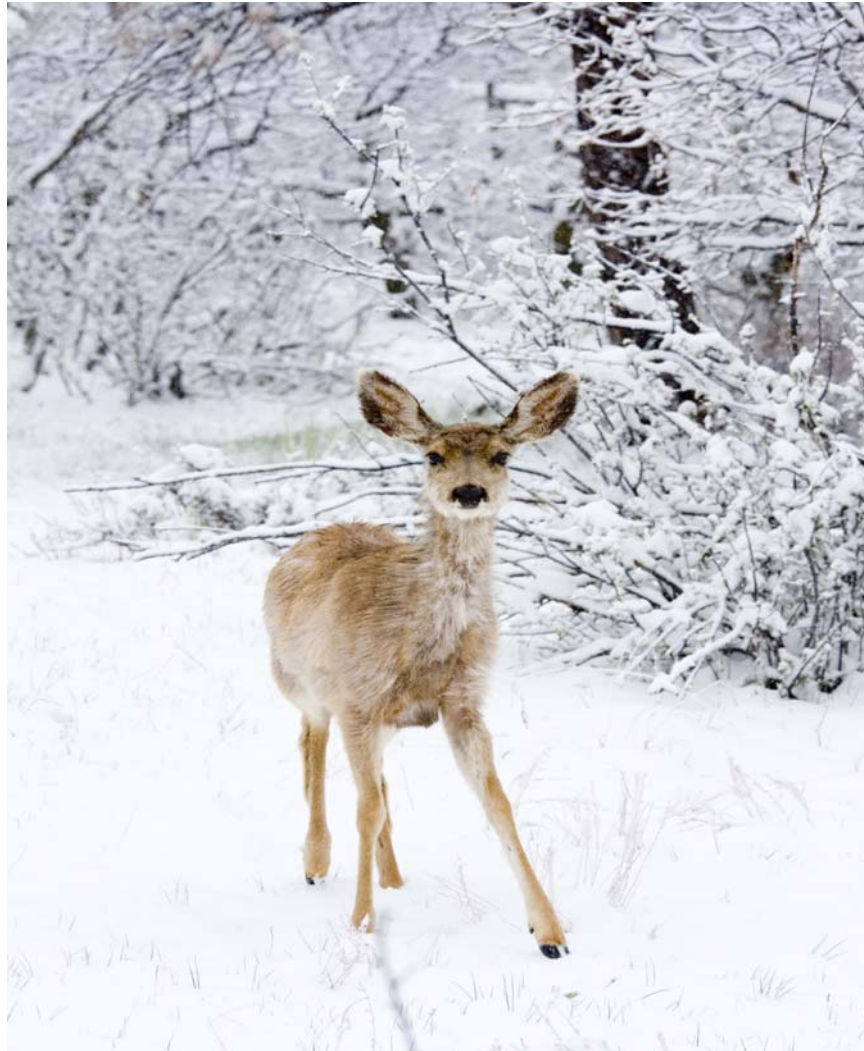


First Church of Christ, Simsbury

# ***THE CORNERSTONE***



*Behold the beauty of life...*

*February, 2011*

# FEBRUARY, 2011

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2 9:30 Hay Stack Circle, Room 28 10:30 Music Together, Room 29 4:00 Women's Praise Choir 7:00 Farmington Valley Chorus	3 2:30 Confirmation Grp—Soup Kitch.at South Park 6:00 Bell Choir, Rm 29 6:30 Occasional Choir 6:30 Troop 76 Leadership Mtg., Parsons' Study 7:30 AA meeting, Room 28	4 2:10 Junior Fellowship—bowling	5
6 8:30 Worship, Chapel 9:30 Rotation Teacher/Shepherd Orientation Breakfast, Parlor 10:00 Uncommon Worship, Sanctuary 10:00 Youth Sunday School 11:00 Confirmation Large Grp. Mtg. for students & parents, Palmer Hall after service	7 1:00 Red Cross Blood Drive 4:15 Junior Choir 7:30 Executive Council Mtg., Parson's Study	8 12:00 Retired Men's Luncheon 4:00 Committee on Ministry, Parlor	9 10:30 Music Together, Room 29 4:00 Women's Praise Choir 7:00 Farmington Valley Chorus	10 6:00 Bell Choir, Room 29 6:30 Occasional Choir 6:30 Troop 76 Boy Scouts, Palmer Hall 7:30 AA meeting, Room 28 7:30 Chancel Choir	11 10:30 Farmington Valley Transition Academy, Palmer Hall & kitchen 7:30 Eagle Scout ceremony, Sanctuary 8:30 Lorenzen Eagle Scout reception, Palmer Hall	12
13 8:30 Worship, Chapel 9:00 Baptism Families, Parlor 10:00 Uncommon Worship, Sanctuary 10:00 Youth Sunday School 11:00 ANNUAL FINANCIAL MTG. in Sanctuary 1:00 Young Families, Deliver to Shut Ins 7:00 Sr. High Youth Group (PF) Small Grp session 2.	14 4:15 Junior Choir 7:15 All Boards Meeting - All Rooms Booked	15 9:30 Prayer Shawl Ministry, Room 28 1:00 Faith Circle, Selected Host Homes 7:00 Evening Prayer Shawl mtg., Room 28	16 10:30 Music Together, Room 29 4:00 Women's Praise Choir 7:00 Farmington Valley Chorus	17 6:00 Bell Choir, Room 29 6:30 Occasional Choir 6:30 Troop 76 Boy Scouts, Palmer Hall 7:30 AA meeting, Room 28 7:30 Chancel Choir	18 2:10 Junior Fellowship	19 9:00 Farmington Valley Chorus 7:00 Jazz Concert
20 8:30 Worship, Chapel 10:00 Worship, Sanct. 10:00 Youth Sunday School 4:15 Confirmation Small Grp Mtg 8 5:30 Brian Baptism family, Parlor 4:15 Confirmation Small Grp 8 (Spiritual Life) 6:00 Uncommon Worship/Brian Baptism, Sanctuary 7:00 Sr. High Youth Grp (PF) Whirlyball	21 <b>Holiday - Office Closed President's Day</b> 1:00 Red Cross Blood Drive	22 10:00 Card making group, Room 28	23 12:00 4th Wed. Study Group, Rm 28 4:00 Women's Praise Choir 7:00 Farmington Valley Chorus	24 6:00 Bell Choir, Room 29 6:30 Occasional Choir 6:30 Troop 76 Boy Scouts, Palmer Hall 7:30 AA meeting, Room 28 7:30 Chancel Choir	25 9:00 First Church Friends - Setting healthy boundaries/ dealing w/neg. emotions of others, Parson's Study	26 4:00 Morton/ Kennedy Wedding - Sanctuary
27 8:30 Worship, Chapel 10:00 Worship, Sanctuary 10:00 Youth Sunday School 7:00 Sr. High Youth Grp (PF) Small Grp 3	28 4:15 Junior Choir 6:00 FMHCC Board Mtg., Parson's Study					

## *THE CORNERSTONE*

### **FEBRUARY 2011 WORSHIP SCHEDULE:**

February 6

**SUNDAY WORSHIP**

**8:30 a.m.** Early Worship in the Chapel with Holy Communion

**10:00 a.m.** Uncommon Worship in the Sanctuary with Holy Communion

Rev. Kevin Weikel preaching at both services on Matthew 5:13-30,  
"Jesus and the Superbowl"

February 13

**MUSIC SUNDAY**

**8:30 a.m.** Early Worship in the Chapel with Rev. Jonathan preaching

**10:00 a.m. SPECIAL MUSIC SUNDAY WORSHIP** in the Sanctuary

"Freedom Trilogy" by Paul Halley and the anthem "Lift Every Voice and Sing" by James and Rosamund Johnson

**ANNUAL FINANCE MEETING** directly after worship—full participation is needed for this important meeting.

The financial results for budget year 2010 and the presentation of the recommended 2011 budget for approval by the Congregation will be presented. Advance copies of the Financial Report will be available for pickup at the Church Office beginning February 6<sup>th</sup>. Childcare activities will be provided during the meeting.

February 20

**SUNDAY WORSHIP**

**8:30 a.m.** Early Worship in the Chapel

**10:00 a.m. Worship in the Sanctuary:**

Rev. Alison Buttrick Patton preaching at both services on  
Matthew 5:38-48: "Walking the second mile (or: How far is it to my enemy's house?)"

**6:00 p.m.** Uncommon Worship in the Sanctuary with Holy Communion and Baptisms of Carly and Maggie Brian

Rev. Kevin Weikel preaching

February 27

**SUNDAY WORSHIP**

**8:30 a.m.** Early Worship in the Chapel

**10:00 a.m.** Traditional Worship in the Sanctuary

Rev. Jonathan Morgan preaching at both services on the topic: "Who Processes Whom? The Challenges of Affluent Living"

## *From the Senior Minister's Desk*

*Dear Friends in Christ,*

*As you can see from Billye Auclair's article, I plan to be on Sabbatical this summer during the months of May, June and July. I am very excited about this opportunity to prepare for the next phase of our ministry together at First Church. There are two main categories to my Sabbatical: (1) Educational Training Opportunities & (2) Active Participation and Learning through experiences at key churches around the country.*



### ***Education Opportunities:***

*Andover Newton Theological School Woodbury Workshop*  
(<http://www.ants.edu/woodbury2011/>)

*Celebrating Call/Challenge Seminar ~ Ministry in a Changing Landscape*  
(<http://celebratingcall.org/>)

*Alban Institute: Stepping up to Staffing and Supervision*  
(<http://alban.org/learningdetail.aspx?id=9174>)

*Alban Institute: Inside the Large Church*  
(<http://alban.org/learningdetail.aspx?id=9175>)

### ***Sabbatical Field Trips:***

***Purpose:*** *To experience first hand the ministries, (including programs and Worship), and collaborate with the leadership (lay and professional) of some of the most active ministries in our denomination and the larger Church. These churches include: Old South Church in Boston; Village Church Wellesley, MA; Asylum Hill in Hartford; Glen Ellyn, IL; Mars Hill, MI and the Saddleback Church.*

*My hope is to experience first hand the ministries of these churches and dialogue with the ministers and lay leaders about new ways to meet the challenges of Christian ministry in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.*

*If you have any thoughts or questions please give me a call.*

*In the Joy of Christ's Service,*

*Jonathan*

Dear Friends in Christ,

A sabbatical leave is common in many fields, including colleges, universities, and religious institutions. It is most often experienced as an extended period of time away from the person's professional obligation, where they can concentrate on professional and personal development through study, research, publication, creative work or other experiences. The goal of the sabbatical is twofold. The first is to contribute to the professional refreshment and effectiveness of the recipients, and second to benefit the organization through the study and learning opportunities that the recipients then brings back with them to their organization.

The term Sabbatical comes from the same Hebrew word as the word Sabbath and literally means "a ceasing". It refers to a rest from work or a hiatus, often lasting from two months to a year. The concept of sabbatical is described in several places in the [Bible](#), including Leviticus, Exodus and Deuteronomy. The foundational Bible passage for Sabbath and/or sabbatical is [Genesis 2:2-3](#), in which God rested after creating the universe.

First Church recognizes the need for our clergy to experience the benefits of a time away from their daily duties of the ministry to spend concentrated time in professional development and renewal. That is why we have made provisions for our clergy to take a three-month Sabbatical after 5 years of service. It is also a common expectation that any clergy who take Sabbatical will commit to share the gift of his or her experience through a minimum of two years of continued service after the Sabbatical.

Since Jonathan has completed his 7<sup>th</sup> year of service with us, he is overdue. So, this summer Jonathan will be taking his Sabbatical during the months of May, June and July. During those months, Alison and Kevin will be the primary source of pastoral care for our congregation with assistance from our Seminararians, Erica Petitti and Diann Bailey, along with occasional special guest preachers.

As has been our practice in the past, we again would like to fund this Sabbatical through special gifts made by members of the congregation. If you would like to help support Jonathan's Sabbatical, please make your check out to First Church noting that it is for "Jonathan's Sabbatical."

If you have any questions regarding this coming time of Sabbatical, please give me a call at 860-651-8643. I am delighted that Jonathan will have this opportunity to recharge his batteries and prepare for the coming years of ministry.

Blessing,  
Billye Auclair, Vice President



## What is God calling you to do? (at First Church)

This seems like an "always" pertinent question. Our Christian faith invites, actually encourages us to be participants instead of spectators. This calls to mind the hymn by Cecil Frances Alexander:

*Jesus calls us; o'er the tumult  
Of our life's wild restless sea,  
Day by day his clear voice soundeth,  
Saying, "Christian, follow me;"*

And how do we figure out how to respond to that message of invitation? Discernment. Discernment is one part of spiritually-centered discipleship that opens us to God's movement in our lives. It is a process, a way of approaching life; it flows out of a larger commitment to yield our attention, agendas, and actions to God. We do not have all the answers, but our shared Christian community encourages us to seek direction by listening until we understand. All are called to develop and contribute their gifts for service to God and to others.

First Church offers many and rewarding answers, opportunities for service, to the question: **What is God calling you to do? (usher, support our worship life, travel on a mission trip, tend the memorial garden, welcome new comers... and the list goes on).** To help you in your discernment, First Church's Nominating Committee members Dane Woodberry (658-7996) and/or Jeff Osborne (651-8907) can help you find and act on your answer. Just give us a call.

## **MANY THANKS FOR NEW YEAR'S DAY MEAL IN HARTFORD**

Once again, on New Year's Day many of our folks from First Church boarded our bus and went to Hartford to greet and serve a meal to over 100 homeless and low income people. Nearly 30 of us decorated the dining hall at South Congregational Church, and cooked and served a meal to very grateful people. This New Year's Brunch included salad, bread, scrambled eggs, turkey, green beans, roasted potatoes and many desserts. Our folks baked and donated a great variety of delicious desserts ranging from brownies and peanut butter bars to chocolate cream and apple pies.

This brunch is one of many Holiday meals sponsored by Hands On Hartford. Thanks to our Mission Board and all those from First Church who participated. Many of Hartford's economic poor received a warm welcome and a nutritious start to the new year.

*David Wadhams, Board of Mission and Outreach*

## ***The Conversations We Have – Associate Minister for Parish Life and Outreach***

*“Who we listen to determines what we hear.  
Where we stand determines what we see.  
What we do determines who we are.”*

*- Robert McAfee Brown, theologian and Civil Rights Activist*

I shared the above quote as part of a sermon on Martin Luther King, Jr. Sunday (January 16<sup>th</sup>). It is a comment that both challenges and compels me. Challenges, because all of us choose our sources, right? When it comes to news or opinion or entertainment, we often gravitate to the voices that echo our own perspective. Challenging also, because certain voices and perspectives are more easily heard in our culture: the voice of business owners, white folk, people with degrees, adults, those in leadership and those with power of one kind or another, get heard. Those without recognizable credentials, those with less money, less clout or fewer degrees...often don't.

I've been reading the autobiography of Iboo Patel, the founder of the Interfaith Youth Core, a Chicago-based, international organization that gathers young people for the purpose of serving the community and learning from one another's faiths: Jewish, Muslim, Christian, Hindu... Patel observes that our churches often disregard the voices and the vision of young people. We applaud the importance of youth programs, but don't necessarily make changes to respond to their needs or take seriously their passions. Yet, they can teach us a great deal about the value of listening to those with a different faith perspective or life experience. Young people are leading the way with interfaith dialogue that explores shared values (like forgiveness and service) while encouraging each person to deepen the ties to his/her own faith tradition.

Also this week, I attended the screening of the documentary film “Summers of Freedom: Martin Luther King, Jr. in Connecticut” (made by Simsbury High School students). I was deeply moved by the work done by this diverse team of teenagers, and I wondered: How are we living up to Dr. King's dream now? How do we listen to the voices of people of color in and around our wider Hartford community? There's so much work yet to do, to dismantle racism, to undo Islamophobia and to build up interfaith understanding. How do we start?

One step is to ask, “To whom do I listen?” With whom do you have conversation on a regular basis: Do you seek out young people, folks of color, people of different faith traditions? Democrats (if you are a Republican)? Republicans (if you are Democrat)? Columnist David Brooks talks about these kinds of conversations as an exercise in humility: *“Civility is the natural state for people who know how limited their own individual powers are and know, too, that they need the conversation. They are useless without the conversation.”* It's not the entire answer, not nearly. But we learn - and grow - by listening, not just to those who already share our perspective, our history or our address, but with those who do not.

Alison

# Church School News



**Feb 6th :**

Teacher breakfast and orientation to the "Who is Jesus?" rotation unit, 9:30 a.m. in the Parlor

**Feb 13, Financial meeting** - student activities: crafts, movie "Be My Valentine, Charlie Brown," and snacks in Rooms 27 and 28

## K . I . D . S . @ First

### Kids Investigating Divine Stories at First Church

**Nursery (ages 3 & under)**

The nursery (Rm. 20) is available during the service for children ages 3 and under. In February, the children will be learning that God is love.

**Pre-K Class (ages 3-4)**

The Pre-K class (Rm. 38) will be learning that "God is love" through activity centers. Students begin in church and are dismissed to class after the children's message.

**Kindergarten class**

Kindergarten class (Rm. 37) will be learning the stories of Jesus' Miracles in February through stories, crafts, and games.

Rotation schedule	B.L.A.S.T. Rm.35-Art	Mouse Pad Rm.32- Computers	Creation Station Rm.34- Cooking	Coliseum Rm.29- Games	Matter of Faith Rm.33- Science
<b>Wk. 4 (2/6)</b> Pre-K – 6 Begin in Church K-6 dismissed to Chapel	<b>Gr. 4</b>	<b>Gr. 5 Gr. 6</b>	<b>Gr. 1 Gr. 3</b>	<b>Gr. 2</b>	<b>Teacher day off</b>
<b>Wk. 4 (2/13)</b> Pre-k-6 Begin in Church K-6 dismissed to chapel <b>Financial Mtg. 11:15-12:00</b>	<b>Gr. 5 Gr. 6</b>	<b>Gr. 1 Gr. 3</b>	<b>Gr. 2</b>	<b>Teacher day off</b>	<b>Gr. 4</b>
	Financial meeting - —student activities: crafts, movie <b>Be My Valentine, Charlie Brown</b> , and snacks in Rooms 27 and 28				

**Rotation Program, Grades 1-6: Self-Control: Daniel, continu  
Who is Jesus?**

As Christians we believe the Bible gives many examples to help people discover who Jesus is. Jesus is the Messiah, the special one sent by God.

Bible Story References: Luke 9:18-21, Matthew 16:13-17, Mark 8:27-29

Bible Verse: Who do you say that I am? You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God. (Matthew 16:15-16)

The students will: 1) become familiar with stories that tell about Jesus as God's son (The Good Shepherd, The Vine, The Bread of Life, Light of the World, The Resurrection and Life); 2) discover the meaning of the word *Messiah*;

3) recognize that Jesus was not the Messiah people expected; 4) be given the opportunity to explore who Jesus is to them.

Rotation schedule	B.L.A.S.T. Rm.35- Art	Mouse Pad Rm.32- Computers	Creation Station Rm.34- Cooking	Coliseum Rm.29- Games	Matter of Faith Rm.33 Science
<b>Wk. 1 (2/20)</b> Pre-K – 6 Begin in Church K-6 dismissed to chapel	<b>Movie and Easter Basket Mission Project</b>				
<b>Wk. 2 (2/27)</b> Pre-K – 6 Begin in Church; K-6 dismissed to chapel	<b>Gr. 1 Gr. 3</b>	<b>Gr. 2</b>	<b>Teacher day off</b>	<b>Gr. 4</b>	<b>Gr. 5 Gr. 6</b>
<b>Wk. 3 (3/6)</b> Pre-K – 6 Begin in Church K-6 dismissed to Chapel	<b>Gr. 2</b>	<b>Teacher day off</b>	<b>Gr. 4</b>	<b>Gr. 5 Gr. 6</b>	<b>Gr. 1 Gr. 3</b>

**VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL**  
**June 20-23 (Mon-Thurs),**  
**9:00 am-Noon**



**Come and have fun this summer at PandaMania !**

Each day the students gather in the Sanctuary (ages 4 to entering the 6<sup>th</sup> grade) to learn the Bible point and new songs. Then they rotate to the games, movie, art, and Bible story rooms to learn about the day's Bible story. This VBS is held in conjunction with the Simsbury United Methodist church and St. Alban's church at SUMC.

**Sign up on the 3rd floor bulletin board to reserve your spot. We need 1 adult volunteer for every 5 kids.** Registration forms will be available in March.

- Day 1 God Made you. God creates the world.
- Day 2 God Listens to you. Elijah confronts the prophets of Baal.
- Day 3 God watches over you. Jonah tries to escape from God.
- Day 4 God gives good gifts. God gives Hannah a baby.

Cost: \$35/student; includes craft, t-shirt, snacks, music cd, etc.

**Mission Projects**



**Easter Basket items:**

The students will be collecting Easter basket items for Gifts of Love. Items needed are markers, coloring books, bubbles, sidewalk chalk, small toys, Easter candy etc. Baskets will be made on Feb. 20th during church school.

D J E S U S D N M H S N E E H  
 Q L F V V M R U X Y O H T Y C  
 G W R Z K Q E T G I R N E Q X  
 Z O U O D Q H S T E P G R E T  
 H N I C W I P C S Q V O N D P  
 H K T R R E E Y H I Q O A U L  
 C S O S D R H W A Y A A L B H  
 N F T O R T S T N F M H E I A  
 A Y G U R M D A F N E V A E H  
 R G S U B G O E S O E N I V N  
 B E T H D J O X L R T R J I F  
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 B R E A D O F L I F E M G V B  
 Q O Q Q A I R P E U E Q C I V  
 S O I L I O I W C R P H P C L

Who is Jesus? Word Search

- Seven I AM Statements:
1. I AM the bread of life: John 6:35—"Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty."
  2. I AM the light of the world: John 8:12—"When Jesus spoke to the people he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."
  3. I AM the door: John 10:7—"Therefore Jesus said again, "I tell you the truth, I am the gate for the sheep."
  4. I AM the good shepherd: John 10:11-14—"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand is not the shepherd who owns the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters. The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. "I am the good shepherd, I know my sheep and my sheep know me..."
  5. I AM the resurrection and the life: John 11:25—"Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live even though he dies."
  6. I AM the way, the truth, and the life: John 14:6—"Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."
  7. I AM the true vine; John 15:1,5—"I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. I am the vine, you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit, apart from me you can do nothing."

- |              |                 |
|--------------|-----------------|
| BRANCH       | LIGHTOFTHEWORLD |
| BREADOFLIFE  | LOVE            |
| ETERNAL      | MESSIAH         |
| FRUIT        | REMAIN          |
| GOD          | RESURRECTION    |
| GOODSHEPHERD | SHEEP           |
| HEAVEN       | THIRSTY         |
| HUNGRY       | TRUTH           |
| JESUS        | VINE            |
| KNOW         | WAY             |



## **Mission in Life - Young Adult Article**

My family has never been a religious one. However, halfway through my sophomore year in high school, a friend encouraged me to come to PF Youth Group at First Church. I was instantly hooked by the atmosphere. I regularly attended PF and all PF related events for the remainder of my high school career including mission trips to Sarnia, Ontario, Canada and Oliver Springs, Tennessee.

In the fall of 2006, I set off for college at Western Connecticut State University, where I had initially decided to study elementary education. It only took one semester for me to discover that elementary education was not for me, leading to much reflection on who I was and what my passions were. It was during this time when Kevin contacted me regarding a young adult mission trip to Denver, Colorado. As we spent a week working with and listening to the homeless population in Denver, it became clear to me that I had a passion for helping the homeless. When I returned to WCSU in the fall, I declared a new major: social work. In May of 2010, I graduated from WCSU with a bachelor degree in Social Work and for the past six months I have been employed by the Bridge Family Center at a short term assessment and respite home for teenage girls in Harwinton, CT. It should be no surprise that I took my first week of vacation to attend the young adult mission trip to H.O.M.E.S. (Housing Oriented Ministries Established for Service Inc.) in Neon, Kentucky, this past January 2-8, 2011.

Our journey to Neon got off to a rough start with a delayed flight and lost luggage, but our adventure only helped to bring our group closer together. When we finally arrived we met Gregg, the H.O.M.E.S. volunteer coordinator, who gave us a warm welcome. Gregg told us all about H.O.M.E.S. and what they do. The mission of H.O.M.E.S. is to obtain adequate and affordable housing for resource-poor families by constructing and rehabilitating new and existing homes. H.O.M.E.S. employs five office personnel and seven carpenters who work year round and host volunteers from around the country and globe to help.

We worked hard during our trip. We built a wheel chair ramp for the Banks family who lived up a "creek road" and in a "holler." A creek road is a creek that doubles as a road and a holler is a deep valley between mountains. Mr. Banks watched with excitement as we worked and he even made us coffee in an attempt to warm us up from the cold.

We also worked with Harrison, one of the seven carpenters employed by H.O.M.E.S., who showed us how to set up and pour the footer for a foundation of a new home. None of us had experience in construction, but Harrison trusted us. He encouraged us by telling us that there was nothing we could do that would mess up the job because he always had four to five different ways to fix any error that any volunteer might make. It put us at ease. And so we cut, placed, and tied rebar that would help to strengthen the concrete footer once it was poured. Eventually the cement truck arrived and we were able to pour the footer. It was very exciting!

The next day, after the footer had dried and was solid, we began connecting heavy bracing boards that would act as holding cells for the concrete foundation. This was harder work than it might sound and took the entire day. When we finished we had an overwhelming sense of accomplishment.

Reflecting back, it is an understatement to say that mission trips have played a crucial role in my life. This trip was no different. Neon, Kentucky, an old coal town that was once home to more than 17,000, is now home to less than 1,000. In some ways it resembles a ghost town but it is also a place of beautiful contrast to the fast-paced lives we live here in New England. There is a sense of community and a friendliness that warms the heart. As a group, we ended each night with a devotional, which lasted hours as we conversed about the day, our faith, and the hope that we could leave Neon with the same relaxed view on life that many of the people there possessed.

It is difficult to put into words the tug on your heart that comes from going on a mission trip. Without the assistance of First Church, many of us would never have had the opportunity to immerse ourselves into another culture and develop our faith. I am thankful that in my sophomore year of high school I agreed to come to PF, because that one night changed the entire path of my life, for the better. I can only speak for myself, although I am certain the others on this trip can agree, I will be returning to Neon, Kentucky, to volunteer for H.O.M.E.S., and will be patiently waiting for the next opportunity to attend another mission trip.

*~Samantha Aleksiewicz, First Church Young Adult*

## REV. KEVIN WEIKEL—YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY

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

Go to [www.1styouthmin.org](http://www.1styouthmin.org) for more detailed information

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### JUNIOR FELLOWSHIP (for 7th and 8th graders)

**Friday, Feb. 4th**      2:10-4:00 p.m. Hop on the church bus in the parent pick-up loop at Henry James and we'll head out to go **Bowling!**

**Friday, Feb. 18th**      2:10-4:00 p.m. Hop on the church bus in the parent pick-up loop at Henry James and we'll head back to the church for fun, snacks, engaging conversation and a meaningful candle prayer.

### CONFIRMATION (for 8th graders)

**Thurs., Feb. 3rd**      **Confirmation Group - Soup Kitchen at South Park.**

**Sunday, Feb. 6th**      10:00-12:15 p.m. Worship in the Sanctuary, Large Group meeting (Prayer) for students and parents in Palmer Hall after the church service.

PLEASE NOTE: Uncommon Worship is at a special time at 10:00 a.m. on Feb. 6th in the Sanctuary.

**Sunday, Feb. 20th**      4:15-7:00 p.m. Small Group Meetings #8 (Spiritual Life) at host homes followed by Uncommon Worship in the Sanctuary.

**Pizza w/ the Pastor:** Dates and times being organized by Small Group leaders and Communicators.

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

**Sunday, Feb. 6th**      **No PF Youth Group**

**Sunday, Feb. 13th**      7:00-9:00 pm, PF Small Group Session 2. See details on the PF Youth Group web page.

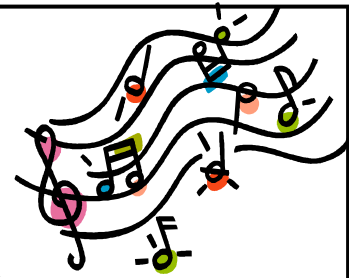
**Sunday, Feb. 20th**      7:00-10:00 pm, Whirleyball! Depart from the church parking lot at 7:00 p.m., play Whirleyball and return to church at 10:00 p.m. (no school the next day!)

**Sunday, Feb. 27th**      7:00-9:00 pm, PF Small Group Session 3. See details on the PF Youth Group web page .

### YOUTH SUNDAY SCHOOL (for 7th-12th graders)

Youth Sunday School attends the beginning of the 10:00 a.m. worship service before heading down to the Youth Room after the Children's Time for conversation.

## *Music Notes*



New England weather, like many things (and people) in New England, is sometimes unpredictable. One can make all the plans one wants, and as the day approaches and eyes and ears are on Bob Maxon's weather forecast, it becomes extremely evident that God is indeed a member of the planning committee.

In February, we are holding two rescheduled events: – Music Sunday, scheduled for January 16<sup>th</sup>, is going to be held on Sunday, February 13<sup>th</sup>. Originally a celebration of Martin Luther King, we will be continuing that theme while we also honor Racial Justice Sunday. All our vocal choirs will present pieces of their own, while combining to sing Paul Halley's great *Freedom Trilogy*. All the while, we will be preparing to sing movements from Mozart's *Great Mass in C Minor* with the Methodist Church in the near future.

Also, our "Jazz in January" concert ran up against the season's first real snowfall, so we have rescheduled for Saturday, February the 19<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m., renaming it "*Midwinter Jazz*". It is a cabaret concert in Palmer Hall, where we set up tables, light some candles, and furnish some heart-warming munchies and beverages to celebrate a cold mid-winter's night. Last year, our own talented jazz guitarist Doug Maher came in with Ken Fischer, Dave Baron and Jake Golbas to put on what proved to be an absolutely amazing evening of music - great playing, fun to watch, and extremely musical for anyone of any age. The general consensus at the end of the show, after a standing ovation and encore, was that the audience was so excited, they honestly wished more were there to hear such a terrific evening.

This year there will be something incredibly exciting that will take place in our own Palmer Hall on Saturday the 19<sup>th</sup>. Doug will be playing with one of the finest piano players around - Matt DeChamplain - who is an incredible talent and an expert in the style of pianist Oscar Peterson. The style is listenable, exciting, a little bluesy, and something that anyone can relate to. Doug will also be bringing in bassist Adam Cote and, for something totally different, vocalist Atla DeChamplain, who, in addition to being a terrific singer, is also Matt's wife.

If you were planning on going out at some point this winter, it's guaranteed that this will beat just about anything you'll hear anywhere else. Tickets can be obtained either at the church office, or at the door on the night of the show.

While you are inside staying, warm, cozy, and safe this winter, take the opportunity to listen to music whenever you can. There's much out there to experience.

*Mark*

## MISSION DOES NOT EQUAL MONEY

The other day I was asked: "How much did First Church give to Mission last year?" The answer the questioner was looking for is a dollar amount: What was the total amount of checks we distributed this year to needy organizations and what organizations received them? I could have answered the question that way, but I didn't - because the question is based on what I believe is the wrong premise.

One of the things that first attracted Becky and me to First Church was our perception of its commitment to Mission. But as I got more involved in the life of the Church and later joined the Board of Mission and Outreach (back then the Board of Christian Concern), I realized how little I knew. Our members live out mission commitments every day in ways most of the congregation never see. Let me give you a few examples.

A number of our congregation members mentor challenged young people in the greater Hartford area. When one of our mentors helped his teenager pay for horse riding camp last summer, is that included in the \$ amount I should recite? How about the time and materials our congregants contributed to renovating the Sexton's house last year? When members donate clothing and food to the Care Bags ministry or one of several soup kitchens we support - does that count? Should I add in the cost of airfare, food and materials members paid for the 2 trips to the hurricane ravaged Gulf Coast? Those are just some of the obvious things. What about when another one of First Church's mentors helped negotiate a better school placement for their mentee? How do we put a value on that? What about the "value" of the tutoring our adults - and PF members - provide to children in Hartford? How do you measure the visitation our "First Church Friends" provide to those fighting disease and disability? I could fill this entire issue of the Cornerstone describing ways our members provide economic and (probably even more "valuable") emotional and spiritual support to some of the most needed members of our community and society.

So how did I answer the question "How much did First Church give to Mission last year?" Here was my response: "I'm afraid I don't have a calculator that knows how to count it all". Next time you're thinking about Mission contribution or the Mission "budget", think more broadly about the premise. I couldn't be prouder of the uncountable ways we are a "Mission Church".

Blessings:



William J. Goss

## **2010 Financial Update**

You may recall that we left our February 2010 financial meeting with real concerns over our financial picture for the coming year. In fact, the congregation voted to accept a budget with a projected deficit of \$20,037. My written reflections on that budget stated that the Board of Finance had reason to "hope that the 2010 actual result will be better than budgeted." I'm now pleased to report that the 2010 operating income and expense results for First Church indeed exceeded our expectations. We ended the year with a deficit of just \$1,827. For this, we are truly thankful.



In 2010, pledge income was \$20,245 above budget, and the "Vitality Initiative" jars added another \$5,170. This result reflects the generosity and commitment our congregation has for the worship, youth ministries, Christian education, and mission programs that define First Church and that impact countless lives in Simsbury, Hartford, Biloxi, Massooli and beyond. We did experience shortfalls in other income, particularly prior year pledges and special appeals. Still, total income exceeded budget by \$16,943. In addition, expenses were \$1,267 below budget, reflecting continued careful expense management.

While we exceeded the expected results for 2010, I must remind you that this result was helped in part by a prior year surplus of \$14,139. In 2010, our expenses actually exceeded our income by \$15,966 on a cash flow basis, and we were not able to make any progress on several financial issues. In 2006, we borrowed \$40,820 from our endowment funds, with a commitment to repay that borrowing over a period not to exceed ten years. We have not been able to make any repayments since 2007, and the balance, which must be repaid over the next six years, remains at \$32,764. In addition, the capital fund for large non-recurring maintenance expense was entirely exhausted in 2009, and we could not contribute anything to it in 2010. This is very problematic, because the trustees have identified two large maintenance items that need attention in the coming year.

As you can see, despite the good results in 2010, we continue to face serious financial challenges. We will not have a surplus to carry over into 2011, so we need to increase our income faster than our expense growth to turn around the negative cash flows we experienced in 2010. In addition, we need to face up to the need to re-pay the endowment borrowing and to fund the capital fund in 2011. Consequently, 2011 is shaping up to be even more challenging than 2010. I urge you to attend the annual financial meeting on February 13th where these challenges will be discussed in more detail.

Jim Trimble  
Treasurer

**From the Committee for Endowment Development**  
**GREAT NEWS. THE ENDOWMENT WINDOW IS OPEN!**



Now may be a good time to make a commitment to the First Church Endowment.

Did you know that the income allocated to the annual budget from our Church Endowment is larger than any other single contribution? Yet this item makes up only about 7-9% of total revenue needed to cover our expenses. As expenses grow, we need the endowment to grow with deposits.

As you may all be aware, last month Congress passed, and the President signed, a two year extension of current federal income tax rates. Also, that legislation reinstated estate taxes for 2011 and 2012 with a \$5 million individual estate tax exemption and a tax rate of 35 percent for amounts exceeding \$5 million.

Given the change, we would suggest talking with your attorney or financial advisor to make sure your estate plan is up-to-date. While you are doing so, please consider adding the Church Endowment Fund as a 10% beneficiary in your will and on your retirement plans. This is a fantastic way to leave a lasting legacy.

A popular feature brought back is that if you are over age 70½, you can make a direct contribution from your IRA to First Church (think Endowment Fund) and not be assessed federal income tax on the distribution. This is known as a Charitable IRA and could save you income taxes.

Once again we hope you will consider naming the Church Endowment Fund as a 10% beneficiary in your will and on your IRA Plan. It is a gift that keeps on giving. The Committee will be happy to answer your questions.

***Leigh King, Bob Lyle, Tim Patterson and Bruce Powell***

## Historically Speaking:

### *What was Life Like?*

**After having had a look** at the 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries and how folks lived in the Massaco Valley, let's take a look at the remarkable changes that took place during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. A new exhibit has been installed in the display cases in the "History Corner" on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor.

The new exhibit is titled: **"20<sup>th</sup> Century Change at First Church."** This exhibit was created at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and documented changes in our physical plant, membership, church school, activities, and budget. The history here is divided into seven stages for ease of understanding and to focus on the physical changes that took place.

**Stage ONE** was from **1900 until 1924** when the church buildings *consisted of the original 1830 meetinghouse and the 1895 chapel* that was on its north side. The chapel contained the original stained glass windows that had been installed in 1883 behind the church altar.

**Stage TWO** occurred from **1925 until 1954** when the church building *consisted of the 1830 meetinghouse, the 1895 chapel, and the new wing completed in 1925* added to the north side of the chapel where our offices and parking lot are now.

**Stage THREE began in 1955** when the church *purchased the Ensign Parish House* across the street to have more space available for our many activities and growing church school. It continued until 1959 when in 1960 the church built an addition to the Ensign Parish House.

**Stage FOUR began in 1960** with the *building of the EPH addition* consisting of a new Social Hall named after Kenneth Palmer, a new chapel named after Henry Ellsworth, a new kitchen, more classrooms and a pastor's study.

**Stage FIVE began dramatically on May 27, 1965** when the *Great Fire* occurred and severely damaged the meetinghouse, the old chapel and the 1925 addition. The 1895 chapel and the 1925 addition had to be torn down. The *meetinghouse was restored* and once again stood by itself on Drake's Hill as it had when it was built in 1830. It was *rededicated in October of 1967*.

**Stage SIX began in 1984** with the *building of the Potter Wing* off the west side of the church. The addition was dedicated in January of 1985 and the EPH was sold.

The new wing held classrooms, offices, new Palmer Hall, new Ellsworth chapel, parlor, and kitchen. It was dedicated to Lyman Potter when he retired in 1986.

**Stage SEVEN began in 1998** with the completion of the *Tercentenary Wing*, later named the Naylor Wing after Rev. Robert Naylor. This wing fills some of the space that once was filled with the 1895 chapel and the 1925 wing.

**Stop by and view** the new exhibit and plan to stay for a while so you can read of our growth and change and view pictures, photos, news articles, and graphs showing growth in our membership, church school and budget.

Donna Hopkins, Historian

\*\*\*\*\*  
 \* **New Member Gatherings -** \*  
 \* \*  
 \* **We warmly *invite you* to join us to find out more about *First Church of*** \*  
 \* ***Christ.....*** \*  
 \* ***learn*** about our faith traditions and history \*  
 \* ***discover*** all the opportunities for you to \*  
 \* ***grow*** in your ***faith***, ***serve*** others, ***be supported and encouraged***, \*  
 \* and ***strengthen*** your involvement in this faith community, \*  
 \* \*  
 \* The next meeting for new members will be coming up in March. Dates are being \*  
 \* planned now and will be available in weekly church bulletins, email, and on the \*  
 \* church website. Childcare will be provided at all meetings. Please call Nancy \*  
 \* Yannopoulos at 860-651-7112 or Roger Spear 860-651-4425 if you have questions \*  
 \* about new members. Welcome to ***all!*** \*  
 \* \*  
 \* \*\*\*\*\*

**JANUARY 2011 EXECUTIVE COUNCIL SUMMARY**

Following are the highlights of the January 2011 Executive Council meeting:

1. Reverend Morgan overviewed tentative plans for his 2011 Sabbatical. A more detailed plan will be presented at the February Executive Council meeting. He plans to announce his Sabbatical plans to the Congregation in a forthcoming edition of the Cornerstone newsletter. The emphasis of his Sabbatical will focus on Visioning; Leadership; and Management.
2. Reverend Patton highlighted in her comments that she has plans in place for a presentation of stories from Palestine, to be presented by her parents Faye and John Buttrick. Alison will be chairing the worship planning team for “Celebrating Call; Celebrating Challenge: Ministry in a Changing Landscape”, a New England-wide conference on May 4 to 6 in Waltham, Ma. Alison will be out of the office beginning January 24<sup>th</sup> through the 30<sup>th</sup> for her rescheduled “2010 reading week.”
3. President Goss identified a need for the development of a strategic plan for the Church that would seek to define a vision of “who we are” and that it must be a Church wide process led by and supported by an appointed “small group”. Key ingredients of the plan would be our identity; what God is calling us to do; and an assessment of achievement. Further discussion will be held at Executive Council meetings.
4. Treasurer Jim Trimble overviewed preliminary 2010 financial results versus budget and plans to comment in the February edition of the Cornerstone newsletter on those results.
5. President Goss and Treasurer Trimble presented and discussed the results to date of the 2011 Consecration Sunday pledging, along with proposed Board 2011 budget submissions. On January 24<sup>th</sup> a special meeting of the Executive Council will occur to review and approve the proposed 2011 budget for presentation to the Congregation at the Annual Financial Meeting scheduled for February 13<sup>th</sup>.
6. Plans to discuss and resolve the Church Rental Policy issues were tabled until the February meeting of the Executive Council. ~ Bill Ketchabaw, Clerk

## **PASTORAL RELATIONS COMMITTEES**

The current Church by-laws provide for a Pastoral Relations Committee for each member of our Ministerial Staff. The principal purpose and mission is to support and maintain an open and healthy relationship between each of the Ministers and the Congregation.

To accomplish that we perform the following:

- Assist in the development of solutions to areas of potential conflict between the ministry of the ordained ministers and that of the Congregation
- Counsel the ordained ministers as requested in their personal and financial concerns
- Support the ministry of the ordained ministers in the community and the denomination
- Provide feedback to the ministerial staff obtained from the Congregation regarding programs or strategies proposed by the ministerial staff.
- Serve as advocates on behalf of the ministerial staff in conversation with the Congregation
- All discussions held with the ministerial staff in our deliberations are treated as confidential in nature.

Jonathan's committee has up to five members – currently Nancy Crouch, Andi Aumen, Hap Poole and Bill Ketchabaw. Alison's committee has up to four members and currently includes Ann Ritson and Rob Cushman. Kevin's committee also has up to four members and currently includes Chuck Howard, Carolyn Keily, and Lauren McCombs. We meet according to the needs of the minister, usually monthly, but at least quarterly.

Now we need your support to make our Committee successful!! Please do not hesitate to discuss with any one of us:

- Your expectations of our ministerial staff.
- Your concerns about Church programs or direction.
- When you have felt satisfaction or deep appreciation.
- What potential areas of conflict or misunderstanding you feel exist.
- Is the pulse of the Congregation strong, steady, and healthy?

We will do our best to advocate for you on behalf of our ministerial staff and with you on their behalf. Please do not hesitate to talk with one of us – we need your voice to be heard.

Carolyn Keily & Bill Ketchabaw

## CARE BAG COMMITTEE HIGHLIGHT



Our church continues to support Connecticut's Department of Children & Families (DCF) through the Care Bag Committee. We provide DCF over 200 emergency removal bags per year (20 per month) for newborns through teens.

The large zippered tote bags go with the child to their emergency foster placement & provide them with 48 hours worth of clothing, toiletries, snacks, toys, a stuffed animal, book & blanket. Most times these children arrive at DCF with nothing but the clothes on their backs .

We have heard back from the social workers that they provide the children some immediate relief from their stress & that they greatly help the social workers by having all the necessities in one place.

We decorate all the bags with love & care knowing that there is a high probability that these kids will be relocated several more times. The bags & their contents belong to them & will hopefully provide them comfort along their journeys.

It takes many hands to put them together. A special thank you to Mary Nason who regularly hand knits infant & children's hats & mittens & to the Haystack Committee who help decorate the bags & sew fleece blankets. Also many thanks to our regular committee members who shop, decorate, & assemble the bags.

We are also appreciative of the many individuals who donate goods in the Care Bag bin in Palmer Hall. We constantly are in need of fleece throw blankets, pajamas, underwear & socks, sweat pants & sweatshirts , art supplies, small toys, stuffed animals, diapers & wipes, & children's books. Your donations go directly & immediately to children in the greatest of need.

We meet on the first Sunday of each month immediately after the 10:00 a.m. service in room 29. Please call Becky Goss (658-7016) with any questions or if you have an interest in helping in some capacity.

## JF HOSTED A SUCCESSFUL HEIFER INTERNATIONAL GIFT SALE!



Leading up to Christmas, JF hosted a Heifer International Gift Sale. It worked like this: People could purchase an animal for a resource-poor family or community and receive in return a certificate that could be given as a Christmas gift to a loved one or friend. The certificate would state that the animal had been given in that friend or loved one's name. This project was important because animals can provide much needed resources for families and communities in need.

JF set a goal of raising \$5,000 for Heifer this year and we are excited to share that they have met and exceeded their goal! JF raised \$5,220 for Heifer and families and communities in need this year. **Way to go JF!**

## Sacred Circles.



Moving in, Reaching out

2011 24-Hour Women's Retreat

6 pm, Friday, March 18<sup>th</sup> –  
4 pm, Saturday, March 19<sup>th</sup>

Silver Lake Conference Center,  
Sharon, CT

Join us as we use small group reflection, song, silence, art, prayer and play to explore the circles in our lives, and to seek God at the center.



### **MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. IN CONNECTICUT DOCUMENTARY**

*A special program commemorating Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s life and time in Simsbury was held on Jan. 17th at Eno Memorial Hall in Simsbury. Featured was a special student documentary on his time spent in Simsbury when he was a young college student, and particularly, at First Church. Go to the Simsbury High School website at [www.simsbury.k12.ct.us/page.cfm?p=3973](http://www.simsbury.k12.ct.us/page.cfm?p=3973) and click on **Student Video**, and you will see an amazing documentary about him.*

*Below is a link to a CBS story, which aired this week on national news also about the Simsbury High School student project on Martin Luther King Jr. Our church member, Bernice Martin, is shown in the video.*

*<http://www.cbsnews.com/video/watch/?id=7256045n&tag=mncol;lst;2>*

First Church of Christ  
Board of Mission and Outreach  
Second Hour Program

***Faith in a New China***

*Exploring the Startling Growth of the  
Christian Church in South China,  
in a Multi-faith Setting*

***Sunday, March 6<sup>th</sup>***

*11:15 am*

*In the Parson's Study*

*Childcare is available*



*Our own Erica Nierendorf-Petitti and Gale Grayson of South Congregational Church in Granby, seminarians at Andover-Newton Theological School, will share their pictures and experiences with Christianity and Buddhism on their recent trip to Hong Kong and the southern coast of China.*

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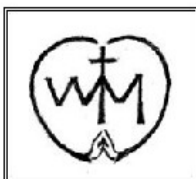
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**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**



**WOMEN'S MINISTRY**

The February 12, 2011 Women's Ministry program  
has been **postponed until April.**  
Details to follow.

**INCLEMENT WEATHER NOTIFICATION** - If we have to cancel or  
change any Sunday services and/or related Sunday church activities  
because of snow or ice, it will be announced as follows:

~Our website <http://www.1stchurchsimsbury.org>. A notice will be  
put on our home page.

~The automated message on our main phone number will be  
changed to reflect the notice.

~WFSB (Channel 3) will scroll an announcement on air under First  
Church of Christ, Simsbury. An announcement will also appear on  
their website - <http://www.wfsb.com>.

***SUNDAY FLOWERS—IT'S NEVER TOO EARLY***



It is not too early to reserve a Sunday  
during our next church year to  
commemorate, honor or memorialize with  
flowers for the Communion table in the  
sanctuary.

If there is a Sunday that you would like to  
reserve, please contact *Bill Lawry* at 860-  
651-0281 or [wlawry@aol.com](mailto:wlawry@aol.com).

**FELLOWSHIP HOUR SCHEDULE FOR FEBRUARY, 2011**

February 6th	Women's Praise Choir (Dawn Medve, Ieke Scully)
February 13th	NO FELLOWSHIP HOUR—Annual Finance Meeting
February 20th	OPEN
February 27th	Committee for Endowment Development— Bob Lyle