverend Patton.
7. President Orr reported that the THRIVE (Taskforce Helping Research Income vs. Expense) committee appointed to review improvement opportunities for both income and expense have completed their assignment with the publication of a report to her that will be shared within the Executive Council.
8. Our ministerial staff plans to participate in the forthcoming Town of Simsbury charette on the future development of Simsbury center.
9. Diana Rutherford, Chair of the Board of Music Ministries, reported that 224 copies of the New Century Hymnals were purchased by the Plymouth Congregational Church in Belmont MA.
10. Wally Musick, Chair of the Board of Trustees, reported that renovation on the Sexton's house is nearing completion.

Meg Gaines, Chair of the Panel of Delegates, informed the meeting that the Delegates will be attending the annual meeting of the Connecticut Conference on October 22nd and 23rd.

Bill Ketchabaw

Clerk of the Congregation

IN THE HEART OF SIMSBURY

In September, several First Church members, including Jonathan and I, attended a “Town Center Charrette” at the library. A “charrette” is a public brainstorming process, in this case, convened to envision the future design and function of the center of Simsbury. Impressively, 185 Simsbury residents attended the public session on Saturday morning, when we divided into 18 small groups (including one group of high school students). Each group had a map of the Hopmeadow/Iron Horse Boulevard corridor and markers to sketch ideas and write comments. When all 18 groups reported back at the end of the morning, the common themes were striking. It was great fun to see the professional design team take those themes and develop them over the course of the next four days. You can check out the final report at the town of Simsbury website (note that this is not a process that will lead to the immediate reconstruction of downtown Simsbury. The design team was charged with proposing zoning changes to reflect the town’s vision for its future, so that we can grow into that future, incrementally).

Here’s the observation I took away: The vast majority of participants agreed that we need to enliven downtown Simsbury, making it more accessible for pedestrians and bicycles and creating more reasons for people to linger along Hopmeadow Street and Iron Horse Blvd. As my own small group discussed this goal, we marked off buildings that could not be changed – including all the churches. The exercise implied (without any intended malice toward these communities of faith) that we will need to work around these historic buildings as we create a livelier, more vital Simsbury Center. While no one spoke ill of the churches, it struck me that we have an opportunity as a congregation: To become a part of – even help to create – that enlivened town center. *We could be* one of those destinations that draws residents to the heart of Simsbury, a “go-to” place for concerts, public lectures, adult learning, community recreation, service and, yes, worship! ...It’s a future worth contemplating.

Grace and Peace,



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Simsbury CT 06070

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Fax 408-9229
Kitchen 658-9043

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UP-COMING EVENTS in the WIDER CHURCH:

CT Conference, UCC, Fall Annual Meeting: Sacred Conversations on Race, October 23-24, Middletown with keynote by General Minister and President of the UCC, the Rev. Geoffrey Black.

<http://www.ctconfucc.org/news/AnnlMtg09/>

JUST PRACTICE: A New England UCC Justice & Witness Event on Practicing Justice in Our Lives, Communities and World, November 6-7, United Congregational Church, Worcester, MA. Register at:

www.macucc.org/mission-justice/JustPractice.htm or see Pastor Alison (planning team member) for details (fliers are posted outside her office).

Together Building Bridges: UCC New England Women's Celebration VIII, March 12-14, 2010, Burlington, VT: An intergenerational celebration for ages 14 and up! Contact Pastor Alison if you are interested in attending with a group from First Church:
www.uccwomenscelebration.org

ALSO, check out the events calendar of the CT Conference, UCC at: <http://www.ctconfucc.org/events.php> or see Pastor Alison for details on these events.

... AND IN THE COMMUNITY:

Community Farm of Simsbury FALL FESTIVAL – at the Town Farm: Sunday, November 1st, 12 noon – 3 pm: Farmers' Market, children's activities, baked goods from local farms, arts and crafts, pony and hay rides. 73 Wolcott Road, Simsbury.