

THE CORNERSTONE



November, 2011

November 2011						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 4:30 Troop 76 Merit badge workshop, Parsons' Study 7:30 Valley Saxophone Quartet	2 9:30 Hay Stack, Room 28 9:45 Music Together classes, Rm 29 4:00 Women's Praise Choir 7:00 Farmington Valley Chorus, Palmer Hall	3 6:00 Bell Choir, Room 29 6:30 Troop 76 Leadership & Committee Mtg., Parsons' Study 7:30 AA meeting, Room 28 7:30 Chancel Choir	4 2:10 Junior Fellowship	5
MISSION 1 6 8:15 Confirmation Large Group mtg 8:30 Worship/Communion, Chapel 9:30 Teacher/Shepherd Orientation breakfast - Parlor 10:00 Uncommon Worship, All Saints Day, Sanctuary 10:00 Church School 11:15 Care Bag assembly, Room 29 11:30 New Member Orientation, Parsons' Study 7:00 PF Youth Group, Youth Room & Palmer Hall	7 1:00 Red Cross Blood Drive, Palmer Hall 4:15 Junior Choir 7:30 Executive Council Meeting, Parson's Study	8 12:00 Retired Men's Luncheon, Palmer Hall 4:00 Committee on Ministry, Parlor 7:00 ONA meeting, Parlor 7:30 Valley Saxophone Quartet, Music Room	9 9:45 Music Together classes, Rm 29 4:00 Women's Praise Choir 7:00 Farmington Valley Chorus, Palmer Hall	10 6:00 Bell Choir, Room 29 7:00 Boy Scout Troop 76 Mtg., Palmer Hall 7:30 AA meeting, Room 28 7:30 Chancel Choir, Music Room	11 10:30 Farmington Valley Transition Academy, Kitchen & Palmer Hall 5:30 PF Fall Retreat at Camp Woodstock	12 PF Fall Retreat - Camp Woodstock 1:30 South Park Inn Meal Prep, Kitchen 4:30 South Park Inn Serving Meals - South Park Inn, Hartford
MISSION 1 13 PF Fall Retreat, returning 1:00 pm - Camp Woodstock 8:30 Worship Service, Chapel 9:00 Welcoming Church Ministry Team-Ambassadors, Parlor 10:00 Worship, Sanctuary 10:00 Church School 11:15 Open & Affirming Second Hour Program after 10:00 service with refreshments, Palmer Hall 6:30 Farmington Valley Chorale Reh. Sanctuary	14 4:15 Junior Choir 7:15 All Boards meeting - All rooms booked	15 9:30 Prayer Shawl Meeting, Room 28 1:00 Faith Circle, Member's Homes 6:00 New Member Orientation, Parsons' Study 7:00 Evening Prayer Shawl Meeting, Room 28 7:00 Deacons Meeting, Library 7:30 Chancel Choir, Music Room	16 9:45 Music Together classes, Rm 29 4:00 Women's Praise Choir 7:00 Farmington Valley Chorus, Palmer Hall	17 6:00 Bell Choir, Room 29 7:00 Boy Scout Troop 76 Meeting, Palmer Hall 7:30 AA meeting, Room 28 7:30 Chancel Choir, Music Room	18 2:10 Junior Fellowship 7:00 DePasquale Scout Court of Honor, Sanctuary 8:00 DePasquale Scout reception, Palmer Hall and kitchen	19
NEW MEMBERS 20 8:30 Thanksgiving Worship, Chapel 10:00 Thanksgiving Worship, Sanctuary 10:00 Church School 11:20 Church School Christmas Service Parts Assignment, Gr. 2-7, Palmer Hall 7:00 Townwide Ecumenical Thanksgiving Service, Sanctuary 7:00 PF Youth Group, Youth Room & Palmer Hall	21 1:00 Red Cross Blood Drive, Palmer Hall 4:15 Junior Choir	22 10:00 Card making group, Room 28 6:30 Cub Scout Pack 276 Meeting, Palmer Hall 7:30 Valley Saxophone Quartet, Music Room	23 4:00 PM Women's Praise Choir - Music Room 7:00 PM Farmington Valley Chorus - Palmer Hall	24 Holiday - Office Closed, Thanksgiving 7:30 PM AA meeting - Room 28	25 Holiday - Office Closed	26 4:30—7:30 p.m. Simsbury Celebrates at First Church
27 8:30 First Sunday of Advent Worship, Chapel 10:00 Worship, Sanctuary 10:00 Church School 10:15 Mission Workshop & Christmas movie, Palmer Hall 6:00 Farmington Valley Chorale rehearsal, Sanctuary No PF Youth Group	28 4:15 Junior Choir 6:00 FMHCC Board of Directors meeting, Parsons' Study	29 7:30 Valley Saxophone Quartet, Music Room	30 9:45 Music Together classes, Room 29 12:00 4th Wednesday Study Grp, Rm28 4:00 Women's Praise Choir 7:00 Farmington Valley Chorus, Palmer Hall			

THE CORNERSTONE

NOVEMBER, 2011 WORSHIP SCHEDULE: Season of Thanksgiving

DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME ENDS: TURN YOUR CLOCKS BACK ONE HOUR!

November 6th COMMUNION SUNDAY – ALL SAINTS

8:30 a.m. Early Worship in the Chapel with Holy Communion
Rev. Alison Patton preaching on Matthew 5:-12,
“Blessed are...”

10:00 a.m. Uncommon Worship in the Sanctuary with Holy Communion
Rev. Kevin Weikel preaching on Matthew 5:1-12,
“For All The Saints”

November 13th SUNDAY WORSHIP

8:30 a.m. Early Worship in the Chapel
10:00 a.m. Worship in the Sanctuary

Rev. Alison Patton preaching at both services on
Matthew 25:14-30, *“Gospel Economics”*

November 20th THANKSGIVING SUNDAY – NEW MEMBERS WELCOMED

8:30 a.m. Early Worship in the Chapel
10:00 a.m. Worship in the Sanctuary

Rev. Jonathan Morgan preaching at both services,
“Making Good on a Divine Promise”

November 27th SUNDAY WORSHIP – FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

8:30 a.m. Early Worship in the Chapel
10:00 a.m. Traditional Worship in the Sanctuary

Rev. Jonathan preaching at both services,
“Still waiting for the New Day Dawning”

From the Senior Minister's Desk

Dear Friends in Christ,

"Growing old isn't for the Faint Hearted!" – Harold Morgan, my Dad.



On October 30th, our Strategic Plan was offered to the congregation during a special after-worship meeting as an inspired proposal of how our congregation can minister more effectively in these changing times. Within this document, we offered five *faith initiatives*: *Nurturing Disciples; Inviting Others; Targeted Ministries; Fostering Generosity; and Emphasizing Mission*. We also offered two supportive initiatives to help us accomplish those five: *Revising our Governance Structure and Refining our Staffing*. This plan is the result of many hours of prayerful discernment by our Strategic Planning Committee and our Church Leadership. I am deeply grateful for their faith-filled work and for this exciting plan for our future together.

One of the specific goals lifted up by the Targeted Ministries portion of the plan is a new model of ministry for the seniors in our church and community. This will be one of the first initiatives to be undertaken as we embrace the promise of this larger initiative. Let me share why I am very energized by this important new ministry.

First, following the quote from my father above; growing older is filled with many challenges. Among them is discovering bodies no longer acting and feeling as well as they might, friends and beloved family members passing away frequently; challenges of chronic disease or ailments; family members scattered around the globe; and since the world is changing extremely rapidly, along with the factors listed above, loneliness or depression or a sense of diminished self-worth can also be one's companion in later years. It is true, growing older is not easy... and we can do much more as a church to help our senior population cope and thrive.

On a related front, during the research phase of our Strategic Planning Process over the past 6 months, we discovered that the two fastest growing demographics in our valley are Singles and Seniors. This is a change for Simsbury and the surrounding towns and speaks of an opportunity to meet the spiritual needs of a growing population in our community.

So, in the coming weeks, we will be developing and refining a new Fellowship Ministry for Seniors that will be specifically designed to address the challenges and issues they are dealing with on a daily basis, while providing additional support and fellowship opportunities. The best model I can lift up as a guide for this new ministry is our own Youth Ministry program. Our PF and JF ministries excel at providing members a supportive and caring environment through pastoral support and leadership with faithful programs, speakers, and activities devoted to addressing the many challenges faced by the members, with a dose of fun added in for good measure. (Though no doubt we may need to find an alternative to the game, "Kick the Can!")

I look forward to seeing what God has in store for us in this new and important ministry!

In the Joy of Christ's service,

Jonathan

From the Associate Minister for Parish Life and Outreach

Practicing Thanks-giving

There is a small container of homemade applesauce sitting on my desk, tied with a green bow and topped with a thank you note. The first thing I need to do this morning is to send a thank you note to the person who sent me that thank you gift (ok: maybe that's the second thing I'll do. First, I want to gobble up the applesauce!). It can become a vicious cycle, can't it? Thanking someone for the thank you for the thank you: Help! I'm trapped in a thank you vortex and I can't get out!

Of course, saying thank you for applesauce is easy. Even making the applesauce in the first place is great fun (especially if you have one of those hand-cranked apple peelers and small children to crank it...). Praising God for apples, cider donuts and glorious fall days – that kind of thank you just bubbles up, unbidden, doesn't it? Like the psalmists, we burst into song: "Praise the LORD! I will give thanks to God with my whole heart!" (Psalm 111)

... OK. Maybe you don't actually burst into song. But you know what I mean, right? You *know* that feeling of gratitude that swells within you when you encounter a beautiful day, have a profound experience, or receive an unexpected gift.

But what about saying "thank you" when times or circumstances are tough? The apostle Paul says, "Give thanks, whatever happens." (1 Thessalonians 5) *Whatever* happens. You mean: Give thanks when I get a flat tire in the rain? Give thanks when the pain shoots through my abdomen, or when that pink slip shows up on my desk? Really?? Because I gotta say: in moments like those, I'm not feeling the joy... Still: "Give thanks, whatever happens."

Maybe Paul doesn't necessarily mean that we need to thank God *for* the flat tire. Maybe he's encouraging us to give thanks *while* changing that tire; or navigating that pain in your gut, or figuring out how you're going to pay next month's bills. Maybe Paul is talking about giving thanks the way we talk about prayer or worship...as a kind of discipline, or a faith practice (there's that word 'practice' again!). So I say: "God: My tire is flat, I'm cold and wet and crabby, but I'm still thankful that I *have* a car. Thank you for the strength to change a tire – or for people I can call on in times of trouble. Thank you that I have a hot shower waiting for me when I get home..."

Saying 'thank you' like *that* shifts our focus and invites us to live out of a place of gratitude. I think it also opens us up, makes us a little more patient and compassionate (not to mention less prone to high blood pressure!). Maybe it even leads us to that other kind of prayer, the prayer for *others*, as in: "Dear God, today I got a glimpse of what it means to feel really lousy, kind of vulnerable, even scared. So now I'm thinking about the people who feel like that every day. Please be with folks who can't get to work because they can't afford gas, or because they are sick, or because no one will hire them. Please comfort them today and help me to do what I can to help where I can... Oh! And, thank you."

Amen.

Still practicing,
Alison

From the Associate Minister of Youth and Young Adults,

You may have noticed a change in the scheduling of our Uncommon Worship Services. For the past three years, these services have taken place on Sunday evenings; this year they will be scattered across three different 10:00 a.m. Sunday morning services (as well as the Christmas Eve 11:00 p.m. service). The first of these services will be Sunday, November 6th at 10:00 a.m.

There are a few reasons why the Board of Christian Education, the Board of Elders, and the ministers feel this change makes a lot of sense. First, on the few occasions when Uncommon Worship took place at the 10:00 a.m. service in the past, many people requested it happen more often. Second, Uncommon Worship became closely tied to the Confirmation process over the years. With Confirmation large group meetings moving to Sunday mornings this year, holding Uncommon Worship at 10:00 a.m. a few times will enable the Confirmation class to experience Uncommon Worship. Third, this format will provide an opportunity for everyone to experience different kinds of worship, opening up another avenue in which we might feel God's presence on Sunday mornings at First Church.

If you have never attended an Uncommon Worship Service, let me take a moment to explain it to you. It is a "blended" worship service, pulling in elements of both traditional and contemporary worship. For example, the music is led by a band, a more contemporary practice, but the band plays many different genres of music, including hymns, which are obviously more traditional. Communion by intinction and candle lighting after Communion are also incorporated into each service in an effort to make it more interactive.

This service is not just for youth, it's for everyone. It's for all people who like the experience of both traditional and contemporary worship. And so you are invited. Come on out and experience Uncommon Worship, we think you'll find it uplifting and meaningful.

Rev. Kevin

UNCOMMON WORSHIP DATES FOR 2011-2012

November 6th at 10:00 a.m.
December 24th, 11:00 p.m. (note, this is the Christmas Eve late service)
Sunday, February 5th at 10:00 a.m.
Sunday, May 6th at 10:00 a.m.

First Church's Strategic Planning Summary: October 30th and Beyond

In previous Cornerstones, I've described the strategic planning process we've been pursuing at First Church since early this year. A very committed team of church members, led by John Wright after Billye Auclair moved out of town, has worked with an experienced church strategic planning consultant, Paul Nickerson, to identify and evaluate the key issues facing churches broadly, and our church specifically, as well as possible approaches to address these challenges. They've held discerning conversations with various groups inside the Church as well as "cottage meetings" of congregation members. From those sessions, the Strategic Planning Committee has identified, refined and narrowed the alternatives in front of us as we grapple with how best to develop and advance an updated vision of First Church.

In September, the Committee presented their preliminary findings and conclusions to the Executive Council, your elected leadership. In a series of follow-up discussions and focused meetings in September and October, the Executive Council discussed features of the Committee's draft plan as well as the issues associated with converting a potential strategic plan into an actual operating plan for the Church. After some final consultation with the Strategic Planning Committee, the Council has finalized a strategic plan document that, we believe, summarizes an exciting vision for First Church that builds on what we've always been but is also adapted to a significantly different world and future.

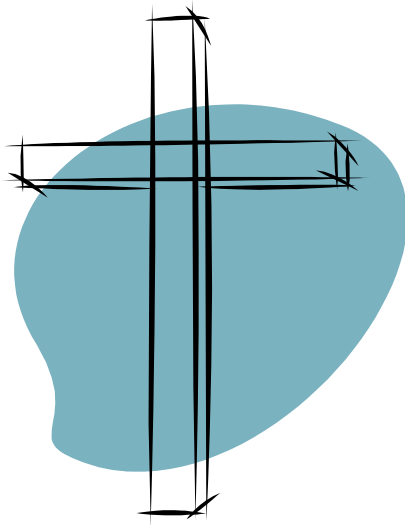
On October 30th, Paul Nickerson will join us and deliver a sermon on these themes. Immediately after the 10 AM service, in the Sanctuary, your Executive Council will present the strategic plan summary. We hope as many of you as possible can attend both the worship service and follow up meeting on that Sunday. In addition, over the course of November and early December, Council members will offer a number of meetings/ working sessions in which members of the congregation can learn more about and react to the proposed plan. We will also make copies available on the web site and in the church office. Over that time period, we hope to receive feedback such that we can finalize its key components in a special congregation meeting in December.

Your Executive Council is very excited about entering this new chapter in the life of First Church. We hope you will be as well and encourage your full and engaged participation in these discussions about the future of your Church.

Blessings:



William J. Goss



INTERESTED IN JOINING FIRST CHURCH?

Becoming a member of First Church means joining a community of faith as together we:

- *Engage in mission and outreach
- *Extend care to one another and
- *Explore our faith

Join us to get to know more about who we are and to meet others on this journey.

New Member Orientation in the Parsons' Study:

Session 1: Sunday, November 6th at 11:30 a.m. -1:30 p.m. with lunch and

Session 2: Tuesday November 15th 6:00-7:30 p.m. with light dinner

Childcare provided on request.

We will welcome new members during the 10:00 a.m. worship on Sunday, November 20th.

If you are interested, contact:

Roger Spear [860-651-4425](tel:860-651-4425), spear7@comcast.net

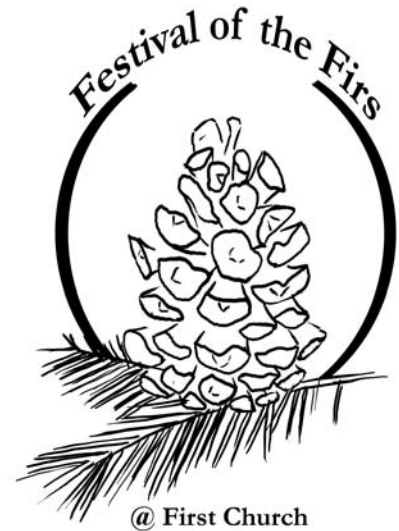
Cindy Braunlich [860-217-1810](tel:860-217-1810), cbraunlich@gmail.com

All are welcome!

Cindy

Simsbury Celebrates @ First Church

Saturday, November 26th
4:30—7:30 p.m.



First Church joins in the largest Community event of the year.

EVENTS

SANCTUARY

Silk City Chorus and
Women's Praise Choir

ON THE SECOND FLOOR

Youth Room—Jazz Coffee House
Interactive Children's Crafts
Wreath Gallery and Tea Cup Auction

LOWER PARKING LOT

First Church Tailgate Party with Foot Long Hot dogs

Many eager and willing volunteers are needed to make First Church efforts a success.

Undecorated artificial wreaths will be available in the church office beginning **November 1st** for individuals, families or groups who would like to decorate and donate them to the tea cup auction. Proceeds to benefit our local mission.

Interested? Contact Suzie Sabia at suzysabia@sbcglobal.net.

Church School News

Fall Church School



Nov 6th: Teacher / shepherd orientation breakfast, 9:30 a.m. in the Parlor.

Nov 20th: Christmas Service Parts assignment in Palmer Hall

Nov 26th: Simsbury Celebrates— Church School Holiday ornament craft, holiday card, or Reindeer mix making in Room 29.

Nov 27th: Mission Project in Palmer Hall Christmas stocking decorating and filling for Covenant to Care to distribute & a movie

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 November, the children will be learning about thanking God for food, friends, and family.

Pre-K Class (ages 3-4) The Pre-K class (Rm. 38) will be learning that “We Thank God” by doing crafts, playing games, and singing in the month of November. Students will start in church and be dismissed to their class after the children’s message. At 11:00-11:15 a.m., the children attend music in Room 37.

Kindergarten Class The Kindergarten class (Rm. 37) will be learning the Bible story about Abraham and Sarah through games, crafts, and activities. Students will start in church and be dismissed to the chapel after the children’s message. They have music from 11:00-11:15 a.m.

Rotation Program for Grades 1-6, Feast & Festivals, cont.:

The students will continue learning the Feasts & Festivals that Jesus celebrated: cooking; Rosh Hashanah; art: Hanukkah; movie: Sabbath: games: Passover, computer: Sukkot and review of the other festivals.

	B.L.A.S.T. Rm.35-Art	Mouse Pad Rm.32- Computers	Creation Station Rm.34-Cooking	Coliseum Rm.29- Games	Blockbuster Rm.27- Movie
Wk. 4 (11/6) PreK-6 Begin in Church	Gr. 3	No class	Gr. 5 Gr. 6	Gr. 1	Gr. 2 Gr. 4
Wk. 5 (11/13) PreK-6 Begin in Church	No class	Gr. 5 Gr. 6	Gr. 1	Gr. 2 Gr. 4	Gr. 3
Wk. 6 (11/20) PreK-6 Begin in Church	Gr. 5 Gr. 6	Gr. 1	Gr. 2 Gr. 4	Gr. 3	No class
Wk. 3 (11/27) PreK-6 Begin in Church, K-7 dismissed to Palmer Hall	Mission Project: Christmas Stockings for Covenant to Care & Christmas Movie, Palmer Hall				

Faith & the Family: How does family religious involvement benefit children, teens, and adults, and strengthen the family?

According to David Dollahite and Jennifer Thatcher, in their survey of research literature, the following benefits are a result of a family’s religious involvement:

- Better emotional and mental health
- The number of couple arguments and divorce rates are lower and marital satisfaction is higher in religiously involved couples
- Closer parent to child relationships and family satisfaction
- Religious parents are less likely to abuse or yell at their children and more likely to hug and praise their children
- Promotes more involved and responsible fathering and mothering
- Religious adolescents are less likely to engage in risky behaviors.

See <http://www.sutherlandinstitute.org/uploads/howfamilyreligiousinvolvementbenefits.pdf> for a copy of the study.

Thanksgiving prayers for families:

Thank the Lord

We thank the Lord
for what we eat
Bread and vegetables
dessert and meat.
We thank the Lord
on this Thanksgiving
For clothes and home,
our needs for living.
Amen.

Let's Be Thankful

(To the tune of Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star)

Let's be thankful for this day
For our friends and our play
Let's be thankful; let's be glad
For our food and the things we have
Let's give thanks for you and me
And our home and family.
Amen.

Fall Church School Mission Projects



Christmas stocking project for Covenant to Care

On November 27th, the kids will be decorating and filling stockings for kids under the supervision of the Department of Children & Families. We hope to make 24 stockings for elementary age students & 6 toddler & 6 infant stockings. The children's mission offering will be used to purchase the items.

Please bring in small items for toddler & infant stockings.



UNICEF: Please return your UNICEF boxes so we can help the children in need around the world.

Church School Christmas Service

December 18th, 10:00 a.m. in the Sanctuary



This year's theme: Santa's Favorite Story

Santa goes for a walk in the woods and falls asleep. The forest animals see Santa and think that Christmas is coming early this year so they call all their animal friends. Santa explains that Christmas is not early, he fell asleep because he was tired. Santa is worried that delivering Christmas presents this year might be too much for him. The forest animals are concerned that there will be no Christmas

without the gifts. However, Santa explains that Christmas is about Jesus' birth, not the gifts that they receive.

On **November 20th**, the students in grades 2-7 who are interested in participating in the service will be meeting in Palmer Hall at 11:20 a.m. to sign up for roles. These opportunities include: being in the sermon skit (above); read scripture, call to worship, or lighting the advent candle; usher; greeter, etc. All students will have a role in the service. Students in grades pre-K and Kindergarten are angels, 1st graders are sheep or nativity animals.

Rehearsal schedule:

Sunday morning, Dec 4th, during church school

Sunday morning Dec 11th, during church school

Saturday, morning Dec 17th, 9:00 a.m., Pancake Breakfast and 9:30 a.m.

Mandatory dress rehearsal

REV. KEVIN WEIKEL—YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY

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

JUNIOR FELLOWSHIP (for 7th and 8th graders)

Friday, November 4th **2:10-4:00 p.m.** We'll head to the church Youth Room for fellowship, snacks, games, Bible study and our traditional candle prayer.

Friday, November 18th **2:10-4:00 p.m. in the Youth Room.** Why do we say thanks? We'll explore what it means to give thanks to God and we'll count our blessings.

CONFIRMATION (for 8th graders)

Sunday, November 6th **8:15-11:00 a.m.** Large Group Meeting (Jesus) in Palmer Hall followed by worship in the sanctuary

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

Sunday, November 6th **7:00-9:00 p.m. in the Youth Room.** Join us for an exciting Scavenger Hunt!!

Friday, November 11th, 5:30 p.m. through Sunday, November 13th at 1:00 p.m.
PF Youth Group Fall Retreat!

Sunday, November 20th **7:00-9:00 p.m. in the Youth Room.** Why is it important to be thankful? On this last PF before Thanksgiving, we'll explore why it's important to give thanks to God and we'll spend some time counting our blessings.

Sunday, November 27th **No PF Youth Group (Thanksgiving Weekend)**

“I Love to Tell the Story...”

“I Love To Tell the Story...” is a monthly column featuring personal stories by First Church members and friends about the ways this church has made a difference in their life and faith.”

Can I count myself blessed?

For the last few weeks we have been talking about our blessings and how to thank God! These words have allowed me to feel blessed and to know that the more we give the more our ministry can do. Yes, I know: heat, lights, snow plowing and repairs are all part of how we take care of ourselves; we do that so we can take care of others.

Recently I feel *more blessed* than usual. It's because one early morning at 5:50 a.m., I interrupted the sleep of a homeless man, a man sleeping in the bus shelter on Iron Horse Blvd. I heard a noise as I approached the shelter to wait for the bus. I peeked in and what I saw was a man, his radio and an overstuffed backpack. They were all huddled into the corner trying to keep out of the rain.

At first I wanted to pull back, hide or maybe even run away... But the children of the church, the First Church children had taught me better. The examples they had set for me became clear in the next second. Their mission stories, their work at South Park Inn, their ability to accept others and open their hearts had made a difference. I also wanted to make a difference and right then I had a chance to do that. So rather than back away I went inside the shelter and sat down.

“So sorry I woke you. Did I scare you?” I asked. I would later learn his name: Michael. “No no....not at all,” and he smiled. We talked until the bus arrived. I quickly handed him money for breakfast. He accepted with grace and appreciation. I told him, “See you next week!” and boarded the bus.

I thought about him all week. Was he wet? Was he cold? Did he eat? The next week, I woke up even earlier than usual so I could make him a warm breakfast. I could not wait to bring it to him. I made him eggs and bacon on an English muffin, a banana, an orange and an apple.

IT FEELS SO GOOD TO GIVE! I felt blessed to feed him, visit with him and share some of the blessings that God has so generously given to me.

First money; then breakfast; and now breakfast, some fruit, a sandwich and a granola bar.

The giving keeps growing and so does the good feeling!
THANK YOU GOD AND PLEASE COUNT ME BLESSED!
Maybe next week I will include some apple pie.

Penny Roskin

Mission: 1

11.1.11 - 11.11.11

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

That they may all be 1

Join UNITED CHURCH of CHRIST congregations across the country on a shared mission for 11 powerful days to feed the hungry and confront food-related injustice. This is MISSION: 1

Hunger Is Everywhere

In the U.S. and CT, 14.6% of our households struggle to put food on the table. One in four of our children are hungry.

In the World, 925,000,000 people are hungry. Each day 16,000 children die from hunger-related causes - that's one child every five seconds.

What is the United Church of Christ doing about it?

- **In 11 days**, the United Church of Christ will collect more than 1 MILLION ITEMS OF HEALTHY FOOD for food banks.
- **In 11 days**, the United Church of Christ will offer more than 11,111 LETTERS to Congress asking our government to reform U.S. foreign assistance in a way that more effectively benefits hungry and poor people worldwide.
- **Most importantly**, our UCC motto and Jesus' prayer "that they may all be 1" will become a focused mission emphasis across the whole United Church of Christ, as we:
 - **Educate** ourselves about food-related policy issues;
 - **Advocate** on behalf of hungry people here and around the world;
 - **Raise money** for hunger-action purposes; *and*
 - **Share bread** - and tuna, and peanut butter, and vegetables, and cereal - with our neighbors in need.

What can you do?

You can really make a difference in reducing hunger here in Simsbury and worldwide:

1. **WRITE a letter** to your U.S. Representatives asking our government to reform US foreign aid to better benefit hungry and poor people worldwide. **See the sample letters and simple instructions inserted in this issue of the Cornerstone.**
2. **DONATE food** at First Church that will be given to the Simsbury Food Pantry. Collections boxes will be in the Narthex, by the Parsons' Study and in Palmer Hall.

Items most needed include:

Chunky Soups
Spaghetti Sauce
Hash
Jelly
Tuna
Cereals
Tea
Coffee (ground)

Maple Syrup
Rice
Chow Mein
Corned Beef
Saltine Crackers
Canned Juices
Canned Stews

Pancake Mix
Canned Fruit
Peanut Butter
Canned Hams
(no refrigeration required)

Look for no-sugar-added, lower salt and whole grain options.

3. **MAKE a financial donation** (checks should be made out to "First Church" - "Mission 1" in the memo line) and the money will be used to purchase additional food for the Pantry.
4. **LEARN more** about food-related policy issues by accessing ucc.org/mission1 AND www.bread.org

Food will be received and blessed during worship

October 30th – Children invited to bring food forward during the Children's Time

November 6th – Food will be presented during the 10:00 a.m. Uncommon Worship

November 13th - All donations and letters will be blessed at 8:30 and 10:00 a.m. services.

OUR GOAL IS to collect 1,111 food items and as many letters as possible!

Mission:1

11.1.11 - 11.11.11

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

That they may all be 1

**Letter-Writing Campaign
To relieve global hunger**

Will you help?

November 1-11, 2011,
United Church of Christ Congregations around the
country will be writing 111,111 letters to
Congress as part of:

**Mission:1
11 Powerful Days to Feed the Hungry**

*Will you prayerfully consider writing a letter to your U.S. representatives,
asking our government to reform US foreign aid to better benefit hungry
and poor people worldwide?*

HERE'S HOW:

Date at the top and Sign the enclosed letters (on ivory-colored paper) to Senator Lieberman and Representative Murphy (NOTE: space allowed for two letters, but you can also write to Senator Blumenthal. Find those letters at fellowship hour).

Consider adding a short, hand-written note. For example: *“As a person of faith, I believe we are called to work against hunger.”* OR *“Thank you for taking this matter seriously. I am grateful for your thoughtful attention!”*

Fill in your address under your name.

Bring Your completed letters to the church office weekdays between 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. or to Fellowship Hour on October 30th, November 6th and November 13th.

Letters will be blessed on November 13th, then The Board of Mission and Outreach will mail them.

Thank you for your faithful witness!

The Honorable Joseph Lieberman
United States Senate
706 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510

Dear Senator Lieberman,

As Congress and the Super Committee work to reduce our nation's deficits, I urge you to create a circle of protection around programs for hungry and poor people in the United States and around the world.

The numbers are staggering. Millions of families in the United States continue to feel the effects of the recession—nearly one in six people in our country are poor. Around the world, nearly 1 billion people are hungry, and one child dies every 3.6 seconds from poverty, hunger, and preventable diseases. This isn't the time for Congress to cut programs that provide vital assistance to those in need.

Programs for hungry and poor people make up only a fraction of the federal budget, but they have a tremendous impact. The Earned Income Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit keep millions of families out of poverty, reward work, and promote economic mobility. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly food stamps) has responded quickly and effectively to need, preventing an increase in the percentage of families struggling to put food on the table for three consecutive years.

International poverty-focused development assistance reduces the likelihood of conflict and strengthens our national security. Moreover, cuts to poverty-focused development assistance will restrict our ability to respond to humanitarian emergencies, such as the ongoing famine in the Horn of Africa.

We must do all we can to reduce the budget deficit but not on the backs of the most vulnerable people. As you consider deficit-reduction proposals, I ask you to take a balanced and fair approach and consider all areas of the budget, including revenues. Please form a circle of protection around funding for hungry and poor people at home and abroad.

Sincerely,

The Honorable Chris Murphy
US House of Representatives
412 Cannon House Office Building
Washington DC 20515

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Music Notes

Halloween is nigh, if not past, and our annual "Holiday Season" is upon us. What that means for church music is preparation for Thanksgiving services, the Advent season, Christmas pageants and ultimately our many and varied Christmas services.

A lot has happened so far - the Silk City benefit in October netted the Fatic Family Fund over \$1,100.00 - a great success. We thank you all for your support, and we thank Jim Kew for organizing this event.



There is a lot more to take place, though, and much music to be learned. Some things to keep in mind:

- November 20th, Sunday morning - our traditional Thanksgiving Sunday morning service, with bells (no whistles) and choirs.
- November 20th, Sunday evening - First Church is hosting this year's town-wide inter-faith Thanksgiving service. Our Adult and Junior choirs are combining with many other church choirs and musicians in what is looking to be a musical cast of thousands. This should prove to be a wonderful, effective celebration of Thanksgiving.
- November 26th, Saturday evening - Women's Praise Choir does their annual presentation at Simsbury Celebrates at 5:30 p.m. in our Sanctuary. We will finish by 6:15 p.m., and on either side (at 4:30 and 6:30) will be the Silk City Chorus. If you didn't catch their concert, it was terrific. This is your chance to hear what you missed.
- December 3rd, Saturday evening - The mighty and exquisite Farmington Valley Chorale performs their winter program in our Sanctuary. We are truly honored to be hosting them, and this is going to be an event of the highest quality. It should probably sell out, so buy your tickets early, through the Farmington Valley Chorale (we will try to have some here as well.)
- December 24th, Christmas Eve services take place. We are already rehearsing music and we would love to have anyone with us that would like to be a part.

We are also looking to make several changes in our Adult Choir strategy, and, if you have not already heard, here is what we will be doing: We realize that there are many out there who would love to sing with us, but because of various reasons, can't make either a Thursday rehearsal, or services on each and every Sunday. We do not want your desire and talent to languish. Therefore, every four to five weeks, we will be having a Sunday morning "pick-up" choir, which hopefully will have been named by then. We will gather, much like the summer choir, for an hour before the service to rehearse two anthems and service music. Here's the difference: we will get you the music ahead of time, and you will have time to take a look at it and do as much advance work as you can, in order to be ready on Sunday. The anthems will be a little more challenging, and this will lessen our time for note-learning, and we will all be able to present the anthems in a way that is more fulfilling and meaningful to you. If you have a problem working on your own, the Chancel Choir will be rehearsing the pieces during Thursday rehearsals, and you are invited to attend just at the beginning to learn these pieces. If this is difficult, a choir member will be happy to partner with you to help you learn the pieces at a time that is mutually convenient, like a Sunday after church, or even on a day during

Music Notes (cont.)

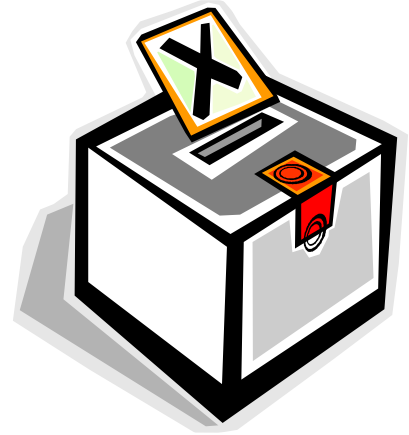
the week. I will let you know as soon as possible, and in as many ways as possible, which Sundays we will be doing this so that you can check your plans. Oh, and by the way - we will not wear robes on those Sundays. Just sayin'.

We are also re-organizing our Occasional Choir. We have found that, even though there are individuals who like to sing in a smaller group with lighter music and like to do presentations in church on an "occasional" basis, to rehearse each week is a challenge, as well as to find Sundays on a regular basis when everyone is available to sing. So we are looking to make our structure and schedule a little less formal in hopes that more might be able to take advantage of making music like this. Therefore, we will not be rehearsing on our regular Thursday evenings at this point; however, I would like very much to hear from you if this type of musical group is attractive to you. We can work out the frequency of our presentations, (maybe even just four or so per year) and we can all rehearse the pieces we choose at a time when we can all get together. A group like this can also rehearse in people's living rooms (if you have a piano) perhaps with some refreshments, so we could conceivably be a little more "socially" oriented as well.

Additionally, I have found that there are more than a few people who like to get together to learn and sing madrigals and motets, and, this might be a good concept for this type of group as well. Also, there has been interest expressed for a Men's Choir, along the lines of Women's Praise Choir. Let me know if you are interested in any of these so that we can begin to make plans. It's good to get together to make music on a chilly fall or winter evening.

Mark

**FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST IN SIMSBURY
OPEN AND AFFIRMING STUDY TEAM**



THE BOX

In May, the Board of Elders commissioned a Study Team to explore both the importance and implications of being an Open and Affirming congregation and also the desires and concerns of the congregation regarding the process and acceptance of the ONA designation. Every congregation undertaking this journey has approached it as a dialogue – a sharing of information, ideas, concerns, and lots of questions. During the coming months, we anticipate many open forums for this dialogue. It is our hope and intention that all voices and views be considered and honored in this process. But recognizing that not everyone can be present or comfortable in such a setting, we encourage you to share your questions and concerns by way of THE BOX, which is located at the church office entrance.

These principles will guide all our conversation:

1. We celebrate that our congregational heritage invites us to take up and wrestle with important and complex matters of faith, recognizing that we will not all agree and that there is ample room for differing views, *and*
2. We are committed to tending to each other in this process, to listening deeply and honoring one another's contributions.

Please join our conversations, share your views and questions, either in person, through THE BOX, or hopefully both. Be curious, creative, and thoughtful. Most of all...

Think outside the box!



OPEN and AFFIRMING PROGRAM BEGINS in NOVEMBER

Our church's Open and Affirming program will begin on Nov. 13th in Palmer Hall, with a presentation, question and answer period immediately following the 10:00 AM service.

This opening session, with our Guest Speaker, Rev. Rick Huleat, Windsor UCC, Open & Affirming for > 15 years, will address:

What does it mean to be an Open & Affirming Church?

How did we get here?

Why are we considering O&A?

What is being planned?

All are cordially invited to attend, actively question the speakers, and embark on informal round table discussions, stimulated by finger food.

In the meantime, we encourage any and all questions be directed to members of the Open and Affirming Study Team, or dropped in our O&A Mailbox outside of the Church Office.

Susan Babcock, Sara Batchelder, Paul Bryant, Mia Capobianco,
Betty Keirstead, Steve Osborn, Shelley Pilsbury, Steve Towles



UCC GLOBAL MINISTRIES COLOMBIA PRESENTATION

On Sept. 27th, I joined a group of about 20 people to hear an enlightening presentation on the many challenges facing the Colombian people, especially those who are impoverished and live in rural areas.

Michael Joseph, a missionary with UCC Global Ministries, who lives in Bogota, Colombia gave us an overview of his work in offering protection to church leaders and lay people living in life threatening situations. Having representatives from UCC is a comfort for people who face almost insurmountable challenges in survival and safety. The rural areas are extremely poor and dangerous places to live. One of the people's greatest challenges is dealing with unresolved land ownership. The other part of this equation is the violence driven by the various warring paramilitary groups who threaten, extort, rape and murder civilians.

One story that struck me was of a terrible massacre by a paramilitary group who murdered 15 members of a community and raped many of their women. As missionaries worked with the women who survived this terrible tragedy, quilting seemed to be a way for them to express themselves and provided some therapy. Viewed from a distance, they created a stunning quilt of bright colors...but up close, the quilt depicted the savagery they experienced explicitly. Michael brought a quilt made just recently by this same group of women, which is one that depicts hope.

My impression is that in spite of the dire challenges, there is hope. The new president is dealing more forthrightly with the land issues, there is support and help provided by UCC and a more enlightened wider community and, finally, the hopeful spirit of the Colombian people persists.

Nancy Wadhams



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 at 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 (4:30 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: November 12th, December 10th

FROM THE BOARD OF CHRISTIAN CONCERN



The Christmas Gift Program has been a tradition at First Church for about 16 years. Through our involvement with Covenant to Care for Children, our church works with social workers whose clients are abused, neglected or impoverished. Included in this list are teen mothers and children who are mentored through our mentoring program here at First Church. The social workers and mentors provide us the names of these children and gift suggestions for each. The gift requests are written on tags that you may select starting Sunday, November 13th and continuing through Sunday, December 4th. Gift tags will be available for you to choose from outside the Parlor and Palmer Hall. During that time period you will shop, wrap and attach the tag(s) to the gift(s) you have chosen.

Collection day is *Sunday, December 11th in the church parlor from 8:00 a.m.-12:00 Noon*. The social workers will pick up the gifts and distribute them to the families. It is important to return the gift on time as it is difficult to get the gift to the child after the collection date. Your gift may be the only gift the child or family receives at Christmas so your generosity is greatly appreciated. The families know that these gifts are being given by our church, and for many it says that the people of God do care and He is with them during difficult times.

This mission project allows the whole congregation to participate and touches many lives as well. Thank you!

October 2011 Executive Council Summary

1. Susan Babcock provided an update of progress by the Open and Affirming Ministry Study team. She summarized that the focus since their launch in March was on learning and organizing the process of exploring an ONA commitment. She agreed to keep the Executive Council informed of the Study Team's progress and key milestones.
2. Discussion was held on the Strategic Plan and the conclusions reached at the special meeting of the Executive Council held on September 19th. The Executive Council concluded that the vast majority of the Strategic Plan prepared by the Strategic Planning Committee was highly valuable and consistent with the views and expectations of the Executive Council. It was agreed that a summary document of the plan submission would be prepared and that a timeline of implementation would be prepared to assure that the desired outcomes occur consistent with the summarized outcomes. President Goss agreed to develop a proposed timeline for action by the Executive Council.
3. The nomination of Dick Burns to the Board of Trustees was approved.
4. Janice Johnson, Co-Chair of the Board of Personnel, presented the Board of Personnel's health benefit recommendation for staff that was based on the UCC plan options. After some discussion, the recommendation was approved by the Executive Council.
5. A special meeting of the Executive Council was scheduled for October 17th to receive and act on the recommendations from the Fatic family support team.

Bill Ketchabaw
Clerk



HISTORICALLY SPEAKING

*What Was Life Like?
How Were These People?*

The Connection of First Church to the Town of Simsbury and to the Simsbury Historical Society.

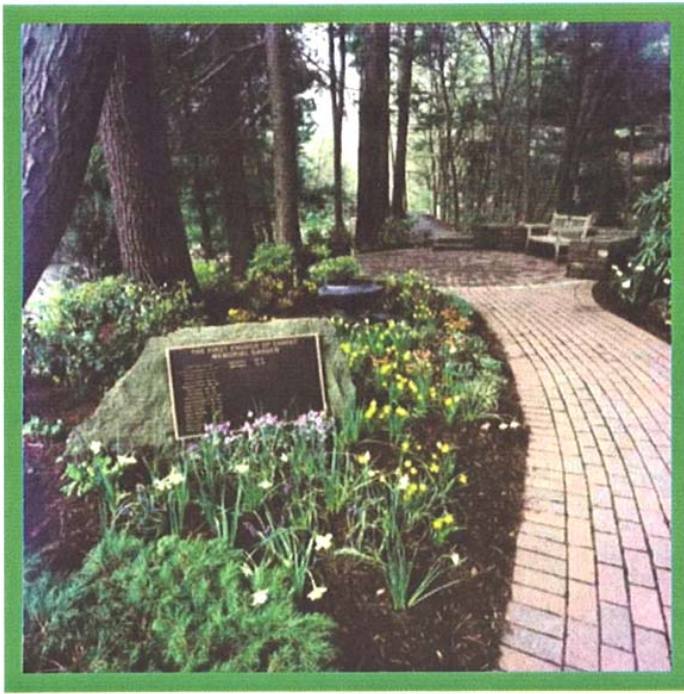
Many of you attended the celebration at the *Simsbury Historical Society* on Saturday, October 15th marking the one hundredth birthday of the Society. Many people from *First Church* have been involved with it for all those years and were for this celebration as well. As I sat spinning on my spinning wheel, I recognized many faces from this church. The Society has preserved many objects to record the history of this town of Simsbury and also of this church. In the early years, the *town was run by the church* as it was in all towns in the colony of Connecticut. Citizens of Simsbury had been given permission to form a new parish by the colonial government that was run by the Congregational Church. In *1818, the State voted to separate church and state* and have only the state and local government run the civil affairs of the towns. In 1839, Simsbury finally built its own town hall to hold town meetings and no longer met at the church. Today it is called Boy Scout Hall.

Over the years that the *Society* has been operating, they have collected many documents, books, photos, newspaper articles, copies of wills, and artifacts that document town history. They have many things now that technically are owned by the church but have been faithfully preserved there. In the 1940's, someone loaned the Society six silver chalices with hearts at the base of the handles. We have a copy of the original loan agreement in our archives. We presently have two of the chalices and one is used for communion. The other four are still kept at the Society. If this loan had not occurred, it is doubtful that we would have any of them today. So we owe them a debt of gratitude for keeping them safe all these years. Over the years, we have helped each other answer questions about our history by exchanging information and books and documents. When they publish a book that would be helpful to us, they give us a copy and we have given them copies of books and documents that we have published. These items are kept in the church archives collection.

Town Hall also keeps old records of the town meetings, vital statistics, wills, property records, etc. Before the advent of statehood and separation of the church and the state governments, the records were kept by the minister at the church and were the only source of information on births, marriages, deaths and church membership. These records are still available for research and are invaluable for genealogists and historians. Carolyn Keily, our Town Clerk, is always friendly and helpful to researchers who show up at Town Hall and need help. She is also a member of First Church.

Since 1911, the relationship between First Church, the town of Simsbury and the Historical Society has, for the most part, been close and mutually supportive. Members of one are frequently members of two and sometimes all three. This too can be documented by the town, the church and the Simsbury Historical Society. I would like to personally wish the Society another one hundred years of successfully keeping the records of Simsbury.

Donna M. Hopkins Church Historian Imagine 2111 and how this town will look and how daily life will be. Will we even have books, photos, paper documents and newspapers then?



First Church of Christ Memorial Garden

It has come to the attention of the Memorial Garden Committee that many of you do not know much about our Memorial Garden. Here are some excerpts from the brochure that is available from the office, our Ministers, or a member of the committee.

First—Where is it? If you go out of the Sanctuary at the upper level parking lot and turn right, you will see our Memorial Rock.

The purpose of the Memorial Garden is to provide a portion of church property for the caring disposition of the cremated remains of our loved ones in a beautiful, dignified, and meditative setting. Present and former members and friends of First Church of Christ, Simsbury may use the Garden.

We have engraved memorial plates with the name, year of birth and death mounted permanently on a plaque at the entrance to the garden. We also have a Memorial Book of Remembrance in the Church Parlor on the antique communion table. It contains a page for a picture and copy of the newspaper obituary of the deceased.

The Boy Scouts made and donated the steps leading to the lower level parking lot.

Come and see why we are so proud and grateful for all the donations making the Garden a place of beauty, solitude and serenity.

Questions may be answered by our Clergy or Members of the committee.

Betty Keirstead, Anita McCoy, Donna Hopkins, Carla Wilde, Diana Woodberry/Jim Block & Peg Psarakis, Consultants

First Church of Christ, Simsbury

MEN'S BREAKFAST

Tuesday, November 15, 2011

Breakfast **Menu**

Buttermilk Pancakes
Bacon
REAL Maple Syrup
Plenty o' Coffee
Fruit
OJ

*Come...
and bring
a friend!*



WAYS to SIGN UP

During Coffee Hour

**Calling Church Office
at 651-3593**

**or by emailing
jonathan.morgan@
1stchurchsimsbury.org**

RSVP by November 12

COST: \$ 5.00

Men's Breakfast

Tuesday, November 15th

7:00 a.m. ~ 8:30 a.m.

Palmer Hall

*Come and be part of this important
discussion around future Men's Ministry
offering in the near future.*

First Church of Christ
689 Hopmeadow St
Simsbury CT 06070
860-651-3593
Fax 408-9229
Kitchen 658-9043

STAFF

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

Rev. Kevin Weikel
Associate Minister for
Youth and Young Adults
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Rev. Alison Buttrick
Patton
Associate Minister of
Parish Life and Outreach
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Dir. of Music Ministries
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Ms Ann Gallion
Church Secretary
Ann.gallion@
1stchurchsimsbury.org

Ms. Darlene Davis
Church Secretary
Darlene.davis@
1stchurchsimsbury.org

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



It is not too early to reserve a Sunday during this 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.

**RETIRED MEN'S LUNCHEON
2011-2012 SCHEDULE**

Second Tuesday each month, as follows:

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

Join us!

**FELLOWSHIP HOUR SCHEDULE
FOR NOVEMBER, 2011**

11/6/11 Open and Affirming —Nancy Yannopoulos,
Diane Jones
11/13/11 Board of Finance (Marguerite Boslaugh, D. Fesco,
Dick Meyer)
11/20/11 Supper Club (Bob & Fran Gauthier)
11/27/11 Thanksgiving Weekend—No Fellowship Hour

