

# THE PARISH POST

THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

CHESHIRE, CONNECTICUT  
[www.cheshirecongregational.org](http://www.cheshirecongregational.org)

Volume XXVIII

February, 2011

No.2

## Called To Heal Creation

By Jeff Braun, Senior Minister

A colleague recently passed along a story. A story that offers a thought-provoking perspective about the created world in which we live, and our role – our sacred role – within it. It is a story that shapes all of us, as surely as it shaped the mind, heart, and spiritual energies of a young girl. I pass it now to you.

The girl was Rachel Remen. The story was told by her grandfather, a rabbi. More than merely a story, it was proffered as a gift on Rachel's fourth birthday.

In the beginning, Rachel's grandfather explained, all was dark. The darkness was holy. But utter. Then, at a special moment in time, the "world of a thousand things" – the world in which we live – emerged from that holy darkness as a great ray of light.

That glory did not endure. In a cosmic accident, the wholeness of that light shattered. The "world of a thousand things," once cohered, once whole, then fractured into a thousand pieces. The pieces fell into, and became hidden within,

every event and every person across the scope of time.

Fracture frames this story. But fracture is not the final note. The tale does not end there. This tale is not told, by Rachel's grandfather or by my colleague or by anyone, merely so we might hear. It's told so that we might understand and respond!

As Rachel would learn from her grandfather, and as Christ teaches us, humanity is commissioned to recognize and recover the divine light hidden within each of us so that, ray by ray, person by person, life by life, moment by moment ... Creation's wholeness might be restored, might be healed.

Surely to God's and to her grandfather's pleasure, healing would become Rachel's life's work. As a physician practicing integrative medicine, in which the best of science and spirituality are blended, Rachel took the human call to heal, to re-unite, to re-integrate, to heart.

*Continued on the next page*

*Continued from the previous page*

We may not respond as literally as Rachel did. But respond we must. To prevent darkness from prevailing, to overcome the world's fracture, to lift each life and, thereby, all lives – we must seek the light hidden within each heart and event, and lift it. This healing will take time and great effort. Yet through the mystery of faith and of God among us, this work is not only sacred. It is possible!

God's Peace,  
*Jeff*



### Adult Mission Trip

Plans are shaping up for the adult mission trip to Brenton, West Virginia, as we take part in the Appalachia Service Project, March 27 to April 2. There are currently five spaces open; the cost will be less than \$300 per person. Please speak to Alison McCaffrey to sign up. To help fund our trip, we are sponsoring a delicious and fun-filled Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper on Tuesday, March 8, in the Parish Hall. We hope you'll join us!



### Banners and Liturgical Arts

We are ready to begin work on new Lenten and Easter banners as well as other banners for weddings and funerals. If you like to sew, if you like to design, if you are interested in helping out, your ideas and help are welcome. Please see Alison McCaffrey for more information. A signup sheet is on the lobby table.

### February Worship Schedule

**Sunday, February 6:** Services at 9:00 and 11:00. Jeff Braun preaching. Communion will be served. Food offerings will be received; the food of the month is pasta (and pasta sauce).

**Sunday, February 13:** Services at 9:00 and 11:00. Jeff Braun preaching.

**Sunday, February 20:** Services at 9:00 and 11:00. Jeff Braun preaching.

**Sunday, February 27:** Services at 9:00 and 11:00. Alison McCaffrey preaching.

### Scripture by Heart

You've watched others offer scriptures by heart; are you ready to try?

A new opportunity for "Scripture by Heart" awaits as we work on scripture texts for Holy Week worship, beginning with Palm Sunday. An informational gathering will be held on Monday, February 7, at 7 p.m. in the sanctuary. Come and learn more about this opportunity. Our regular meetings will be on Monday evenings, starting February 28, at 7 p.m. in the sanctuary. Please see Alison McCaffrey with questions. A signup sheet is on the lobby table.

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

## Christian Education in February

**Caroll's Corner:** Greetings, all! As I write, I've been here just about two weeks, and it's been a blessing. I have found my desk, and am now familiar with 'God's Closet.' I have met many of you, and our kids are great. We had a fun first week together. It was a 'get to know you' Sunday. I told them about me, and they told me about them, we made a bulletin board together, and in the end I taught them that "we were going to go in peace, and we were going to go in love, we were going to go with God, and we were going to keep in touch." I left feeling satisfied and content. I want to thank the wonderful volunteers, lay leaders, staff and Christian Education Board members who have been helping me find my way, and thank you all for your call to do ministry here in Cheshire. I look forward to many happy years together.

**Sunday School Needs:** Our church school has many great children enrolled, and we need dedicated volunteers to teach our classes. You can do it! Don't think "I don't know enough about the Bible to teach." Leave your comfort zone and let us help you help us. The more you teach, the more you learn. You and your children attend church because you know how important it is to know God. Show your children how important your faith is by helping out in a classroom. We are in need of volunteers to tell stories, do crafts, talk about missions through games, and maybe show a movie or read a book. We will expect each parent with a child in Sunday school to volunteer time to make our

program run smoothly; there are enough of us so that each family would serve only a handful or so times per year. We understand everyone is busy; this commitment fits in the busiest of schedules. We thank you for your support. Keep our program in your prayers. All things are possible with God.

**Snack Donations:** If you have a child in church school and your last name begins with N, O, P, or Q, please volunteer to bring some juice. No cookies are needed at this time. All donations can be left in the C.E. office. Thank you.

**Fourth Grade Bible Sunday:** Our annual potluck event will be held February 27 from 4 to 6 p.m. All children in Grade 4 and their parents are invited to attend. Please sign up and bring a dish to share. Bibles will be given out during worship on March 6.

**February in Church School:** This month's theme is the Lord's Prayer. Our rotation will include Red Sea Productions, Thou Art, and Bible Games. On the last Sunday of the month, we hold a one-room Bible Jeopardy, Pictionary, or Hangman class. Our goal is to help children discover that the Bible tells us that Jesus was a man who frequently talked to God. Among the lessons: The disciples were curious about how Jesus prayed, so they asked him. He taught them a special prayer. Christians today still pray this prayer, and it's called the Lord's Prayer. Talking with God helps

*Continued on the next page*

*Continued from the previous page*

us feel closer to God. We can talk with God at any time about anything. There are many ways to talk to God.

**Vacation Bible School:** Vacation Bible school already? Yes, it's time to start to think about VBS. Majesty Books in Manchester is holding a review of all the programs available this year on Saturday, February 19. I will be going to the event, and would love to have you come along! If you are interested in coming, please see me as soon as possible.

*Caroll Cyr*

### Parish Care News

Have you noticed the 'new look' of the cards we sign every Sunday? Mark Hall is the photographer, and has managed to capture our beautiful church as well as many lovely scenes in New England. Ruthe Sperzel has also constructed personal cards with her wonderful artwork. Ruthe, at age 90, is still donating her talents for the well-being of others.

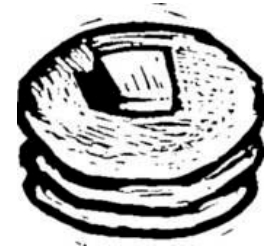
The card rack is near the back door of the church, by the bulging coat rack. A few cards are put out every week for all to sign. Also, there will be a note to indicate the purpose of the card (illness, new baby, big birthday, etc.). Please feel free to add your personal wishes to the card with your signature. It means so much to the recipients to be remembered by so many caring people.

*Jan Cowles, Jane Montgomery,  
and Pam Euerle*

### Shrove Tuesday Pancakes

Please join us on Tuesday, March 8, for our Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper, from 6 to 7:15 p.m. in the Parish Hall.

Shrove Tuesday marks the day before Lent begins (Ash Wednesday). It is a day with a long history, and depending on which part of the world you are from, it is called by different names. In European countries, it is most often called Shrove



Tuesday; "shrove" is the past tense of the word "shrive," which referred to the medieval practice of priests hearing confessions before Lent began. It is also known in Europe as Fastnach. Other parts of the world associate more with the practice of Carnival, or Mardi Gras, which means "Fat Tuesday." The idea behind it is to use up all the fats, sugar, milk, and eggs generally not eaten in the six weeks of Lent. And these are the ingredients of pancakes!

Cooking and serving this wonderful meal are many of those going on the adult mission trip to Appalachia. We will combine traditions for a fun event for all ages as we serve up pancakes, bacon, and fruits as well as some New Orleans Jazz music. We will end with a brief closing in preparation for Lent. There is no set cost for this meal. Donations will be received; all funds to offset expenses for the adult mission trip. A signup sheet is on the lobby table.

## Outreach Updates

First Congregational Church sent a van full of cereal to the FISH food pantry in New Haven in early January, and a van full of groceries to the Greater Waterbury Interfaith Ministries food pantry at the same time.

Watch the Parish Post next month for information about our second Food for All Week, which will be the first full week of Lent (March 13 through 19). This is an opportunity to simplify our eating for one week, and contribute the savings to our hunger ministries.

**Midnight Run:** We will take food and warm clothing to the hungry and homeless in New Haven on Monday, February 27. If you would like to contribute ingredients for the meal, please sign up on the Midnight Run board at the church. We always need warm clothing, especially men's clothing, new or used in good condition. New men's socks and underwear are usually in short supply. And we gratefully accept trial sized toiletries. If you want to contribute a toiletry, but are unsure what to purchase, the item of the month is toothpaste. If you are interested in riding along on the Run, please sign up on the Outreach Board in the Parlor.



### Hospitalized?

If you or someone you know is in the hospital, please inform the church office. Federal law prohibits health care facilities from giving out this information.

### Thanks from Outreach

The Board of Outreach would like to thank all of those who so graciously and generously donated Thanksgiving turkeys, meal fixings and children's Christmas gifts last year.

The Thanksgiving meals were given to 52 families under the supervision of the Waterbury office of the state Department of Children and Families. You read it right: The congregation surpassed its goal of 50 meals!

The donations were nothing short of amazing, with people going above and beyond to ensure that these families had a holiday food spread similar to their own.

In addition, during the recent holiday season, 57 children's Christmas gifts were generously donated by the congregation. Yes, here too, we surpassed our goal of 50 gifts!

The Waterbury DCF and members of the sponsored families were so grateful for everything - the generous donations brought tears to their eyes and a smile to their faces. Your generous giving this holiday season provided so many families with food and gifts to lift spirits and add fun and festivity to families' holidays.

*Christine Fitzmaurice and Beth Ross*

## Serving at Columbus House

In the true Holiday spirit, many from our wonderful church family volunteered to help with serving dinner at Columbus House, the homeless shelter in New Haven, on December 29 – so many, in fact, that we couldn't accommodate everyone! Hopefully, those who did not come will not be discouraged and will call me for the next meal on March 30.

We had an abundance of food to bring and many extra treats to add to the dessert plates, much to the delight of the residents there. That night we were able to serve the people right at their tables, rather than having them standing in line to receive their dinner. It added to our blessing to truly treat them as guests.

Many thanks to all who cooked or served: Terri Adesso, Gordon Hurlbert, Becki Louys, Betty Prichard, Janet Moore, Emma Norback, Millie Farrell, Kathy Duffendack, Lauren Minichino-Fisher, Diane Visconti, Carol Cummings, Tina Sullivan, Augusta Ozdemirer, Nancy Brunetti Slade, Marianne Beckmann, Martha Lape, Sally Ziegler, Peggy Allen, Susan Harris, Marilyn Gordon, Angela Michaels, Carol Tucker, Carolyn Brown, Eleanor Gager, Chris and Ed Albrecht, Pam and Ken Euerle, Jan and Paige Cowles, Lisa Canas, Marianne and Bill Eagleson, and Kelly and Joe Garthwait.

Thanks also to the Eaglesons for hosting a wonderful dinner afterward for all the servers – a great time of friendship and fellowship!

*Jan Garthwait*

## Lape Endowment Fund Makes Fifth Donation

The 2010 donation from the Martha Lape Outreach Endowment Fund was used to buy \$300 in grocery gift cards for the Cheshire Food Pantry, and \$700 has been sent to the Cheshire Youth and Social Services Department to be used for fuel supplements for needy families during this heating season. The combined \$1,000 donation was made possible by a large gift in memory of Dorothy Swanson, Suzanne Lawson's mother and a longtime church member. This gift will allow us to make larger donations for the next few years.

Memorial gifts or gifts in honor of someone may be added to this outreach endowment fund at any time. Unless the gift to the fund specifies otherwise, only the interest from the fund is used for the yearly donation.

The fund was established in 2005 with donations made by parishioners in honor of Martha's retirement as Office Manager of First Congregational Church. The money has been invested and each year the committee of three (Pam Euerle, Martha Lape, and Leah Sanders) decides where the interest and any additional donations will be sent. Past gifts have been sent to Back Bay Mission in Mississippi, Downtown Evening Soup Kitchen in New Haven, Monteverde Friends School in Costa Rica, and to the United Church of Christ Disaster Relief Fund. Donations are made on a three-year rotation of national, local, and global.

## News of the Youth Groups

**Super Bowl Subs:** The youth group will be selling Super Bowl grinders for \$6. Proceeds will go toward supplementing costs for their retreat or mission trip.

We'll have many options for what you would like



on your grinder. Order forms will be in the parlor or office. Act immediately! All order forms must be turned in by 5 p.m. February 1.

**Youth Mission Trip 2011:** Our youth will be heading to Owego, N.Y., from July 31 to August 6. We look forward to serving alongside hundreds of teens from other parts of the country while we repair homes of the many residents we will serve. Our informational potluck dinner will be on February 27 from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. in the Parish Hall. We ask that families of 8th through 10th graders bring a main dish, while those with children in 11th and 12th grades bring a salad (green, fruit, pasta, etc.).

**Other YUTES News:** We will not meet February 6, Super Bowl Sunday. Enjoy the game! Also, we won't meet on February 20, the first Sunday of school vacation. We'll be back on February 27 with the mission trip potluck dinner. We've enjoyed the new series called "The Pause." Each week is different, so if you haven't checked it out yet, please come on February 13 to see what it's all about: 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. in the Parish Hall.

**For YUTES Updates:** If you haven't been getting YUTES e-mail updates and would like to receive them, please send your email address to cheshireyutes@gmail.com. Todd periodically sends out reflections titled, "YUTES Thoughts: Reflections on Life, Faith, and Youth Group." He also posts it on Facebook and on the web site.

**Midnight Run:** Hey, Middle-Schoolers! Our February run will be on February 28. Make your own pizza night – we'll provide the dough, sauce, and cheese. If you'd like any other toppings, bring them with you. If you're in 8<sup>th</sup> grade and entering high school next fall, you can join us on the mission trip this year! Come to the informational potluck at church on February 27.



### May Day Tea Party

Plans are being made for a Tea Party on May 1, 2011 from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. in the church's Parish Hall. Please save the date and any wedding, bridesmaid and flower girl dresses you may have for a fashion show. If you would like to join our



committee, please contact Jan Garthwait at 203-272-5915, Pam Euerle at 203-272-9345, or Karen Gravino at 203-272-1067.

## We Say Thanks

Many thanks to all who donated their time or treasures to the Children's Corner of the Christmas Fair. There was an excitement in the air as children shopped for their parents, visited Santa, and made gingerbread houses and ornaments. One hundred gingerbread houses were constructed that day; they were gone by 1 p.m. We had many enthusiastic youths from the church patiently helping little ones, and raised close to \$700 to help our youth groups with their programs. Thanks also to Rita Hughes for her storytelling and for our own Santa for his gentle and patient way with his visitors. Hope to see you all again next year!

*Beth Ross, Joellen Jason, Jan Garthwait*

I want to thank you so much for the use of the prayer pager, and especially for the many, many prayers that were said for me. The prayer pager continued to remind me of the many prayers that were being said for me. My recovery went well, and on March 29 I was allowed to return to work. Since then, I have had three CAT scans to check for any recurrence of the cancer. Each time, I have been given a clean bill of health. The oncologist even went as far as to say, "It looks like you are cured." Our prayers and your prayers have been answered. All praise is due to God. I can only hope that the next recipient of this pager is blessed with as much success as I have been.

*Mark Minor*

Thank you so much for the generous staff Christmas gift. It was such a pleasant surprise to receive it, and is greatly

appreciated. It has been a pleasure serving you as your Parish Care Coordinator for the past three years. The position made it possible for me to get to know more of my church family and made me realize, once again, why First Congregational Church is such a special place. May God bless you all.

*Donna Mead*

I want to thank the church for all the cards, prayers and phone calls I received during my hospital stay and recovery. Special thanks go to Alison for her visit to St. Raphael's, Ken Euerle for the wonderful lunch and home visit, and Mark Hostage for his many visits to the hospital, Southington Rehab Center, and my home.

*Hugh P. Larson*

We would like to thank the church family for the welcome, all the care and for the delicious meals you've provided for us.

*Fae and Farshid Hakim; Marguerite, Daryoush, Daniel, and Samuel Golmohammadi*



The following sent notes of thanks to the church for poinsettia plants delivered at Christmas:

Joan Anderson, Charleen Becker, Jim Brown, Ruth and Magnus Hansen, Ruth Havlick, Blanche McKeagney, Dan and Helen Prince, and Jeanne Zook.



## Lectionary for February

**Sunday, February 6:** Isaiah 58: 1-12; Psalm 112: 1-10; 1 Corinthians 2: 1-16; Matthew 5: 13-20.

**Sunday, February 14:** Deuteronomy 30: 15-20; Psalm 119: 1-8; 1 Corinthians 3: 1-9; Matthew 5: 21-37.

**Sunday, February 20:** Leviticus 19: 1-18; Psalm 119: 33-40; 1 Corinthians 3: 10-23; Matthew 5: 38-48.

**Sunday, February 27:** Isaiah 49: 8-16; Psalm 131; 1 Corinthians 4: 1-5; Matthew 6: 24-34.

## Bereavement Group To Meet

Anyone experiencing a loss is invited to join a support group that will meet on Thursday evenings through March and into April at the church. The group meets at 7:00 in Room 10, starting March 3 and ending April 7.

Participants will follow the pattern of other bereavement sessions held by the church, using Kenneth C. Haugh's four-book series "Journeying Through Grief." It is not necessary to sign up in advance, but those who want more information may call Jan Garthwait at 203-272-5915.

## Milestones

in the life of our church family

### Deaths

Theresa Chubbuck, cousin of Grace Knipe, December 12.

William Crisfield, brother of Mona Coley, January 2.

Carrie Coley, granddaughter of Les and Mona Coley.

Bob Johmann, January 16.

Mae Barone, sister of Martha Sullivan, January 18.



## Thanks for 'Pew Pals'

Thank you to all who have brought in a small stuffed animal for our 'Pew Pals,' the furry little creatures found at the end of each pew in the Sanctuary.

Your donations keep this unique ministry of joy and companionship in the pews going. Donations may be placed in the basket outside Alison McCaffrey's office.

**Save paper!**

**Get the Parish Post by e-mail.**

**Write:**

**office@cheshirecongregational.org**