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Bathed in Easter's Miracle

By Jeff Braun, Senior Minister

Easter *rises*. Even as Lent draws us inevitably toward Good Friday's darkness, a sacred light gathers beyond the near horizon. A light not yet visible. A light that will not break forth — a light that *cannot* break forth — until the Cross is endured and Easter morning, itself, dawns.

And yet a light that, however invisible to our eyes at this moment, we can already *feel*. *Feel* as it re-fortifies our faith. *Feel* as it re-stokes our sense of wonder. And *feel* as it re-minds us of God's unquenchable, miraculous love for us in Christ.

People across the world and across our country face many challenges at this moment. People in our very town and in our very congregation, as well. These challenges are real. And these times can feel dark. They can rattle our confidence, upset our security, and dim (or even eclipse) our faith, despite our best efforts to believe.

Thankfully, in such a time, what we need most is *precisely* what Easter delivers. Not a recovery of our retirement

funds nor leads on a new job. Not an end to our warring ways nor a promise that we won't have our own crosses to bear.

As much as we might value each of these, Easter delivers something even deeper. Something even more profound. Something infinitely more lasting.

Easter delivers the sacred, death-denying, tomb-emptying, heaven-to-earth-to-heaven-again promise that no matter what challenges confront us, our Creator is present to us in Christ and in the Spirit. That we never walk alone. That our faith is secure in Jesus. And that, together, we are gathered in Jesus' name and bathed in Easter's miracle so as to live and to love and to serve and to commune with *all* of God's children.

Easter rises. Even as the darkness of Good Friday nears; even in the despair that many feel in these hard times — Easter *rises*! Easter *rises*! Easter *RISES*!

And thanks to our all-loving and mysterious God: Together, we rise, too!

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I am so happy to be here as your senior minister. I honor the sacred invitation to become part of your lives, to participate in the many spiritual and communal rites of passage, and, together, with both staff and laity — to *rise* in Easter's renewing Spirit!

God's Peace,

Jeff



Holy Week / Easter Events

Palm Sunday, April 5: Worship with Communion at 9 and 11 o'clock. Telling of the Passion story by the Scripture by Heart group. Distribution of palms.

Maundy Thursday, April 9: 6:15 p.m. Upper Room meal and worship; sign-up on lobby table. Appropriate for families; child care option available.

Good Friday, April 10: Noon worship in the chapel and 7:30 p.m. worship with the Service of Tenebrae in the sanctuary.

Good Friday, April 10: Silent Vigil begins at 10 p.m.

New this year: Holy Saturday, April 11: LightFest, 7 to 11 p.m. in the parsonage back yard. A sharing of faith stories from scripture and experience around a campfire. The Labyrinth will be lit for self-guided walks. Renewal of baptismal vows at 11 p.m. Dress warmly, bring a chair, and bring your guitar.

Easter Sunday, April 12: Worship with Communion at 8:00, 9:30, and 11:30. Children's program at 9:30 and 11:30 services.

Worship Schedule For April

Sunday, April 5: Palm Sunday. Services at 9 and 11. Alison McCaffrey preaching. Communion Sunday. Food offerings will be received; the food of the month is boxed macaroni and cheese.

Thursday, April 9: Maundy Thursday. Meal and worship at 6:15 p.m.

Friday, April 10: Good Friday. Services at noon and 7:30 p.m. (Tenebrae)

Sunday, April 12: Easter Sunday. Communion will be served. Services at 8, 9:30, and 11:30. Jeff Braun preaching.

Sunday, April 19: Services at 9 and 11. Jeff Braun preaching.

Sunday, April 26: Services at 9 and 11. Youth Sunday.

Coffee Hour Hosts Needed

A few opportunities are open for hosting a coffee hour. Why not gather your church friends or pew mates and create a theme for a coffee hour? If interested, please call Regan Huntley at 272-8467.

**Have you remembered
First Congregational Church
in your estate planning?**



‘Adopt’ a Flower Bed

The Board of Trustees invites individuals, families, or friends to adopt one or more of the church’s landscaped areas. You will be responsible for keeping your “adopted” area weeded from April through November, and will be asked to help spread the (provided) mulch if mulching is done in your area. There’s no pruning; that will be done by the Trustee Grounds Chair. To sign up, look for the poster on the lobby bulletin board.

Here are the areas for “adoption”:
Meeting House – front and south side;
Meeting House – north side; Connector and Parish Hall – front; Parish Hall – south side; Parish Hall – rear (west side); Triangle outside rear connector doors; Connector/Chapel – rear; Parsonage – front; Parsonage – sides; Parsonage – rear; Whiting House – south side; Around the maple tree behind the benches on the back walk; The Memorial Garden (between the chestnut tree and Whiting House); the area around the two signs on the Green.

Annuals may be planted in some areas, but permission must be received beforehand, and the plants must be watered weekly. All annual plantings must be removed before the first frost. If you have questions, please call Bill Eagleson at 271-2850 or Martha Lape at 272-9327.

Miles for Malawi

We have lots of treasure beyond our money. To help one project, the Board of Stewardship is calling for something other than a monetary donation.

Amy Webb, who chairs the church’s missionary to AIDS orphans in the African country of Malawi, is seeking donation of travel miles from airlines to pay for her next journey to Africa.

If you have frequent flier miles on United Airlines, U. S. Airways Dividend Miles, or Delta Skymiles, and would like to donate them for use with the Malawi mission, please contact Ruth MacDonald at ruthkmacdonald@comcast.net, or in person.

She will supply you with the information you need to donate the air miles. Information is also available on the Stewardship bulletin board in the connector, and in the weekly worship bulletin.

Hospitalized?

If you or someone you know is in the hospital, please tell First Congregational Church. Federal privacy laws now forbid health care providers from informing others, including churches, when someone is admitted to the hospital. We want to care! But we can’t do it without your help.

Parish Care in February

Here is what your Parish Care Committee and its volunteers did in February:

Bereavement – The Bereavement group continues to meet on the last Thursday of every month in Room 11 at 7 p.m. If you have suffered the loss of a loved one, please join this group. A new Grief Series will be given in April for anyone who has experienced a loss. (Please see the story elsewhere in the Parish Post.)

Cards – 11 cards were sent containing sympathy, get well, encouragement and anniversary of deaths.

Caring Visitors – Four parishioners have agreed to become Caring Visitors. One has been assigned and the others will receive their assignments within the month. This is a very rewarding experience for everyone involved and very needed by those receiving the visits. Please consider becoming part of this ministry. Call Donna Mead if you are interested.

Chores – One snow shoveling was performed. If you have any small chore that needs to be done around the house, call Donna or John Bates (272-6389).

Meals – 12 meals were delivered to three people. Marianne Eagleson will be the contact person for April. We also need more frozen dinners. If you make one, please label it with the contents, date and your name. You can leave it in the church white freezer or drop it off at Lynn Ryan's (295 Sorghum Mill Drive, 271-3931).

Please call Lynn before delivering to ensure she will be home.

Prayer Pagers – Five of the six pagers were used in February. The seventh pager is not working and will not be replaced until a need arises for it.

Rides – One ride was provided for a parishioner.

Stephen Ministry – 14 care receivers were ministered to by 10 Stephen Ministers. If you or someone you know think you could benefit from having a Stephen Minister, call Sue Chatfield (235-6294) for a consultation.

Telephone – Kelly Bunn was the person performing the February calls. Thank you, Kelly, for performing this important ministry.

Parish Care Coordinator – Donna Mead spent two days entering the Christian Life Community assignments into Church Windows. Every member of our church is now assigned to a district. This will assist her in helping her identify possible members in the church who could help others in need due to their locations. It is also going to help the Senior Search Committee in introducing Jeff Braun to our church community.

Donna is also attending the weekly staff meetings. This has proven to be an efficient method of sharing needed information.

The Parish Care Coordinator spent a total of 55 hours in February.

Giving Prayerful Consideration

For a number of years, we have used the phrase “prayerful consideration” in this church for the mental and spiritual preparation that we undergo in the fall before to making our annual pledges of financial support to the church. We on the Board of Stewardship have asked you to give your pledge prayerful consideration, and on occasion, when we have asked if you would be making a pledge, you’ve told us that you were giving it – you guessed it – “prayerful consideration.”

If you think about it, it’s not at all evident what this phrase means. Is it prayer and then consideration? Or perhaps a combination of prayer and consideration? Or perhaps there’s a back and forth thing here – think it over, then talk it over with God, then think some more, then...

Prayer is – perhaps should be – something so personal between yourself and God that anyone who would presume to tell you how to do it is suspect. But at minimum, one would think that you would want to talk about why you’re making the gift to the church, and how it relates to your other priorities. If (as one might think) it is a return in gratitude for the goodness that has come to you from God, then it seems like you would want to articulate this in detail and at length.

One thing is sure: A pledge of, say, \$500 that is given with no more thought than it takes to fill in the blanks on a check can’t mean nearly as much to God as a pledge

of \$500 that is carefully thought out, well articulated, and deeply felt. This is not like paying a utility bill.

One way to make your pledging meaningful is to look at it as the continuation of your pledging in recent years: It is either an increase, a decrease, or a continuation of the same amount.

Another way to view your pledging is to see it in relation to the pledges of others, and it is in this spirit that we provide the following overview of pledging in our church. There are members that don’t pledge at all, but as a general rule, the more active and faithful a member is, the more that person pledges, though students and retirees tend to pledge less.

The highest pledges are into five figures annually. About a third of our pledge units increase their pledges every year. Excluding the non-pledges, the average pledge was \$1,946 last year, across 294 pledges. If we throw out the highest and lowest pledges (which tend to skew the average), it was \$1,873 – and that allows you to infer roughly what the highest pledge was. The midpoint, with as many pledges above as below, was \$1,200.

On the Board of Stewardship, we are interested in maximizing pledges, but even more important, we want to encourage all to make a spiritual discipline of their annual pledges. And giving “prayerful consideration” is easily the most important step in pledge discipleship.

The Board of Stewardship

Summer Music on the Green

On Saturday evening, June 20, the Board of Music will present its fourth annual Music on the Green, featuring the Heartbeat Dixieland Jazz Band, directed by Bill Logozzo. This eight-piece jazz ensemble is hailed as "New England's most lovable jazz band." Save the date now to join us on the Green with your picnic, ears, and dancing feet, and get ready to experience one of the most enjoyable evenings of the year.



Carpeting for Music

If you are installing new carpeting and need to dispose of your old rug, please notify Bob Giddings at 272-9347. The Music Board is looking for carpeting to cover its newly built choral platforms in the choir loft.

Bob will arrange a time to pick up your used carpeting so that the platforms can be finished off.



D'Eugenio Conducts At Wesleyan

Wesleyan University's Concert Choir has been busy preparing for its joint concert with the Greater Middletown Chorale, the region's 32-year old community chorus and one of the preeminent choral groups in Connecticut. The concert will take place on Wesleyan's campus on Sunday, April 19, at 4 p.m. at Crowell Concert Hall, with soloists, 100 voices from both choirs and a 22-piece string orchestra of professional instrumentalists drawn from the New

Haven Symphony and Yale Symphony Orchestras. Concert and rehearsals are under the direction of our own Joe D'Eugenio.

The groups are jointly preparing Schubert's *Mass in G*. The Wesleyan Choir will also sing Mozart's *Ave Verum Corpus* and Georg Phillip Telemann's *Psalm 117*, written in 1758. Additionally, *Lass Dich Nur Nichts Nichts Dauren, Opus 30*, by Johannes Brahms will be sung by the GMC and Mozart's *Divertimento in D Major, K136* will be played by the chamber orchestra.



Spring Cleanup April 25

The Trustees have scheduled the annual Church Grounds Cleanup Day for Saturday, April 25. This is our chance to spruce up the church grounds. We need to pick up the leftover leaves and other tree debris from the winter storms from around the Meeting House, Connector, Parish Hall, Parsonage, Whiting House, and the Church Green. We also plan on mulching the Meeting House front and sides, the Connector front, and the Parish Hall front and side.



You can help by joining us and donating your time and energy. We will need rakes, shovels, tarps, wheelbarrows, and a couple of chain saws. We will begin at 9 a.m. and plan on being done by noon. We look forward to seeing you!

The Board of Trustees

UCC Event for Women

Celebration VIII, a United Church of Christ Women of New England event, will take place March 12-14, 2010 (next year). Join us in Burlington, Vt., for this special weekend. The theme is "Together Building Bridges...a time to break down and a time to build up" ...Ecclesiastes 3:3.

The Workshop Planning Committee has been hard at work and has created an impressive and varied list of forums and workshops for participants.

New and exciting intergenerational opportunities will be offered, and women of all ages are invited to enjoy uplifting worship, inspiring music, spiritual workshops, stirring speakers, energetic music, informative programs, and more.

See the web site for more information:
www.uccwomenscelebration.org.

If you have questions about Celebration VIII or any previous Celebrations, ask Martha Lape or Karen Gravino, who have attended many times.

There will be a bus going from Connecticut. If you are interested in attending the Celebration and riding the bus, please let Martha know so she can see that you get the bus information when it is available.

**Visit the church web site:
www.cheshirecongregational.org
to keep up to date!**

Ladies, Are You Stressed?

If so, come to the Connecticut Women of the United Church of Christ's annual meeting in Wallingford on April 25. The Rev. Lee Ireland, Associate Minister of the Orange Congregational Church, is the keynote speaker, on "Staying Centered in Troubled Times." After her presentation, there will be a choice of four workshops: "Experiencing the Sanctuary of Silver Lake," "Creating Quiet Times," "The Spirituality of Reiki," and "Armchair Yoga."

The cost for the day, including lunch, is \$16, if the reservation is made by April 15, and \$20 after that. For additional information and registration forms, see the lobby bulletin board. Send reservations to Martha Lape by April 15.

Bereavement Series

Beginning on Thursday, April 16, there will be a five week series for anyone who is grieving. The group will follow Kenneth C. Haugk's "Journeying through Grief," which explores the many aspects of grief. We encourage anyone who has lost a loved one to join us in a quiet, private, and comfortable setting.

We will meet in Room 11 at 7 p.m. for five consecutive weeks, with the final week being a special remembrance service led by Alison McCaffrey. Please bring a photo of your loved one to share with the group. If you have questions, call Jan Garthwait at 272-5915.

Christian Education in April

Bible Journeys For Grades 2-6: The April and May workshops have the theme “Summary of Treasures in Heaven.” Grades 3 through 6 will go to class when dismissed from the church. Watch the bulletin for when children leave for class. Grade 2 at the 9:00 service only will leave for Chapel in the early part of the service. After Chapel they will go with their Shepherds to their Bible Journeys workshop. Parents may find their children in the classrooms listed in the bulletin.

Thou Art, Room 8: Children learn that Jesus is a servant leader. As they create a group cross, they learn ways that Jesus was a leader and ways that he was a servant. Children identify servant leaders in their church. They will glue pictures of these leaders to a church that reminds them that Jesus glues us together in one body although we are many people. Children will learn that they can be servant leaders in the church and in their daily lives. They choose a servant leader card that they incorporate into a Servant Leader Collage that they create with the cross at the center, church leaders woven throughout, and bound together with the glue of Jesus.

Red Sea Productions, Room 9: Children will learn that God wants them to be good stewards of their possessions. Through two stories, “The Quilt Maker’s Gift” and “The Rich Young Man,” children come to understand that God wants them to have a Spirit filled attitude towards their possessions – one of generosity and contentment, not greed and selfishness.

As they assemble paper quilt squares, they discover a Bible verse that can guide them in the stewardship of their possessions in their daily lives. A ‘give away’ activity helps children put in action what they have learned.

Desert Tales, Room 10: It is never too early to train a child in God’s way of handling money. Church giving, savings, expenses, spending, and giving generously are all aspects of good stewardship of money that will be addressed in this workshop. Through hands-on experiences with real money, children learn how to live in God’s way and make thoughtful and responsible decisions about money. Children learn that everything they have belongs to God and God wants them to give the first part back to God in love. Children learn that spending wisely allows them to have money available for times when giving generously is needed.

Gospel Games, Room 11: Through the “Poor Woman’s Gift” story (Mark 12: 41-44) children hear that the woman was a good steward of her relationship with God. Her relationship with God was an everyday practice that resulted in her living her life with a generous spirit. She gave out of trust and faithfulness. Through another story, “The Flour Bag,” children hear of a poor modern day family who give their last bag of flour to the local food pantry. Children learn that their daily relationship with God can result in having a generous spirit. Children put this into action by making

9:00

Date	Thou Art	Red Sea Prod.	Desert Tales	Gospel Games
April 5	Week Off	Grades 3 & 4	Grade 2	Grades 5 & 6
April 12	Easter - off	Easter- off	Easter - off	Easter - off
April 19	Grades 5 & 6	Grade 2	Grades 3&4	Week Off
April 26	Grade 2	Grades 5 & 6	Week Off	Grades 3&4
May 3	Grades 3 & 4	Week Off	Grades 5 & 6	Grade 2
May 10	Rehearsal	Rehearsal	Rehearsal	Rehearsal

11:00

Date	Thou Art	Red Sea Prod.	Desert Tales	Gospel Games
April 5	Worship	Worship	Worship	Worship
April 12	Easter Off	Easter Off	Easter Off	Easter Off
April 19	Grades 2-4	Week Off	Grades 5/6	Week Off
April 26	Grades 5/6	Week Off	Grades 2-4	Week Off
May 3	Week Off	Grades 5/6	Week Off	Grades 2-4
May 10	Week Off	Grades 2-4	Week Off	Grades 5-6

Pancake Mix for a pancake sale. The children during Coffee Hour on Children's Sunday give out the mix they made in exchange for a donation of food for a food pantry. They will see how their efforts and spirit can make a difference in someone else's life.

Palm Sunday Processional, April 5: Children who wish to be in the Palm Sunday Processional are asked to meet 15 minutes before the service in the hallway outside Room 11. Older children will carry the banners they made in the March Thou Art Workshop.

Easter Programs for Children: During the 9:30 and 11:30 a.m. services there will be a Children's Program for Ages 3-Grade 2. Children will leave during the first hymn and go to Rooms 8 and 9 for an Easter

Program. Nursery Care will be provided at the 9:30 and 11:30 Services.

Lenten Mission Project Grades 2-8: The money for your mission project is due on Sunday, April 19. Stories about how you multiplied your money for God are also due on that day. Parents are asked to please count the money with the children and send a check made out to the First Congregational Church; in the memo please indicate for Heifer Project. Deb Gravell is looking forward to reading your stories. If you would like to read your story on Children's Sunday, please let her know.

Lenten Mission Project For Preschool 3-1st Grades: All money is due back to Church School on Sunday, April 19.

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Parents are asked to count the money with the children and send a check made out to the First Congregational Church and in the memo please indicate for Heifer Project.

Stepping Stones: The grade 5-6 youth group has been keeping busy each month with mission projects around the state. In March, they made Easter baskets for the children at the Cromwell Children's Home. The next meeting is May 8, 2009 from 7 to 8:30 p.m. All those in Grades 5-6 are invited, and friends are welcome.



Youth Group News

The YUTES would once again like to thank our church family for its support of the 30 Hour Famine both spiritually and financially.

Twenty-five youth and adults enjoyed a night of fellowship and bowling at Highland Lanes recently. Prizes were awarded for best bowler, most improved and worst bowler – an award that many in the group were obviously aspiring to!

In addition to our discussions, we've been mastering the game of Ga-Ga, a type of dodge ball game that originated in Israel and is popular with youth groups around the world.

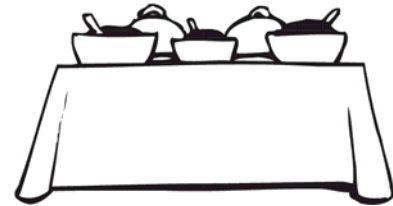
We are preparing for Youth Sunday, which is April 26. We look forward to a special service that morning entirely created and led by our youth. The Praise Band will be there as well. Please join us for this contemporary service.

Progressive Supper May 2

All interested adults who enjoy good food and good company are invited to participate in this year's Progressive Supper on May 2. There is a signup sheet in the lobby for all who are interested.

The entire group convenes at one (large) home for the appetizer portion in the early evening. We then disperse to assigned homes for a dinner and gather again at another home for the dessert finale. It is an enjoyable evening for everyone

and helps all of us forge new and deeper



connections with one another outside of church. The details will follow, but please sign up at church or call Jan Cowles at 272-8441 or email her at this address: jbcowles@sbcglobal.net, or e-mail Kate Hall at katehall4@gmail.com.

We are happy to answer any questions you may have to make the evening a comfortable one for you. Also, if you need babysitting resources, please contact Kate. We hope you will consider joining us this year.

Easter Sunday Services:
8:00, 9:30, and 11:30 a.m.

Oberammergau 2010

There's a new reduced fare for next year's trip to see the Passion Play in Oberammergau. Sign up before May 1, and receive \$400 off the total price of the trip from June 29 to July 9, 2010 to Italy, Switzerland, Austria and Germany.

The performance of the Passion Play, portraying the last week in the life of Christ, began in 1634, when the villagers of Oberammergau, Germany made a promise to God that they would perform a play about Holy Week every 10 years if they would be spared from more deaths from the bubonic plague, then devastating Europe. The deaths in the village ceased, and the villagers have kept their promise ever since. The actors, singers, instrumentalists, and technicians, more than 2,000 in number for each performance, including children, are all residents of the village.

Our itinerary, which ends with the play, will also take us into scenic places in four countries, including a ride on the famous Glacier Express train, a 7½-hour railway journey involving 291 bridges and 91 tunnels and across the OberAlp Pass.

The trip is arranged through King Travelways, and booked through Collette Tours. A reduction of \$190 is a result of a lower fuel surcharge for the flight, and will be added to the \$210 for early booking by May 1.

Those interested should call King Travelways at 634-3500, or Alison McCaffrey at 272-5323 or Sue Chatfield at 235-6294 with questions.

Outreach Updates

Our delegation of workers has returned from a busy and rewarding week of rebuilding along the Gulf Coast, and are eager to share their experiences. We'll publicize the date, time and place for a program as soon as they are confirmed. Thanks to all who supported this trip and to the wonderful group of workers who spent a week together painting and plastering and rebuilding lives. You can view photos of our work campers in Mississippi by selecting the link on the church web site's home page.

The barrel for donations from our church to Haiti is available in the parlor. School supplies are always needed, as are toiletries and first aid supplies, and lightweight clothing such as T-shirts, cotton socks, and underwear. On April 19, in keeping with the seasonal focus on our walk with the risen Christ, we will be collecting gently used shoes for Haiti. Also in April, our church will be collecting Easter baskets for needy children. Watch the Outreach bulletin board in the parlor for details.

Our congregation continues to donate non-perishable food generously each month. Some 242 items were donated in February, and almost 300 in March. If you are not able to bring non-perishable food items to church on the first Sunday of the month, you may bring your donation at any time and put it in the basket near the offices.

Executive Board Notes

Spring is in the air. Flowers push up through the soil, robins dot the lawn, there is lingering sunlight for the drive home. Everywhere you look, it's clear that we will soon enjoy the annual celebration of new life. Those who serve on your Executive Board sense a similar feeling of springtime within our congregation...a feeling that a new life has arrived.

Continuing the metaphor, Dave Buchan was the caring gardener who took good care of the roots, shrubs, and other living parts of the church, preparing for a new season. Jeff Braun is now here ready to be part of new growth that is already underway.

Here are but a few examples of the many issues that are soon to take full bloom: A successful adult mission trip to the storm-ravaged Gulf Coast has been skillfully planned and executed by your Board of Outreach. The Board of Trustees is engaged in the detailed planning for the Columbarium as well as plans for the future use of the parsonage.

The Board of Stewardship, along with the treasurer, are exploring ways to enable those who are interested to support the church by way of "electronic giving" rather than the traditional weekly envelopes. Lenten activities, study groups, vibrant youth activities all abound. Everywhere you look, there is new growth and excitement.

Behind the scenes, we continue to look for new and better ways to coordinate the efforts of boards, committees and myriad

small groups. Our focus remains to find ways to grow our faith and discipleship – not our internal bureaucracy. As always, I solicit your thoughts, prayers and suggestions.

God's peace,
Bob Mead



Membership Message

The Board of Membership would like to remind everyone to please wear name tags. This will greatly help the Rev. Jeff Braun during his process of getting to know us (and our names). If you don't have a name tag, first check the carousels in the Parlor and Narthex. To get a new tag, please add your name to the request sheet on the table near the office, or fill out a card in the pew racks. Name tags for guests will be available in the pews.

New Members will be received on June 21. On Saturday, June 20, there will be a new member orientation session. Anyone seeking information about joining the church should talk with an usher or a minister, or call the church office (272-5323).



'Pew Pals' Donations

You may donate 'Pew Pals' – smaller-size stuffed animals, new or pre-loved – in a basket outside Alison's McCaffrey's office.

How to Donate Flowers

The flowers that beautify our Sanctuary every week are donated by members and friends of the church, often in memory or in honor of a loved one. Have you ever wanted to participate in this aspect of our ministry? Here's how:

The Flower Committee maintains a list of those who wish to donate flowers. Usually, such donations are made annually, often on a significant date such as a birthday or anniversary. The donor is notified each year of an upcoming date, and asked whether he or she wants to provide flowers again.

For various reasons, members and friends may drop off this list, and new giving opportunities become available. Generally, two arrangements are donated each week, meaning that every year about 100 people may provide flowers. (It's up to each donor to decide how much money to spend, but a typical arrangement costs about \$40.)

In addition to the "regular" donors, the Flower Committee maintains a list of those who are willing to provide flowers on a "fill-in" basis if there are Sundays when, for whatever reason, there is a need. These donors are very much appreciated!

If you would like to donate flowers, either one time or on an ongoing basis, please contact the Flower Committee to find out which Sundays are available. You may call or e-mail Karin Arai at 250-8815 or karin.arai@cox.net.

Lectionary for April

Sunday, April 5: Mark 11:1-11 and 14:1-15; John 12: 12-16; Psalm 118: 1-2, 19-29; Isaiah 50: 4-9; Psalm 31: 9-16; Philippians 2: 5-11.

Maundy Thursday, April 9: Exodus 12: 1-14; Psalm 116: 1-19; 1 Corinthians 11: 23-26; John 13: 1-17 and 31-35.

Good Friday, April 10: Isaiah 52: 13-53; Psalm 22; Hebrews 4: 14-16, 5: 7-9, 10: 16-25; John 18: 1-19, 42.

Sunday, April 12: Acts 10:34-43; Isaiah 25: 6-9; Psalm 118: 14-24; 1 Corinthians 15: 1-11; John 20: 1-18; Mark 16: 1-8.

Sunday, April 19: Acts 4: 32-35; Psalm 133; 1 John 1: 1-2; John 20: 19-31.

Sunday, April 26: Acts 3: 12-19; Psalm 4; 1 John 3: 1-7; Luke 24: 36-48.

You can read The Parish Post
in three ways!

On paper

the way you're doing now

On line

go to

www.cheshirecongregational.org
select "publications and reports"
and choose "Parish Post"

Via e-mail every month

Simply notify

office@cheshirecongregational.org

Expressing Our Thanks

Words can't express our gratitude for all your prayers, meals, diapers, wipes and formula we received after Elizabeth's stroke. We thank you all so much for your generosity and support. Elizabeth continues to improve with each day. She has no residual effects from the stroke. She continues to rest and care for her newborn. She will remain under the care of the Hartford Hospital Stroke Center for many months to come. Her recovery was truly a miracle. You and your prayers are a part of that miracle.

The Gravell and Raso Families

Many thanks for the cards, flowers and especially for Dave Buchan's visit with me at Yale New Haven Hospital. With the excellent care I have, I am now back at work full-time.

Gordon M. Clark

The members of the Praise Band would like to thank the Tuesday Circle group for their generous donation. We plan on recording a Praise Music CD later this year and will put the money towards the purchase of music, supplies and equipment. Thanks so much for your support!

The Praise Band

Thank you all so much for your kindness, prayers and support during our very sad time. My family and I gratefully appreciate it.

Dawn DeFeo and Family

Patty and I thank you for your generosity and thoughtfulness. We had a wonderful time at the reception on

Sunday, March 15. Dolores' cake, the ice cream and the goodies – and those who prepared them – were deeply appreciated, especially by your former interim Senior Minister who has his eye out for the desserts. The chalice, and the picture of the church, will always remind us of First Congregational Church and its people. Patty is eager to get to Borders to use her gift card! My thanks again to the officers, members and friends of the church for our "partnership in the gospel." You have a very vital congregation. I wish Jeff Braun and the church many happy years ahead of shared ministry.

God bless,
Dave Buchan

Milestones

In the life of our church family

Baptisms

Jonathan Robert Heavens, son of Glenn and Jeannine Heavens, March 15.
Connor William Murtaugh, son of Christopher and Kimberly Murtaugh, March 15.

Deaths

Charles Ewaskio, February 19.
Ted Upson, February 20.
Flora Violino, sister of Fran Spirito, February 27.
Robert Patterson, husband of Chloe Patterson, February 28.

COME
HOP SKIP

and

JUMP ON

OVER

to the

SPRING



Rummage Sale

Thursday, April 23 – 3 to 7 p.m.
Friday, April 24 – 9 to 11 a.m.

Donations of clothing and household items may be brought to the Parish Hall on Monday, April 20 and Tuesday, April 21.

Help is needed for the sorting and pricing beginning on Monday the 20th.
Come and stay as long as you can.

If you can work sale hours, please call Addie Marx at 272-8145.