

THE CORNERSTONE



Tending your spirit in the growing season

June, 2011

JUNE, 2011

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
			9:30 Hay Stack Circle, Room 28 10:30 Music Together Classes, Room #29 7:00 Farmington Valley Chorus - Palmer Hall	6:30 Occasional Choir 6:30 Troop 76 Leadership Mtg. - Parsons' Study 7:30 AA meeting, Room 28 7:30 Chancel Choir		
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
8:30 Adult Study Prog.—Justice for the Poor, Youth Rm 9:30 Worship, Communion Sunday Sanctuary 9:30 Church School Summer Prog., Children's Library 11:00 Strategic Planning Comm. Mtg., Parsons' Study 7:00 Sr. High Youth Group (PF)	1:00 Red Cross blood drive 7:30 Executive Council Meeting, Parson's Study	5:30 Strategic Planning Committee meeting, Parsons' Study	10:30 Music Together Classes, Room #29 7:00 Farmington Valley Chorus	6:30 Troop 76 Boy Scouts, Palmer Hall 7:30 AA meeting, Room 28	2:15 Junior Fellowship, Youth Room 7:15 Jacob Feder Recital, Palmer Hall	6:00 ABC House graduation celebration dinner, Palmer Hall & kitchen
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
8:30 Adult Study Prog., Justice for the Poor, Youth Rm 9:30 Worship/ Baptism, Pentecost Sunday, Sanctuary. Following Worship, a Special Congregation Strategic Plng Mtg., Sanctuary 9:30 Church School Summer Prog., Children's Library 11:15 Committee of Deacons, Library 5:00 Boy Scout Troop #76 merit badge mtg, Rm 29 7:00 Mission Trip pre-meeting for students & parents, Youth Room	7:15 All Boards Meeting - All Rooms Booked	4:00 Committee on Ministry, Parlor	10:30 Music Together Classes, Room #29 7:00 Farmington Valley Chorus	6:30 Troop 76 Boy Scouts, Palmer Hall 7:00 Strategic Planning Committee Mtg. , Parsons' Study 7:30 AA meeting, Room 28	7:00 Eagle Scout Court of Honor for Stephen Draghi, Sanctuary 8:15 Eagle Scout (Draghi) reception, Palmer Hall and kitchen	Youth Mission Trip (6/18-6/26) - Neon, Kentucky
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Youth Mission Trip (6/18-6/26) - Neon, Kentucky 8:30 Adult Study Prog., Justice for the Poor, Youth Rm 9:30 Worship, Sanctuary 9:30 Church School Summer Program - Children's Library	Youth Mission Trip (6/18-6/26) - Neon, Kentucky 9:00 Youth Vacation Bible School (6/20-6/23), United Methodist Church, Simsbury 1:00 Red Cross blood drive	Youth Mission Trip (6/18-6/26) - Neon, Kentucky 9:00 Youth Vacation Bible School (6/20-6/23), United Methodist Church, Simsbury 9:30 Prayer Shawl Ministry, Room 28 1:00 Faith Circle, Selected Host Homes 7:00 Evening Prayer Shawl meeting, Room 28	Youth Mission Trip (6/18-6/26) - Neon, Kentucky 9:00 Youth Vacation Bible School (6/20-6/23), United Methodist Church, Simsbury 12:00 4th Wed. Study Group, Room 28 7:00 Farmington Valley Chorus	Youth Mission Trip (6/18-6/26) - Neon, Kentucky 9:00 Youth Vacation Bible School (6/20-6/23), United Methodist Church, Simsbury 6:30 Troop 76 Boy Scouts - Palmer Hall 7:30 AA meeting, Room 28	Youth Mission Trip (6/18-6/26) - Neon, Kentucky	Youth Mission Trip (6/18-6/26) - Neon, Kentucky
26	27	28	29	30		
Youth Mission Trip (6/18-6/26) - Neon, Kentucky 8:30 Adult Study Prog.—Justice for the Poor, Youth Room 9:30 Worship - Sanctuary 9:30 Church School Summer Program - Children's Library	6:00 FMHCC Board meeting, Parsons' Study	10:00 Card making Group, Room 28	7:00 Farmington Valley Chorus	6:30 Troop 76 Boy Scouts, Palmer Hall 7:30 AA meeting, Room 28		

THE CORNERSTONE

June 2011 WORSHIP SCHEDULE:

June 5th **COMMUNION SUNDAY**
9:30 a.m. - Worship in the Meetinghouse
Kevin Weikel preaching on Acts 1:6-14
"Witness of the Spirit"

June 12th **PENTECOST SUNDAY**
9:30 a.m. - Worship in the Meetinghouse
Alison Buttrick Patton preaching on Acts 2:1-21
"Language Lessons"

**STRATEGIC PLANNING PRESENTATION IMMEDIATELY
FOLLOWING THE 9:30 a.m. WORSHIP – *Join us!***

June 19th **SUNDAY WORSHIP**
9:30 a.m. - Worship in the Meetinghouse
Alison Buttrick Patton preaching on Matthew 28:16-20
"What do we do now?"

June 26th **SUNDAY WORSHIP**
9:30 a.m. - Worship in the Meetinghouse
Erica Petitti preaching
"As it is in Heaven"

From the Associate Minister for Parish Life and Outreach

Tending your spirit in the growing season...

Two years ago now, a good friend gave me an arm-load of iris bulbs for my garden. I planted them all around my house. Then I waited. And waited. Last summer, we enjoyed bright green foliage, but only one or two purple blooms. This summer, I can already count dozens of buds, just waiting to spring open. I can't wait to see their glorious color!



While many of us are anticipating vacation, a chance to 'check out' or to 'unplug,' the earth is hard at work, nurturing the plants that will feed our bodies and inspire our spirits all summer. It's not just the iris in my yard: our snow peas have sprung, the tomatoes in my yogurt cups are ready to be transplanted and the rhubarb will be up soon. All around us, the earth is greening!

So I started thinking: how might *we* grow this summer? What might we do to nurture our spirits, cultivate our faith and feed our souls? In the rhythms of our church year, summer is often considered 'down time.' Most boards do not convene and we offer one worship time rather than three. It's tempting to think of this as 'taking a break' from church life. But what if we look at summer differently? Dorothy Bass writes about "opening up the gift of time." What if summer was a gift to be opened, a chance to live into our faith in ways that often feel harder to do during the busy school year?

Imagine opening ourselves up to the Spirit like a sunflower opens to the sun. Imagine soaking up worship like a thirsty watermelon vine, or seeking out a Bible study like a sapling sending its roots down deep. Participate in a small group study ("Justice for the Poor" starts Sunday, June 5th at 8:30 am), practice faith in action by helping to rehab 60B Old Farms Road or cultivate the gardens at Simsbury Farm. Take note of the space that opens up. Listen a little more deeply. Pray a little more. *Notice* God at work around us and give thanks more often.

If you are traveling, try worshipping in another church, to see how God might touch you through a different community of faith. When you are home, join us at First Church! Together, we will take a deep breath of gratitude and wonder. We'll stretch out our arms to embrace this time and welcome God. On June 12th, we'll celebrate Pentecost, when the Spirit of God blew through the church and inspired the disciples to share the Good News. Who knows: If we remain open, we may just discover how the winds of God's Spirit are blowing through our own lives as well. I can't wait to see what glorious gifts spring forth!

Alison

Annual Meeting Thoughts – A Time of Transition

We did have the necessary quorum on May 15th to conduct our annual meeting as required by our Bylaws, but many of you reading this issue of the Cornerstone were not able to be there. While the minutes will reflect the business that was conducted, let me give you the key takeaway I had from that important day.

Starting with Jonathan's sermon right through the annual meeting, the word that kept coming to my mind was "transition". The nomination of new officers and Board members reflects the annual transition of the governance of the church. The acknowledgement of service and contribution from the Auclair family and approval of Melinda Westbrook as our new Vice President were consistent with that theme. We discussed Jonathan's sabbatical which will focus, among other things, on the experience of other churches who are dealing with these changing times.

However, my strongest sense of our Church in transition was the presentation of the initial work of the Strategic Planning Committee. For the last few months, this group of highly committed congregation members has been sorting through challenging questions and analysis regarding the role of church life in America and New England, but in particular our own focus and niche in particular: What defines First Church? What would be the one minute "elevator speech" you might give if asked by someone to describe First Church, and would it resemble the answer of another member?

Part of me would like settling back to past times (who among you remembers Ozzie & Harriet?), where life was much simpler and almost everyone went to church on Sunday. There were no sports practices on the Lord's Day and the idea of someone going into the office to work on Sunday was crazy. But that's a fantasy for a long lazy car drive – not a description of today's environment. We *must* adapt to the world we live in and the challenges we face, not just our members, but our broader community. Doing so thoughtfully and strategically will permit us not only to thrive as a church, but to live out our call – as Jonathan described it in his sermon on the 15th – to spread God's love in the world.

It can be scary to be an organization in transition, but it can be exciting as well. Please engage actively in the strategic planning process in the weeks and months ahead. I think you will find it an extremely valuable experience.

Blessings:



William J. Goss

ONA: All Are Welcome Here

As I announced at the annual meeting last month, the Board of Elders and Executive Council have commissioned a ministry study team to establish a dialogue with the congregation about what it means to be an Open and Affirming—or “ONA”—church, and to see where that dialogue leads.

One common question that arises when discussing Open and Affirming status is: why do UCC churches single out lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender—or “LGBT”—individuals for a special welcome? While many religions offer support to the oppressed, there are a number of religious organizations that have actually been active and vocal oppressors of those who are LGBT. So that LGBT’s will know that they are welcomed by the UCC, the UCC General Synod has adopted a Covenant of Openness and Affirmation, declaring that: *“we recognize the presence of ignorance, fear and hatred in the church and in our culture, and covenant to not discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation, nor any other irrelevant factor, and we seek to include and support those who, because of this fear and prejudice, find themselves in exile from a spiritual community.”*

Let me share a story with you of a friend of mine who found himself “in exile from a spiritual community.” John and I grew up in the same hometown. We both attended church as children--his family attended the Catholic church, mine was Congregational. I reunited with him recently after over 30 years, and we caught up on the decades of each other’s adult lives. He shared with me that he spent those three decades without a church home, feeling unwelcome and judged by the very institution that had nurtured his faith as a child before he had acknowledged that he is gay. Despite professional success, a loving personal relationship, and family support, there was a gaping hole in John’s heart that was longing to experience and worship God in the fellowship of a church community, and yet he felt rejection and harsh judgment from the church. A few years ago, John discovered the UCC church in his town, and found the embrace of Christ’s followers that he had been missing for so long. He is now an active member of that church, and speaks with joy about his return to a community of faith and fellowship that I expect will nurture him for many years to come.

John’s story was difficult to hear. I cannot imagine being turned away by the very place that preaches that we are *all* God’s children—no exceptions! There are members of our congregation, and children and grandchildren of members, and youth in our youth programs, and people in our community, who are living out John’s story every day. They deserve to be heard, and to be embraced in the love of Christ’s church community.

The ONA ministry study team welcomes your questions, ideas, comments and concerns as we move through this study process together. Please keep us in your prayers, and may we all open our hearts to this very important dialogue.

Susan Babcock--for the ONA Team
(Steve Towles, Sara Batchelder, Shelley Pilsbury & Steve Osborn)

Dear Members and Friends of First Church:

Our Strategic Planning Initiative is well underway, and we are writing to provide you with ways that you can help us as we work towards creating a vision and accompanying action plans for First Church.

- 1. Our next presentation to the Congregation will be on June 12th, directly after the 9:30 a.m. worship service. More details will follow in the Church's weekly update.*
- 2. We are providing several ways for you to share your thoughts and ideas with us.*
 - a. There is now a "suggestion box" outside the church office.*
 - b. You can email us at: Strategicplanning@1stchurchsimsbury.org*
 - c. Join us for Fellowship Hour on June 5th. Members of the Strategic Planning Committee will be present to answer questions and take your comments.*

Pray for the Committee. This is challenging work, and we encourage you to keep all of us in your prayers.

Finally, I want to provide you with an opportunity to support our initiatives financially. As you know this is a challenging budget year for First Church. We would like to have members support our initiatives by either donating to the Strategic Planning budget that will help pay for our excellent consultant - Paul Nickerson, or donate to help defray the costs of Jonathan's sabbatical, which is also benefiting the Strategic Planning goals. Several members of the congregation have already contributed to one of these two initiatives, and we thank them for their support. If you would like to join them, please make your check out to "First Church of Christ, Simsbury" and put either "Strategic Planning" or "Jon's Sabbatical" in the memo line. You can either place your donation in the offering plate, or drop it off in the Church Office.

Thank you in advance for your support.

*In Christ,
Billye Auclair*

Church School News



VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL June 20-23 (Mon-Thurs).

9:00 a.m.—12:00 Noon

Come and have fun this summer at PandaMania!

Each day the students gather in the Sanctuary (ages 4 to entering the 6th 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.

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.

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.

Summer Church School Program: Torchlighters, Heroes of Faith series.

Students ages 4 and up begin in church and are dismissed to the children's library, Room 22 for movie and snack after the children's message.

Torchlighters is a series of animated movies with strong values and educational content. Each *Torchlighters* episode presents the story of a true-life hero from Christian history. Kids will see what God can do through a "Torchlighter" and will be challenged to carry their own torch while learning about the history of our faith.

June 5, *The Perpetua Story* -- In the days of the Early Church, this young mother and new believer is imprisoned, charged with being a Christian, a traitor to the Roman gods. In order to gain her freedom, all Perpetua needs to do is offer a pinch of incense to the gods of Rome, just like every other good citizen. With this one simple act she will gain her freedom and will return to a life of comfort. As her father pleads with her to think of her baby and the family's good reputation, Perpetua rises to face the Roman Pro-counsel. She has made her choice and there is no turning back. Watch as Perpetua's resolve is tested again and again by those opposed to her and the rest of the small group known as "Christians."

June 12, *The Jim Elliot Story* -- The year was 1956. From the steamy jungles of Ecuador, news spread around the world that five young American men were mercilessly killed by members of the Auca tribe (now known as the Waodani)--a people those young men had gone to serve and befriend. That seemingly senseless tragedy a half century ago has become an inspirational marvel as that same tribe is now friends with the families of those they killed! This is the story of one of those brave Torchlighters --Jim Elliot. In We follow Jim's adventures from his college years to his work in the jungles, showing young people his faith in action as he answers God's call to do the seemingly impossible.

June 19, *The William Tyndale Story* -- William Tyndale tops King Henry VIII's "Most Wanted" list in 1535 and is being pursued across Europe by the king's bounty hunters. What is his crime? Murder? Theft? No, none of these. William Tyndale's "crime" is translating the Bible into English for the common people. Is he willing to risk his life for this cause? This episode of *The Torchlighters* follows William Tyndale's adventures as he works in secret, moving from town to town as a fugitive to avoid capture. Friends and allies help him along, but enemies may be lurking around any corner. Come along and see whether this Torchlighter completes his task before the king's men close in on him.

June 26, *The Amy Carmichael Story* -- As little Preena is snatched away from the most gentle woman she has seen in months, she wonders how she will ever again find a way out of the temple, where she is held against her will. How will she find the missionary known as Amy Carmichael, the one who wears a cross and serves a different sort of God? Meanwhile, Amy is also consumed by the awful truth she has learned about the plight of the "temple girls." Will Amy's faithful determination be enough to free Preena from the powerful customs and superstitions that keep her hostage?

Fall Teacher/Shepherd Opportunities, Sept 11-Dec 11

The church school is a co-operative program where parents work together to teach their children about their faith. Please contact cindy.cole@1stchurchsimbury.org

Pre-K—2 Teachers needed:

Job description: The teachers lead the class each Sunday in learning the basics about faith: our church, prayer, God, etc. The students are using learning center activities, crafts, and reading Bible stories in circle time. All the teaching materials and crafts are provided to the teacher.

Kindergarten—Patti Scanlon, 1 additional teacher needed

Job description: The teachers use the Hands-on Bible curriculum to teach the students beginner Bible stories along with how to apply the story lessons to their lives. The teachers lead the students in games, crafts, and reading the Bible story.

Grades 1-6 Rotation Program: Fall units: Living as Caretakers (Creation), Feast & Festivals, Christmas

Computer room – Craig Patton, Debi Ackels

Cooking room – Chris Morgan, Linda Peach

Art room – Ann Marie Prabulos, 1 teacher needed

Game room – Bryan Tawney, Beth Strapp

Movie room – 2 teachers needed

Shepherd job description: Shepherds meet their students in the chapel each Sunday, take attendance, hand out name tags, etc. They lead the students to class and are in charge of monitoring class room behavior, building relationships, and assisting the teacher as required.

Shepherds for Sept 12-Dec. 12

1st grade shepherd— Erin Naspo

2nd grade shepherd - Jackie Brooke

3rd grade shepherd –

4th grade shepherd –

5th & 6th grade shepherd – Kim Tawney

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

Pentecost Party held on May 15th



Making ships and sailing them from England to America as our church ancestors did for religious freedom.



Hopscotching through the history of First Church of Christ.



Making a stained glassed window & learning the history of the windows in the Parson's study.

Making red dipped candles & learning red is the color of Pentecost, lighted candles symbolized the presence of God in the church, and the significance of flame in the Bible story.



Making Rice Crispies bars to learn that the church (rice) needs all the people (skittles) with their gifts and talents to make a difference in the world.

Making Holy Spirits kites to fly on the breath of God (wind).



Making offering boxes and learning that our money helps maintain the church and support people in need.

Music Notes

The church year is drawing to a close – Christmas 2010 and Easter 2011 are in the rearview mirror, and much of the music has been put away. Even though planning has already begun for next fall, winter, and spring, things are a little more relaxed.



There are still some significant events coming up for the summer, though:

The Junior Choir exchange with the Methodist Church Youth Choir is on Sunday, June 5th, at (what will be) the 9:30 a.m. service in our sanctuary. After their presentation here, everyone will travel down the street to do a repeat at Simsbury United Methodist Church – all are invited to attend both services to hear this – the kids are doing a great job and are very excited about this occasion.

On June 12th, which is Pentecost Sunday, also marks the final presentation by the Chancel Choir until September (we will have an informal “Summer Choir” on a Sunday in July as yet to be announced). The musical styles that Sunday will run the gamut from Orlando Gibbons, to a more contemporary classical piece, to a piece in African style composed by Pepper Choplin, when they will be joined by Women’s Praise Choir. This is truly a Pentecost Sunday, where many musical languages will be spoken.

On June 19th, one of my favorite annual events will occur – Ruth Edwards will present four piano pieces for the service’s musical offerings of the day. She is a top-notch pianist, and, no matter where one’s tastes fall stylistically, I know that everyone will be able to appreciate the music this Sunday. This year she will play, among other pieces, two by Felix Mendelssohn’s sister Fanny Hensel – often said to be a better composer than her more famous brother.

On June 26th, our Choral Bells will be present to play two pieces for the morning’s worship. This group has expanded, worked hard, and improved greatly under the expert tutelage of Jeannie Boehner, and I know that the music on this Sunday will bear evidence to that. The Choral Bells are a beautiful aspect of the music here at First church, and the music that they play is not only wonderful to hear – it is fascinating to watch the players as they attain the marvelous different effects that the bells are able to achieve. If any are into the physical aspects of making music, this is definitely the group to belong to.

There is much more music coming up for the summer – and if anyone is interested in providing music for any of our worship services, you are more than welcome – please get in touch via phone, email, or stop by during the week. I look forward to hearing from you.

Have a great June!

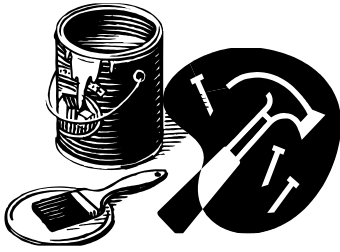
Mark

MAY 2011 EXECUTIVE COUNCIL SUMMARY

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

1. As the Chairperson of the Open and Affirming Ministry Study established by the Board of Elders, Susan Babcock presented their initial report that had been endorsed by the Board of Elders. It was moved; seconded and carried that the Executive Council endorse the content of the report and that the report be presented to the Congregation at the Annual Meeting on May 15th for their endorsement.
2. Reverend Patton reported that the Board of Mission and Outreach is organizing for further work efforts on the Simsbury housing project at Simsbury Farms.
3. Reverend Morgan highlighted his participation this past week in the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Simsbury Jewish congregation that included his participation in the Holocaust remembrance activity conducted at Eno Memorial Hall. He reminded the meeting that his sabbatical will commence the week of May 16th.
4. Reverend Weikel informed the meeting that he has applied to participate in the UCC Pension Board sponsored educational program known as "Target 20/30" that offers an educational experience to clergy with five years or less experience. It is a 10 year commitment of ongoing education with sessions held four times a year. The program costs are free to selected participants, with an accompanying financial pension benefit at the completion of the program.
5. Treasurer Trimble reported that both income and expenses are running favorable to budget. Due to better than expected returns on investment reserves, the UCC Pension Board announced that First Church will receive a "free month" of health and dental premiums in the third quarter. It was moved; seconded; and carried that the benefit be shared with those staff members contributing to the cost of this benefit.
6. It was moved; seconded; and carried that Melinda Westbrook be approved as the Vice President to complete the remaining term of Billye Auclair who has resigned effective June 2011. The Congregation will be given the opportunity to ratify this appointment on May 15th.
7. Dane Woodberry commented that recruitment for the Board of Elders continues to present a challenge with only three Board vacancies filled to date.
8. Proposed by-law amendments were submitted by the By-laws Revision Committee for approval and subsequent presentation to the Congregation on May 15th for their approval. The revisions amend the annual performance review process for our Ministerial staff and increase the membership by two for the Board of Music Ministries. The proposed revisions were approved by the Executive Council.
9. Billye Auclair, Chair of the Strategic Planning Committee, reported that subgroups have been formed to examine several topics agreed for study related to the future of First Church. Consensus was reached that the Strategic Planning initiative is progressing slower than envisioned, but a draft of proposed strategies will be ready for presentation at the Annual Meeting on May 15th.
10. Discussion occurred on a position paper presented by the Board of Trustees related to a Town proposal, on behalf of the Simsbury Library, to install a roadway connecting the Library to the Boy Scout Hall parking lot. Trustees opposed this plan based on increased traffic and safety hazards to the First Church property. After considerable discussion it was moved; seconded; and carried (with two objections) that the Trustees support the installation of the roadway, with the installation of a controlled gate at the entrance to the Boy Scout Hall parking lot, as suggested by the Town Engineer, to address the traffic concerns raised by Trustees.

~Bill Ketchabaw, Clerk



Grab a hammer or a paint brush!
...We are rehabbing 60c Old Farms Road!

Did you love volunteering for *Habitat* or *Christmas in July*? Do you still remember that trip you took to *Back Bay Mission*? OR have you *wished* you had the chance to participate in a hands-on mission project, but never found the time? Now's your chance – right here in Simsbury!

When? During the Month of June
Where? 60 B Old Farms Road – one of the houses behind the Apple Barn
What? We are collaborating with the Town of Simsbury to rehab a house and convert it into a unit of affordable housing in our community.

Last fall, many volunteers worked together to landscape the yard around 60C Old Farms Road. We extracted it from the weeds and brush, planted shrubs and revived the view. In January, 2011, the Town of Simsbury rented that house to a family, at a below-market rate defined for 'affordable housing' by HUD (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development).

We also installed Energy Star windows at 60B. Now, we are ready to pick up where we left off in October, re-doing the interior of 60B, so it, too, can be rented to a family in need of affordable housing.

Join us! As we rehab a kitchen, make repairs and paint the interior. **No skills required.** We will have skilled members to guide our projects. Just bring your work clothes and enthusiasm!

How do I sign up? Look for the dates and sign-up sheets after worship, call the office or contact Pastor Alison for info.

See you there!

SMALL GROUP OPPORTUNITY: *Justice for the Poor*

8:30 a.m. Sundays in June

A major priority in the history and character of First Church is our strong emphasis on mission – working with others to realize God’s justice and mercy in the world. We hear references to “social justice” in our church, but what does that mean? What are the connections between faith and justice? What does scripture have to say about justice for people who are economically poor, hungry, imprisoned or displaced? What is the relationship between our worship and our work to create affordable housing here in Simsbury; or between Bible study and our partnership with Simsbury Farm and Gifts of Love?

During the month of June, the Board of Mission & Outreach will offer a small group study and reflection opportunity called “***Justice for the Poor.***” Together we’ll examine scripture and reflect on Jesus’ invitation to “feed my sheep,” using videos and a study guide developed by **Sojourners**, a public advocacy group based in Washington, D.C. (www.sojo.net) We’ll also look for ways to relate this study to our own mission and ministry here at First Church.

WE WILL GATHER IN THE YOUTH ROOM AT 8:30 AM EACH SUNDAY, BEGINNING June 5th, and conclude in time for worship at 9:30 am (our 8:30 am worship concludes for the season the week before, on May 29th). Some of the topics will include:

“Burger King Mom”: Being Poor in America

Hosted by Dave Wadhams

Is There Something Wrong with the “Prosperity Gospel”?

Hosted by Jim Martoccio

Standing at the Corner of Church and State

Hosted by Fletch Kelly

Each topic stands alone, so if you miss one, you don’t have to worry about catching-up in order to attend a later session. Although the program contains a total of six sessions, we are presently planning for four in June. We will let the group decide if they want to keep going into July. **All are welcome!** See any of the hosts, or the Reverend Alison Patton if you have questions or if you would like childcare. *Coffee and tea will be served! Join us.*

Historically Speaking: *What was Life Like?*

Charles E. Stowe was the minister here from February 1891 until July 1899, following Horace Winslow. His pastorate was considered controversial and he was both more worldly and more socially conscious than his predecessors, as well as most of the congregation. His ideas were maybe too liberal among this long-time staid and conservative New England congregation. During his time here they held bimonthly meetings of the Missionary Society at member's homes to raise money for poor southern blacks. A concert quartet from Tuskegee Institute came and sang here. Girls from the church held a sale on the parsonage lawn and raised \$13 which they sent to Tuskegee. He resigned amidst disagreement over his behavior in April 1899, to take effect in July that year. His life's story is a very interesting one. There are copies of letters he wrote to the leaders of the congregation and his letter of resignation in the church archives. He admitted to some kind of indiscretion and knew that people were dissatisfied with him.

He was the youngest son and seventh child of Harriet Beecher Stowe, abolitionist and author, and Calvin Ellis Stowe, biblical scholar and professor. He was born on July 8, 1850 in Brunswick, ME when his father was a professor at Bowdoin College. His mother wrote "Uncle Tom's Cabin" the next year. His upbringing afforded him an excellent education and he had traveled the world as a rebellious teenager on a three-year sailing trip to Spain, Italy and Japan, and with his parents, as his mother traveled to Europe as a popular author. He returned home and settled down to study at Bowdoin College and at Harvard and then became a minister. He married in 1879 and he and his wife Susan had three children – two girls, named Leslie and Hilda, and a boy named Lyman. The oldest girl, Leslie, died at age four. There are some interesting photos of him and his family and the parsonage during the time they lived in Simsbury. There is a photo of the parsonage in the Lyman Potter's 2002 book on page 86.

Charles's twin sisters, Hatty and Eliza, lived in a house that is still there at 965 Hopmeadow Street. They attended First Church but also attended other churches in the area. They became close friends with Oliver Hart Bronson, the minister who followed Charles at First Church. He was here after Charles resigned in 1899 until 1907. It was during this time that Hatty gave the silver baptismal bowl and the traveling communion set to the Rev. Mr. Bronson. In 1903 she gave him the communion set in memory of her brother, Frederick William, who had been wounded at the battle of Gettysburg.

In 1906 she gave the baptismal bowl that is still used, "in memory of the gentle motherhood of her mother, Harriet Beecher Stowe." In 1953 both of these lovely gifts were sent to the church from Santa Barbara, CA by the widow Bronson. They were sent to then minister Kenneth Palmer. They have been here ever since. The letters that were exchanged for these precious gifts are in our archives also.

Charles and his second wife, Elizabeth, retired to Santa Barbara in 1919 where Mr. Bronson and his wife also lived. While living there, Charles wrote for the Santa Barbara Morning Press. He wrote some very humorous articles for New York and California papers.

There are copies of a couple of his "Two Minute Essays" in one of the scrapbooks kept in the safe in the archives. The S.B.M. Press carried his obituary in 1934 and his funeral service was conducted by his old friend Oliver Bronson. In 1947 when the church here celebrated its 250th anniversary, Bronson, as well as Charles's son, Lyman Beecher Stowe, attended.

Donna Hopkins, Historian—Only 77 years since the death of Charles E. Stowe. Read more about Charles and all our other ministers in Lyman Potter's book.



Board of Mission and Outreach *South Park Inn*

WOULD YOU LIKE TO COME ALONG WITH US OR WORK "BEHIND THE SCENES" PREPARING THE DELICIOUS FOOD?

The people of South Park Inn absolutely love it when we come work with them to help meet the many needs of the people there who are homeless and in transition. And, I must say, the blessings are always ours.

Each of the opportunities below represents a great experience to bring a family together, to reconnect with friends, to extend your Women's Circle experience, to share with your Bible Study friends, to add a new dimension to your Men's group involvement, or to develop relationships with board members.

Look for sign ups outside Palmer Hall or EMAIL Denise Bell sopherbell@aol.com if you would like to help with any of the following.

- Cooking a meal (approximately 1:30—4:30)
- Serving a meal (4:20 to about 6:30)
- Training to be a lead cook (Jeff is a great trainer)
- Sharing your nursing knowledge with young mothers once a month
- Doing a Bingo Night at South Park Inn or Plimpton House
- Sharing your nutritional knowledge with folks at Plimpton House
- Helping young men in transition learn personal budgeting skills

Meal Dates for 2011:

June 11
July 9
August 21
September 18
October 22
November 12
December 10



First Church of Christ
689 Hopmeadow St
Simsbury CT 06070
860-651-3593
Fax 408-9229

STAFF

Rev. Jonathan Morgan
Senior Minister
jonathan.morgan@
1stchurchsimsbury.org

Rev. Kevin Weikel
Associate Minister for
Youth and Young Adults
kevin.weikel@
1stchurchsimsbury.org

Rev. Alison Buttrick
Patton
Associate Minister of
Parish Life and Outreach
alison.patton @
1stchurchsimsbury.org

Mr. Mark Mercier
Dir. of Music Ministries
mark.mercier@
1stchurchsimsbury.org

Ms. Cindy Cole
Director of Christian Ed.
cindy.cole@
1stchurchsimsbury.org

Ms. Anne Nelson
Church Administrator
anne.nelson@
1stchurchsimsbury.org

Mr. Jim Kew
Assistant Treasurer
jim.kew@
1stchurchsimsbury.org

Ms. Catherine Behrens
Assistant Church Admin.
cathie.behrens@
1stchurchsimsbury.org

Ann Gallion
Secretary
ann.gallion@
1stchurchsimsbury.org

Darlene Davis
Secretary
darlene.davis@
1stchurchsimsbury.org

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

FELLOWSHIP HOUR SCHEDULE FOR JUNE, 2011

6/5/11 Welcoming Church Ministry Team
6/12/11 Board of Finance
6/19/11 Board of Trustees
6/26/11 Board of Mission & Outreach

RETIRED MEN'S LUNCHEON 2011-2012 SCHEDULE

2nd Tuesday each month as follows:

2011: Sept. 13th, Oct. 11th, Nov. 8th, Dec. 13th
2012: Jan. 10th, Feb. 14th, Mar. 13th, Apr. 10th,
May 8th

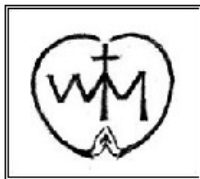
Join us!

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).



***WOMEN MINISTRY'S
SMALL STUDY GROUPS***

Please continue to turn in the pink survey forms to the Church Office or contact Nancy Crouch at 860-658-1894 or Sara Burrows at 860-408-1459 for more information.