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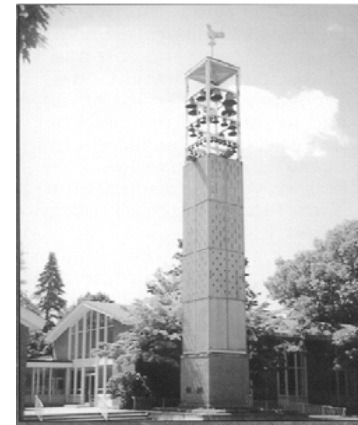
First Church website - www.firstnewbritain.org

First Church News

First Church of Christ, Congregational United Church of Christ

830 Corbin Avenue
New Britain, CT 06052
860-229-3709
www.firstnewbritain.org

March 2010



UPCOMING LENTEN AND EASTER DATES

- Wednesday, March 3, Pot Luck Supper at 6:00, followed by a program at 7:00, entitled “Bible 101.”
- Wednesday, March 17, at 6:00, Pot Luck Supper, followed by “Jesus 101” at 7:00.
- Sunday, March 28, Palm Sunday
- Thursday, April 1, Traditional Soup and Bread Supper at 6:00, followed at 7:00 by a Maundy Thursday Service of Communion and Tenebrae in the Sanctuary.
- Friday, April 2, Building Closed in observance of Good Friday
- Sunday, April 4, Easter Sunday and Communion Sunday; with a Second Hour Egg Hunt for the Children

First Church provides worship and education that deepen the understanding and living of the Christian faith to promote spiritual growth, hospitality, and service to others.

OFFICE and GALLERY HOURS

Monday - Thursday 9:00 am – 3:00 pm
Friday 9:00 am – Noon

PROGRAM STAFF

The Rev. Jack Cook, Senior Minister
Sharon Chamberlain, Coordinator of Christian Education
James Gower, Director of Music Ministries
Sarah Flythe, Coordinator of Youth Programming

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.

GREETINGS FROM THE PASTOR

Dear Friends,

One of the highlights of the Lenten season in churches of many different denominations across our country is the annual One Great Hour of Sharing Special Mission Offering. We'll be receiving that offering on Sunday, March 14, 2010.

The OGHS Offering, administered by Wider Church Ministries, is the refugee, relief, and development fund of the United Church of Christ. It supports international programs of health, education, and agricultural development, and emergency relief to people in more than eighty countries. For example, in the aftermath of the earthquake, OGHS dollars went immediately to Haiti.

The 2010 OGHS theme is inspired by John 21:15-17, when Jesus asks Peter, "Do you love me?" If you know this scripture, you may remember that after Peter confesses to loving Jesus, Jesus tells him, "Feed my sheep." We too are called to care for all who are in need, just as God cares for each of us.

In his last moments with his disciples, three times over, Jesus passionately repeated his instructions to them: "If you love me, take care of the people I so deeply love. Live your love for me by actively tending those for whom I have sacrificed everything."

We are called now to show our love by doing the following: give food to the hungry, clean water to the thirsty, clothing to the naked, healthcare to the sick; welcome the refugee and the stranger (Matthew 25: 34-40); share strength and refuge with the fearful (Psalm 28:8-9); rescue those in danger (Ezekiel 34:10); and bring justice to the oppressed (Ezekiel 34:16).

When we share the resources we have, lives change!

But in challenging economic times, such as these, we often wonder how much we can afford to sacrifice to help feed Jesus' sheep, when our own needs are barely being met. Perhaps only through prayer, can that question be answered. Do you recall the feeding of the 5,000? When Jesus asked the disciples to feed the hungry crowd, the disciples despaired (Mark 6: 34-44). The five loaves and two fish seemed insignificant compared to the massive need. Yet with God's blessing, what seemed like so little, turned into a miracle of compassion for all.

Through One Great Hour of Sharing, our gifts meet compelling needs, while also bringing the blessing of compassion into our own lives.

Please give generously on March 14!

See you in church! Blessings always!
Jack

COUNCIL CHAIR'S REPORT

We now enter the Lenten Season here at First Church. Spring is not that far away, despite the snow on the grounds as this is written. And as springtime is a time for renewal both figuratively and liturgically, we will now take it to the literal sense at our church.

The balance of the Capital Campaign will be spent on areas of the church that many of us use on a regular basis. We will start at the Fireside room and go on to Fellowship Hall, new lights for the choir loft and repairs to the Courtyard.

Plans for the Fireside Room include air conditioning, a gas fireplace insert, a new ceiling, new paint, removal of the closet areas, Pergo-style floors and other upgrades to the windows and their coverings.

Improvements for Fellowship Hall include new lighting and other details that have not been worked out yet.

The Choir loft will receive new lighting for the choir areas and the organ.

There are plans to make the Courtyard more attractive with new plantings, removal of some shrubs and trees, paving stones in place of the cement slabs and ensuring proper drainage of rainwater from the area.

The approximately \$175,000 left in the Capital Campaign may not do all the work described above, but it will go a long way. Thank you to all who donated throughout the campaign for improvements to our church!

Don Robertson
Church Council Chair

FIRST CHURCH MISSIONS

OSGOOD FOOD PANTRY

We are currently collecting food for the Osgood Food Pantry. Any non-perishable foods are accepted. Perhaps you would consider donating cooking oil as one of your donations. This will enable the food recipients to cook with healthy ingredients such as canola, olive, or vegetable oils. Thank you for all you do. ~ Missions Committee

REQUEST FROM HOSPITALITY

If anyone is going through their kitchen drawers and have a few extra dishtowels, please consider donating them to the church kitchen. Our supply has shrunk to just about nothing. Thanks! Hospitality committee

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

CALENDARS!

They sure do fill up quickly! So if you're planning your summer schedule, don't miss **"The Good News Clues Detective Camp"**! Children entering K-5th grade next September, are eligible to attend. Camp dates are **Monday, July 12th - Friday, July 16th**. Watch for more *top secret* information...

Thank you to the CE Committee for the *many, many* pancakes they made for the church school students on Valentine's Day *and* then the supper on Ash Wednesday. When asked if he was giving something up for Lent, Scott Mangan replied, "Pancakes"!

Thanks to everyone who contributed money to our "Souper Bowl" collection, we will be sending a check for \$110 to the Friendship Service Center. That will help to make a lot of soup!

ST. PATRICK'S DAY SOCIAL!

Will you be wearin' the green with nowhere to go?

Come on over to First Church on **Saturday, March 20th, from 7:30 – 11:00 p.m.**

There will be music, (and maybe a wee bit o' dancin') food, fellowship and fun!

Tickets are **\$5 a person** and will be on sale the next 3 Sundays, Feb. 28th, March 7th and 14th, during coffee hour. Don't miss the chance to catch Rev. O'Cook doing the jig!

In addition to our church school students distributing the palms on Palm Sunday, it is my plan to have them participate in a portion of the worship service that day. ***And that means***...it is important that they be in church school on March 14th and 21st.

We will actually stay until 12 noon on the 21st, so that Jim Gower can join us for the musical rehearsal we will need. The children really seem to enjoy being part of the service so I hope this opportunity will work into your schedule!

Congratulations to **Andrew Baker and Travis Lavigne** for perfect Sunday school attendance during the month of January!

See you in church,

Sharon Chamberlain
Coordinator of Christian Education

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION (cont.)

YOUTH GROUP NEWS

I would like to thank the congregation for buying Super Bowl Grinders from the youth. Thanks to Sarah Mangan, Julia Allen, Nancy Cook and Bill Allen for prep work in making the grinders. A special thanks to Scott Mangan for organizing the entire Super Bowl fundraiser by taking orders, putting up advertisement, shopping and managing the making of the grinders.

Sarah Flythe,
Youth Group Coordinator.

YOUTH GROUP DATES

- March 7th, Youth Group will meet at First Church from 5:30-8:00pm. Berlin Congregational will be our guests.
- March 14th from 1:00-3:00pm, an Interfaith Workshop at the Jewish Mosque in Berlin.

ADULT BIBLE STUDY

The early church, located in Asia Minor (now Turkey), lived among the pagans. They were a small minority with different beliefs and customs. Discover the passion and commitment early believers displayed, as they claimed Jesus in the face of fierce consequences and powerful adversaries. Yet, they would become a stronghold for God and Jesus. Certainly, they prospered (we're here aren't we?). How did they do it? Was their situation any different from ours? The effectiveness of the early believers is amazing and raises a host of questions with great implications for our world today.

Come and learn more . . . starting Monday, April 12th at 7:00 pm, in the parlor. Each Monday is self-contained, hence attending all sessions is not necessary. Ray Vanderlaan will be our guide on these excursions.

April 12 *Everything to Lose, Nothing to Gain*; filmed in Caesarea Philippi

April 19 *The Salt of the Earth*, filmed in Sardis

April 26 *Where Satan Lives*, filmed in Pergamum

May 3 *The Mark of the Beast*, filmed in Ephesus

May 10 *Hot or Cold*, filmed in Laodicea

May 17 *Fool Proof Living*

CHURCH NEWS

CONGRATULATIONS

To Danielle Michaud, granddaughter of Bill Furman, on getting her driver's license.

NEWS FROM CHARLIE NICHOLS

Charlie writes from Florida: "Please let the church members know that they are in my daily thoughts and prayers. My year-long chaplain resident program is challenging and highly emotional, as I have been called to minister to over forty families whose loved ones died at the hospital. The most heart wrenching was an 8 year old boy. I also ministered to 9 Haitian patients and their families who arrived at the hospital via a floating hospital called the "Comfort." It's one thing to hear about the suffering, but when one personally listens to their stories, it makes one more fully realize the scope of their anguish."

Charlie and Barbara are in our daily thoughts and prayers as well! They will be in worship on April 4th.

THANKS FROM THE REV. DAVIDA FOY CRABTREE

Please accept my thanks for your church's gifts for Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM) in 2009. The fact that you were able to *continue* your giving in spite of the difficult financial times through which we are living is a testament to your faith in the hope and promise of the Gospel.

As Paul wrote of the churches of Macedonia, during another time of great affliction, you have given of your abundance. Your gifts transform countless lives here in Connecticut, across the country and around the globe.

On behalf of all who benefit from your generosity, thank you!

Sincerely in Christ,
The Rev. Davida Foy Crabtree, Conference Minister

2010 OPEN DATES FOR MEMORIAL FLOWERS

The fourth Sunday of August is available as a permanent, annual, opening for memorial altar flowers. The fifth Sunday of January, fifth Sunday of August and fifth Sunday of October are open for this year only. Please contact the church office (860-229-3709) if you are interested in any of these dates. Thank you.

NEED HOME HEALTHCARE?

Barbara Golaszewski has time available and has been assisting Joan Thomas for the last 3 years. Call Barbara, at 860-747-4492 in the evening, for availability. Joan, 860-827-8656, can give her a reference.



UPCOMING EVENTS

PROPERTY COMMITTEE MEETING

There will be a Property Committee Meeting on Tuesday, March 2, at 6:30 pm, to discuss future Capital Campaign renovations.

GALLERY OPENING POSTPONED

The Gallery Opening planned for Sunday, March 7, 2010, has been postponed. The artist is unable to exhibit at this time. Once I have a replacement artist, I will announce the date and ask for a volunteer to host the opening. Thank you!

LENTEN SUPPERS

The next two Wednesday Lenten programs will be pot-luck suppers on March 3rd and March 17th with dinner at 6:00 p.m. and a program immediately following:

March 3rd will be hosted by the Missions and Congregational Life Committee and the program will be "Bible 101".

March 17th will be hosted by the Financial and Business Concerns Committee and the program will be "Jesus 101".

PLEASE BRING A DISH BASED ON YOUR LAST NAME AS FOLLOWS:

A - H MAIN DISH

I - M SALAD OR HORS D'OEUVRES

N - Z DESSERT

On Thursday, April 1, our Deacons will serve their traditional soup and bread supper at 6:00, followed at 7:00 by a Maundy Thursday Service of Communion and Tenebrae in our Sanctuary.

Please plan to attend.

