

WEEK OF 4.19.09 AT FIRST CHURCH

Sun. 4.19.09	10 am – Worship and Sunday School
Wed. 4.22.09	7:00 pm – Bible Study in the Parlor
Thurs. 4.23.09	7:30 pm - Adult Choir
Sat. 4.25.09	Rebuilding Together

WEEK OF 4.26.09 AT FIRST CHURCH

Sun. 4.26.09	10 am – Worship and Sunday School Guest Minister, Davida Crabtree; Confirmation Class to Attend Worship 6:30 pm – Youth Group
Mon. 4.27.09	10 am - Newsletter Deadline 6:00 pm – UCC Central Association Meeting
Tues. 4.28.09	4:00 pm – Societies’ Committee Meeting 7:00 pm – Council Meeting
Wed. 4.29.09	7:00 pm – Bible Study in the Parlor
Thurs. 4.30.09	7:30 pm - Adult Choir



Thank-you Mary Hannifan! FUN at First Church returned with Craft Night, when Mary hosted an enjoyable evening of decorating some beautiful Easter eggs. Hmmmm.....who will volunteer to be the next Craft Night hostess? Is anyone interested in teaching Knitting 101, Scrapbooking Basics, or any other craft?

ADULT BIBLE STUDY

Do you realize that you can attend **Adult Bible Study** for one or more lessons? You do not need to attend all sessions. During each lesson, a different parable will be studied. Come on down Wednesday, April 15th at 7:00 p.m. . . . and any, or all, Wednesdays until May 20th. ~ Charlie S.

MAKING FRIENDS OF CHURCH NUMBERS

This is a one-day seminar for pastors, lay leaders, and church members who want to better understand and manage church finances. It is being held on Saturday, April 25, from 9:00 A.M. to 2:00 P.M. at the First Church of Christ in West Hartford. Several of our leaders are planning to attend. If you would like to attend as well, please call the church office as soon as possible. We need to make reservations. ~ Rev. Jack

CENTRAL ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MEETING

We are hosting the Annual Meeting of the Central Association UCC on Monday, April 27; a social hour will be held at 6:00 P.M., followed by dinner at 6:30 P.M., then worship and the meeting at 7:15 P.M. The cost of the dinner is \$7.00 All are invited! Please call the church office by April 22 to make a reservation. ~ Rev. Jack



CONFERENCE MINISTER TO VISIT FIRST CHURCH

Please mark your calendars for Sunday, April 26, when the Rev. Dr. Davida Foy Crabtree, Conference Minister of the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ, will be our guest at First Church. She will preach the sermon in morning worship, visit with our members and friends during the coffee hour, and then meet with our leadership over lunch. Her biography follows . . . please attend! ~ Rev. Jack

The Rev. Dr. Davida Foy Crabtree
Conference Minister of the Connecticut Conference of the UCC

Education

Litchfield (CT) High School, 1962
Marietta College B.A., 1967
Andover Newton Theological School ~ M.Div. cum laude, 1972
Hartford Seminary ~ D.Min. with distinction, 1989
Ordained September 17, 1972 ~ Married to David Hindinger

Experience

Connecticut Conference, Conference Minister ~ July 1996 to present
Southern California, Conference Minister ~ 1991-1996
Senior Minister, Colchester (CT) Federated Church ~ 1980-1991
Minister & Director, Greater Hartford Campus Ministry ~ 1976-1980

Author

The Empowering Church: How One Congregation Supports Lay People’s Ministries in the World (Alban Institute, 1989)

Awards

Walter Everett Humanitarian Award, 2007
Antoinette Brown Award for Excellence in Ministry
United Church of Christ General Synod, 1977
“Somos Uno” Award ~ from United Neighborhoods Organization of East Los Angeles, 1995

Recent Leadership Responsibilities

Board of Trustees, Andover Newton Theological School
Board of Directors, Amistad America, Inc.
Board of Directors, Christian Conference of Connecticut
Former Chairperson, Conference Ministers United Church of Christ
Chair, Board of Directors, United Church of Christ Insurance Board
E-Mail Address ~ dfc@ctucc.org

The Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ
125 Sherman Street Hartford, Connecticut 06105
(860) 233-5564 Toll Free in CT (866) 367-2822



Thank-you to Susan Rathgeber, for hosting the April 5th Gallery Opening. Thanks, to Peg Guilbault and everyone who helped with hospitality. Thank you, also, to Julie Zink and everyone who baked; the treats were delicious!

QUARTERLY GIVING STATEMENTS

"Please Help FCC Save Postage: Your quarterly giving statements will be available in the narthex on Sunday, April 19th for pick up. Every 42 cents helps! Thank-you!" ~ Lynn A.

NEW MEMBER RECEPTION:

We will be receiving new members into our family of faith on Sunday, May 17, 2009. If you would like to join First Church at this time, please speak to Rev. Cook or call the church office at 860-229-3709. All are invited!

GEORGE HARRIS’ INSTALLATION

Members of First Church are cordially invited to attend the installation of The Reverend George Harris, as Lead Pastor of South Congregational ~ First Baptist Church. It will be held on Sunday, April 26 at 4:00 pm at the South Church Sanctuary, 90 Main Street, New Britain, CT. A reception will follow in Cooper Hall. ~ Rev. Jack

IN OUR FIRST CHURCH FAMILY

Our thoughts and prayers are with Phil Madore on the passing of his father, Dick Madore, on April 7. Calling hours will be from 5 – 8 pm, on April 23, with the funeral service at 10:30 am, on April 24 at Bailey Funeral Home, 48 Broad Street, Plainville, CT.

THE NEW BRITAIN FOOD SECURITY COLLABORATIVE

COME CELEBRATE

WHEN: April 20, 2009 ~TIME: 4 – 6 pm ~Brief Program at 5:00
WHERE: New Britain Food and Resource Center ~ 460 Osgood Ave.
RSVP before 4/14/09 by calling Flor at (860) 827-8295

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR REBUILDING TOGETHER

First Church continues our tradition of helping members in the community on Saturday April 25th. This year we will be working at the home of David Haroian at 45 Kenwood Dr New Britain. Our list includes painting, cleaning, fixing front steps, electrical work, window cleaning, and the First Church tradition of a yard transformation. This year we need your help. Our volunteers have diminished in the past few years. Please come for the day or part of the day. Any help, makes a huge difference in the life, of these people, in our local community. Sign up forms will be in the church office. Contact Glenn A. or Pete O. Thank you. ~ Glenn A.



Dear Church School Parents...

As you know, the final Sunday school event of the year is held on Children's Sunday. This year the date will be Sunday, June 21st, which is also Father's Day! (perhaps a tribute to Dads?!) The goal is to have as much participation by the children as possible, BUT...that can only happen if they are here to prepare and rehearse. We will begin some of that preparation in May, but the KEY dates for rehearsal will be Sunday, June 7th and Sunday, June 14th – with the possibility of a Thursday evening rehearsal as well. If you would like your child to participate to his/her fullest potential, please plan to be available on those dates!

Thank you to Aaron Mangan, Sarah Mangan, Caitlyn Schulz, John Thomas, Jr., and Brian Thomas for being our egg-hiders for the Annual Egg Hunt! It was *COLD* out there!

Thank you to Tori Anderson, Samantha Armitage and her friend Ryan, and Olivia Ohanesian for their assistance in the toddler room on Easter Sunday. It was "hopping" in room 2!

And thank you to everyone who made a contribution to the Heifer Mission Project. **We raised \$285!** That's a lot of barnyard animals for Heifer International.

Calling all graduates!

It's time to catch up on the milestones of our students. If you have a member of your family who will be graduating this spring, please email me that information at sharon830@snet.net. We will need the name, daughter/son of, where they are graduating from, and future plan(s), if any. The deadline for submitting your information is Wednesday, May 6th!

See you in church,
Sharon Chamberlain
Coordinator of Christian Education

FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST

APRIL 15, 2009

NEW BRITAIN, CT

Dear Friends,

A familiar gospel song, sung often in this season we call Eastertide, asks the question, "You ask me how I know he lives?" and then boldly answers, "He lives within my heart!" This question lifted up in song is in fact the compelling question of these "low" Sundays after Easter—How can one know and believe that Christ is risen? In fact, the gospel story of Thomas' questioning unbelief is the traditional lesson for the very first Sunday after Easter.

To be sure, these fundamental questions of our faith never go away. Can we believe it all over again this week, when the lilies begin to lose their bloom, the crowds are way smaller, and the alleluias are somewhat faint? Indeed, how can anyone in this modern day and age believe that Christ still lives and that because he lives, we shall live also?

We all want to know it in the same way we know that $2 + 2 = 4$. We all want to trust it just as we trust sunset and sunrise. But, as I have said before, knowledge is not the same as belief. To say "I believe" is not the same as to say "I know."

In this moment of history, strongly influenced and perhaps controlled by science and reason, rational inquiry is trusted more than religious teaching. Time was when the pronouncement of the church, as we would say "ex-cathedra," was the unquestioned foundation for belief. But after the Protestant Reformation, the scriptures were available to all; and anyone kindly disposed to the Word of God was considered capable of teaching true doctrine.

The personality cults are thriving now. Television personalities, popular preachers, respected theologians, and even movie stars and sports heroes are trusted for giving the "word of truth."

In the old days, Sunday School classes were likely to conclude, "Well, you can't know. You just have to believe, you know. Believe it in your heart, you know. Just like the song says, 'He lives within my heart!'" But we do not *know*, and that is what makes the lesson so vitally important year after year.

These are important points. The insistent quest and question—"I won't believe unless..." The personal encounter with truth—"Reach out your hand..." And the importance of the witnesses. We are still dependent on the first witnesses of the resurrection and the Gospel record for our resurrection faith. Indeed, "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe." *We* are *those*!

Come to church on Sunday, April 19; and we'll look again at the story of "Doubting Thomas" (John 20: 19-31) and ask the question of my sermon title—"Are the doors shut or open?"

See you in church! Blessings always!

Jack

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OFFICE AND GALLERY HOURS

Monday - Thursday 9:00 am – 3:00 pm
Friday 9:00 am – 12:00 pm.

Please go to our website, www.firstnewbritain.org for staff contact information

Copies of sermons and additional newsletters are available in the information rack outside the church office.