

# THE PARISH POST

THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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

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## The 23rd Psalm Speaks of Summer

By Jeff Braun, Senior Minister

Many are the biblical passages that offer solace in troubled times. Many are the passages to which we look when our way narrows and hope dims. Many, indeed. Yet perhaps none more so than Psalm 23.

Like an ancient prayer stone, the 23rd Psalm has been worn smooth. For millennia, believers have worked their troubles over this passage ... so much so that when we recite it, whether silently or aloud, we can sense not only the contours of the psalm's original words, but the contours of all the lives those words have touched. We can hear not only the author's ancient voice, but the chorus of every voice, every heart, that has lifted this sacred intercession.

As Christians, we associate Psalm 23 with times of passing. It's when death depletes us that we turn, most often, to this ancient prayer for restoration and refreshment. Yet death is not the only thing that can deplete us. *Life* can deplete us, too.

Through hectic schedules, long hours, financial concerns, illness, and the like, life

can run us down – all the more so as we face June's final flurry at work, at school, and at church. Here, again, (though perhaps unexpectedly!) Psalm 23 speaks to our deep needs. It expresses our spiritual desire — to be restored, to be refreshed. Perched as we now are on the very cusp of July and August, we can hear yet another voice echoing within Psalm 23's poetic strains. If we listen, we can hear... the sound... of *summer*.

In the words of this age-old prayer (which, in ancient times, would have been sung during worship), we hear both our ancestors who've gone on before us and the still small voice inside us, incanting:

“The Lord is [our] shepherd, [we] shall not want. He maketh [us] lie down in green pastures: He leadeth [us] beside still waters. He restoreth [our] soul...”

In this Psalm, so often used at times of memorial, we can hear, unmistakably, the Holy Spirit whispering to us. We can hear

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Christ, from beneath an arbor, bidding us to slow down; bidding us to luxuriate in July's green pastures and to steep in August's gauzy depth.

On behalf of the entire church staff, I pray that this summer, we all might heed the psalmist's wise counsel "to lie down beside still waters," so that when fall springs fresh upon us and August's dog days give way to September's new surge, we might face it... *restored*.

God's Peace,  
Jeff



## Summer Staffing Schedule

Please note these summertime changes:

- The Rev. Jeff Braun will be away from July 18 through August 17.
- The Rev. Alison McCaffrey will be away from August 16 through September 1.
- Pastoral coverage has been arranged for Monday, August 17.
- From June 22 through Labor Day, the church office will be open from 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Visit our church web site:  
[www.cheshirecongregational.org](http://www.cheshirecongregational.org)  
to keep up to date!

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## Worship Schedule For July and August

**Please note: During July and August, and also on September 6, the service times will be 8 and 10 a.m. The exception is July 5, when there will be a 10 o'clock service only.**

**Sunday, July 5:** One 10 a.m. service. Alison McCaffrey preaching. Communion will be served. Food offerings will be collected; the food of the month is bottled juice.

**Sunday, July 12:** Services at 8 and 10. Jeff Braun preaching.

**Sunday, July 19:** Services at 8 and 10. Alison McCaffrey preaching.

**Sunday, July 26:** Services at 8 and 10. Dave Brunetti preaching (both services).

**Sunday, August 2:** Services at 8 and 10. Alison McCaffrey preaching. Communion will be served. Food offerings will be collected; the foods of the month are baby food and cereal. The 10 o'clock service will be led, in part, by the 2009 summer youth mission trip team.

**Sunday, August 9:** Services at 8 and 10. Alison McCaffrey preaching.

**Sunday, August 16:** Services at 8 and 10. Alison McCaffrey preaching.

**Sunday, August 23:** Services at 8 and 10. Jeff Braun preaching.

**Sunday, August 30:** Services at 8 and 10. Jeff Braun preaching.

## Preserving Sacred Space

Have you seen the water damage to the ceiling of the Parish Hall? Or the pieces of slate that have fallen off the roof?

The slate roof on the Parish Hall has been leaking for some time now. The water damage to the building is evident both inside and outside: One of the soffits on the exterior of the building has deteriorated to the extent that the exterior light mounted on it is askew.

Inside the building, the discolored ceiling tiles on the south side of the Parish Hall show where water has been leaking. The roof is already many years beyond its expected life, and has served well to protect the sacred space that so frequently supports our church life and fellowship, and our many outreach efforts through community events.



The time has come to replace this roof. Further delay will only result in a need for

greater repairs. The blue tarp in the Parish Hall will show you where the damage has begun.

The trustees are seeking bids (current estimates are about \$60,000 to \$100,000) to replace the roof with 40-year architectural shingles, pending Historic

District approval. Work is expected to be done during the summer or early fall. More information on the project will come as the work schedule is established.

Like every other part of our buildings and campus, Parish Hall is a sacred space. It frames our fellowship after services, inspires our faith in action, and is a place where our church family's deep bonds are both woven and consecrated, both remembered and celebrated.

In maintaining this space (among others) so that it is safe and sound and presentable, we are, in a material way, preserving a part of God's house, and, what's more, a part of the faith home that we love and with which we've been entrusted.

The question of how to fund this time-sensitive project is being actively discussed by key boards and staff members. Once the issue has been resolved, we will share that information with you.

In the meantime, we ask for your prayers and thoughtful input as we address this challenge. And, if you would like to make a donation for this repair, please feel free to do so.

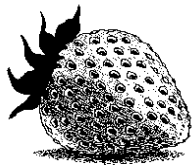
### A Letter of Thanks

Thank you for the lovely flowers and for remembering our anniversary. We had a nice chat with Mark Sullivan when he delivered our surprise.

*Bob and Esther Moffatt*

# Thanks for a Great Strawberry Festival

A large crowd of church and community members enjoyed one of the most successful Strawberry Festivals in recent memory last month. The highlights:



- The \$17,000.00 gross is the highest ever in the history of the festival. After paying our bills, the net proceeds will benefit church outreach, maintenance of the church, and the youth group mission trip.

- We served approximately 1,500 shortcakes, using 480 quarts of strawberries, and ran out just before the festival ended. Long lines at the food tent kept the burger-flippers hopping.

- New attractions, including the dunk tank, a cake walk for the kids, and a Beatles tribute band, were all popular, and added to the fun atmosphere. Jeff, Alison, Roger, and Todd were all good sports and received numerous dunkings from those with a good aim.

The success of the entire event was due to the extraordinary effort of over 100 church volunteers of all ages. The Strawberry Festival committee comes up with the ideas for the event, but the execution of these ideas would not be possible without the extraordinary efforts of our church members. Whether working a two-hour shift or working for two full days, the combined effort of our congregation was the only way possible to

successfully pull off such a large-scale event. The festival committee would like to thank all of those who helped and looks forward to seeing everyone (and many new faces) at next year's festival to be held Saturday June 12, 2010.

*The Strawberry Festival Committee:  
Brad Fuller, Martha Lape, Jim Louys,  
Addie Marx, Beth Ross, Carol Warner,  
Gary Warner, and Jessie Waszmer*



## All-Church Directory Update

Plans for the Directory are well underway and sign-ups have begun (during coffee hours). Photographs will be taken at the church from Thursday, August 27 through Saturday, August 29 and from Tuesday, September 1 to Thursday, September 3. On weekdays, the photo sessions will run from 2:30 to 8:50 p.m., and on Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4:50 p.m. The next signup opportunities will be held following worship on July 12, 19 and 26. Look for the Membership sign-up table in the parlor. If you have questions about the signup process, please contact the church office or anyone on Membership.

A number of volunteers will also be needed to make the directory a success. We are asking anyone who can spare two or three hours on one of the photo days to help greet and check in families to contact the church office or send an e-mail message to [churchdirectory@live.com](mailto:churchdirectory@live.com).

## Summer Church School, and Looking toward Fall

The theme of Summer Church School this year is "God Sightings." Children will be digging into the Bible for the treasures of God's Word. We will learn short verses together, create bible Crafts and have a Bible snack. Children will be looking for God Sightings in their daily lives as they go through the summer.

Participants are those from age 3 to Grade 3. Youth helpers may be from Grades 4 and up. Summer Church School



started in late May and runs through Labor Day Weekend. Please

note that starting July 5 and running through Labor Day weekend, the main service will be at 10 a.m. We are here for families all summer long. Join us when you are in town!

As families leave for a summer vacation, be sure to take a God Sighting Vacation Bag from the Summer Church School room the Sunday before you leave. Please return it when you return from vacation so another family may make use of it. See Debbie Gravell.

Volunteer teachers and helpers will be needed each week. If you are interested in joining us with your gifts of teaching, please contact Pat Noah Scinto 271-1795. Please consider checking your calendar and volunteering for a Sunday in the

summer. There is a calendar outside Room 8.

**Volunteers Needed:** Noah's Ark Nursery is looking for volunteer caregivers to work one Sunday, (10:00 service) during the month of July or August, and also from September to May once a month at the 9 or 11 o'clock services. You would be one of a two-person team. Training is provided if you have never done this before. We offer child care for ages 6 weeks up to age 3. If interested, please contact Lisa Skelly (Nursery Coordinator) at 699-0522, or skellyls@snet.net or Debbie Gravell (Commissioned Minister of Christian Education) at 272-5323.

**Church School resumes** on Sunday, September 13. Children's Ministry Handbooks and Parent Nursery Handbooks will be sent in August to all families in the church. If you do not receive your handbook by late August, please call the church office.

It is critical that all families of infants through Grade 8 fill out the enrollment form for the children in their families. There is a separate form for infants through toddlers. This must be filled out new each year. We use the information to note food allergies, ordering curriculum, and so forth. Please return your family's form by the end of August.

Church School teachers and helpers are

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also needed for the next Church School year. If you are interested in talking with Debbie Gravell about the possibility of helping in the Church School, please call her at 272-5323 ext. 16 or e-mail her at thirl.gravell@snet.net to arrange a time for a personal conversation.

Church School Volunteer training will be held in late August and early September for the various volunteer groups. Please watch your postal mailbox for further detailed information and dates. All volunteers, returning and new, must attend the yearly training event in order to volunteer.

**Blessings to our church school children** and their families for the money raised for Heifer Project International. Children and families in grades preschool 3-grade 8 raised \$2,087.50 to purchase baby animals for poor farming families throughout the world.

The farming and village families receive a baby animal, are taught to raise it and breed it, and then pass along the first born to another family who are trained to receive it. So the gift goes on and on. What a wonderful way to feed families by equipping them with animals and training them to feed themselves.

Thanks to all who worked so hard on this project.

**The Confirmation Class of 2009** raised \$713.30 for Americares Free Clinics in Fairfield County. The 12 youth in our confirmation class were very concerned about health care for the uninsured. They

chose to raise money for Americares Free Clinics, which service Bridgeport, Norwalk and other cities in Fairfield County.

They researched the organization, printed their brochure to hand out to explain their mission and then spent a Saturday morning in May on the Church Green raising money. They baked cookies in the shape of band aids to give out as a thank you for a donation. Thank you to these wonderful young people for their ministry to the uninsured on behalf of our church.



## Summer Music in Worship

If you would like to sing and/or play an instrument as an offering during one of our summer worship services, please contact Joe D'Eugenio, Music Director, at 272-5323, ext. 18. Summer worship is a wonderful opportunity for individuals to offer their talents and gifts to God and our congregation. All are welcomed and encouraged!

If you sing, and have been wanting to blend your voice with others during worship this summer, please consider joining our summer choir, which meets two more times: Sundays July 12 and August 2 for the 10:00 service.

The choir will meet 45 minutes before the start of the service to rehearse an easy Offertory anthem. It has been particularly wonderful in years past for people who normally do not sing in the choir during the year to help form a choir during the summer. All are invited to sing!

## Parish Care in May and June

Here is what your Parish Care Committee and its volunteers did in May and part of June:

**Baptism/Births:** There were four baptisms in May and four in June. A plaque was given to each family commemorating this special event in their lives.

**Bereavement –** The Bereavement group continued to meet on the last Thursday of the month in Room 11 at 7 pm. If you have suffered the loss of a loved one, please join this group. It has proven to be very helpful to those who attend – no matter where they are on their grief journey.

**Cards –** Two cards were sent.

**Caring Visitors –** Caring Visitors have been visiting and bringing joy and companionship to five people.

**Chores –** No chores were needed to be done, but if you have a small chore that needs doing, please call John Bates (272-6389) to arrange a meeting.

**Meals –** Six meals were delivered to a family. Bobbie Porter will be the contact person for July and August.

**Prayer Pagers –** Three of our pagers were used during the months of May and June. If you, or someone you know, is going in for surgery or going through a difficult time and would benefit from knowing that others are praying and thinking of them, please call Donna Mead and she will deliver a pager to them.

**Rides –** Six rides were provided to people needing them. Thank you, drivers!

**Stephen Ministry –** Three new Stephen Ministers finished their training and were commissioned on June 7. There are now a total of 17 ministers that have been trained. If you or someone you know could benefit from having a Stephen Minister, call Sue Chatfield (235-6294) for a consultation.

**Telephone –** Perry Stevens made the May calls to wish people happy birthday and happy anniversary.

**Parish Care Coordinator –** Arleen Reid has volunteered to make calls to parishioners who have asked for our prayers – whether for themselves or ones they love. These calls are being made in order to stay in touch with those going through a difficult time. It is also a way that we can assess what other needs they may have that the Parish Care Committee might be able to meet. This has been a great assistance to me and allowed me to spend more time in other areas of Parish Care.

The Parish Care Coordinator spent a total of 46.5 hours in May.

*Donna Mead  
Parish Care Coordinator*

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

## Recital July 16

Soprano Regina Walter is pleased to return to Cheshire to present a recital and collaborate with her former Cheshire High School classmate, Joe D'Eugenio, on July 16 at 7 p.m. at the church.

Ms. Walter made her professional operatic debut as Monica in Menotti's "The Medium." She has appeared with the Dallas Opera, the Fort Worth Opera, the Connecticut Grand Opera and Orchestra, the Italian National Opera, and others. She made her Carnegie Hall debut in 2004 as the soprano soloist in Beethoven's *Mass in C* with the North Texas Festival Choir.

As a guest artist, Ms. Walter has performed in Germany, Scotland, Ireland, the Czech Republic, and France.

The evening's program was inspired by the song "Si mes vers avaient des ailes" (If my verses had wings) by Reynaldo Hahn. Many composers have also set poetry calling on nature to carry one's love to another or to a homeland.

Two other prominent examples of this are Felix Mendelssohn's "Auf Flügeln des Gesanges" (On wings of song) and Franz Schubert's "Ständchen," whose opening words are translated "Softly fly my songs through the night to you."



## A Reminder About Our Prayer Pagers

Our congregation uses Prayer Pagers to let others know that we are thinking about them and praying for them. It's easy to use this parish care tool. Here's how:

Step 1: Dial the phone number of the prayer pager. An automated voice will then say "Please leave your message after the tone."

Step 2: You then enter 777# and the automated voice will say "Thank you for calling." The person you are calling will then hear his or her pager beep and know that someone has been praying for him or her.

Step 3: Hang up. (The prayer pagers are local calls in the Cheshire area.)

Here are the current holders of prayer pagers:

- Bob Mason: Prayers for healing for his family, dial 657-0057.
- Betsy Adams: Prayers for support, dial 657-0081.
- Susan Hunter: Prayers for healing, dial 657-0059.

If you would like a prayer pager, please call the office at 272-5323, ext. 10, for a referral to an available minister.

Also, in the lobby area near the rear entrance, there are cards for those hospitalized, available for signing, at the card desk.



## Outreach Update: Art Needed

If you were at the Strawberry Festival in mid-June, you most likely saw your Board of Outreach selling plants and beautifully painted garden rocks (done by Carol Ploch). We were raising seed money for another mission trip, and we collected more than \$440. The Board is committed to keeping these trips as affordable as possible for all church members.

We continue to collect non-perishable food items throughout the summer, when donations are often slow at food pantries. Food may be brought to the church on Communion Sundays (the first Sunday of each month) or left in the baskets in the hallway near the sign-up table at any time.

A Malawi AIDS concert and Arts and Crafts Silent Auction will be held November 22. We are inviting the very talented members of our congregation to contribute items of their artwork or crafts. Suggestions of local artists who might want to contribute are also welcome. Mary Hyson, a local photographer, has already donated seven of her pictures. More information on this event will be in the September Parish Post.

## Upcoming Congregational Meetings

Tentative dates have been set for 2009 congregational meetings and the Annual Meeting to be held in January 2010. They are:

**Sunday, September 20, 2009** -  
Congregational meeting on preliminary budget (informational, no vote)

**Sunday, December 6, 2009** -  
Congregational meeting to vote on final budget

**Sunday, January 24, 2010** or Monday,  
January 25, 2010 - Annual meeting

## Preventing Theft

It has come to our attention that there have been a few incidents of thefts in cars parked in our back church lot. It is important that you not leave anything valuable that can be seen through your car windows, because thieves may break the glass and take your valuables. Apparently, this is happening at several area churches.

The many cars parked in the lot, both on Sundays and for night meetings, offer an enticing opportunity for thieves to “shop” for cars where purses and other valuables are locked in the car, but still visible. If you absolutely must lock your valuables in your vehicle, please consider putting them in your trunk before leaving for church (so a thief won’t see you lock them away)...or better yet, just bring them with you. Please spread the word so this stops happening at our church.

## Youth Group News – And Thanks

The Youth Mission Trip to Groton, Conn., will be from July 19 to 25. We will have a lot of experiences to share when we return, and will lead the 10 a.m. Sunday morning service on August 2 as a way to bring our trip home to the congregation.

**A personal note:** So many people have been generous with their thanks to me over the past few weeks as my tenure begins to expire as youth director. It is hard for me to accept thanks for something that I thoroughly enjoyed doing! It seems rather, that I should be the one to give thanks to all of you at First Congregational Church for the confidence you placed in me to lead your youth program over the past two years.

There have been so many aspects of the job that provided unexpected blessings. The visibility of the position helped me to either meet or get to know in more depth so many of our congregation. I am enriched by your acquaintance and friendship. Thank you for supporting the YUTES and me in so many different ways.

Another particular pleasure was the opportunity to work closely with our gifted staff each week. I think I took for granted the amount of care and time and creativity that goes into making our church services and programs as inspirational as they are. I couldn't have done the job without their wisdom, kindness and support.

Finally, it has been my pleasure to get to know so many terrific young people and adult volunteers. I'll not soon forget all

our faith discussions and fun experiences and our sharing of joys and concerns with each other. For everything we take with us, we leave a part of ourselves behind. So, as you take whatever it is that I gave to you, I take all the hope and joy of each of your spirits with me. I am confident that you are in great hands next year and I'll be excited to hear about all your new experiences! God bless you.

*Roger Olander*



## Women's Bible Study

Women's Bible Study resumes Wednesday, September 17. We will finish the Mission Study we began in May. The next topic involves the Women of Faith "Contagious Joy" Study series.

The facilitator is Debbie Gravell. The group meets Wednesdays at 10 a.m. in the Parlor. All women of the church are welcome. No Biblical experience expected or needed, just the pleasure of our company as we read and study Scripture together.



## Hospitalized?

If you are hospitalized, or you know someone else in the congregation who is, please tell First Congregational Church.

Federal privacy laws now prohibit hospitals or nursing homes from telling us the names of patients. We want to be caring – and we can be, with your help.

## Why Do We Give to the Church?

Short answer: We don't. Rather, we're giving to God – giving *back* to God. The church is the beneficiary, but not the intended recipient. The church in turn gives back to God, and the beneficiaries this time are the orphans of Malawi, the UCC superstructure, Columbus House, and in fact, many of the parishioners. In their turn, they are, we hope, all giving back to God as well. These resources are in motion and once they stop, socked away in some account somewhere, they lose the currency of spirit with which they're imbued. Call it a spiritual economy, the White rather than Black Market.

With less of our own doing than we sometimes like to take credit for, good things come to us – talents, time, and resources. We have the illusion that we are in control – that it's only through our extraordinary self-discipline that we can sing so well, get others so organized; only through our investment of time that we earn so much, have made such a go of it; only through our insight that we understand mathematical principles so clearly, got through all that schooling, made it to success.

But that still small voice comes to us in the middle of the night and tells us otherwise. We are mostly middle-class in this church, and we mostly come from somewhere in the middle class, and many of us know that we could have eased up more than we did and probably still have come out somewhere close to where we are now, still in the middle class. And we

can all probably remember friends and colleagues who seemed to work just as hard and have what it takes, but somehow didn't get the breaks.

In the Middle Ages, poets and philosophers and theologians had the idea of the Wheel of Fortune – the higher you rise up and the prouder you become, the further and more devastating will be your fall, no matter if you are a rich man, a king, or a warrior, because God is in control.

And because we are made by God – set up, supplied, and nourished in and through his special care – our spirits grow stronger and then we are pulled toward the church like a seedling to the sunlight. An essential part of that vital interplay is thanksgiving, not to the church but to God. It's present in every worship service, it's the grace that is said at mealtime, it's what we teach our children when we help them discover bedtime prayer.

But it's more than just fine words and deep feeling. We must contribute somehow, make some spiritual transaction, deal in that White Market currency – in short, give back – in order to find the deepest fulfillment, the blessing of a mind or heart or soul fully engaged and at peace.

In this sense, our giving is thanksgiving, and it strangely fills us like a turkey dinner with all the fixings. We must give as we have received, and the more we have received, the more we feel compelled to give.

*The Board of Stewardship*

## Lectionary for July and August

**Sunday, July 5:** 2 Samuel 5: 1-10; Psalm 48; Ezekiel 2: 1-5; Psalm 123; 2 Corinthians 12: 2-10; Mark 6: 1-13.

**Sunday, July 12:** 2 Samuel 6: 1-19; Psalm 24; Amos 7: 7-15; Psalm 85: 8-13; Ephesians 1: 3-14; Mark 6: 14-29.

**Sunday, July 19:** 2 Samuel 7: 1-14; Psalm 89: 20-37; Jeremiah 23: 1-6; Psalm 23; Ephesians 2: 11-22; Mark 6: 30-34, 53-56.

**Sunday, July 26:** 2 Samuel 11: 1-15; Psalm 14; 2 Kings 4: 42-44; Psalm 145; 10-18; Ephesians 3: 14-21; John 6: 1-21.

**Sunday, August 2:** 2 Samuel 11:26 - 12:13; Psalm 51: 1-12; Exodus 16: 2-15; Psalm 78: 23-29; Ephesians 4: 1-16.

**Sunday, August 9:** 2 Samuel 18: 5-33; Psalm 130; 1 Kings 19: 4-8; Psalm 34: 1-8; Ephesians 4:25 - 5:2; John 6:35 - 51.

**Sunday, August 16:** 1 Kings 2: 10-12 and 3: 3-14; Psalm 111; Proverbs 9: 1-6; Psalm 34: 9-14; Ephesians 5: 15-20; John 6: 51-58.

**Sunday, August 23:** 1 Kings 8:1-43; Psalm 84; Joshua 24: 1-18; Psalm 34: 15-22; Ephesians 6: 10-20; John 6: 56-69.

**Sunday, August 30:** Song of Solomon 2: 8-13; Psalm 45: 1-9; Deuteronomy 4: 1-9; Psalm 15; James 1: 17-27; Mark 7: 1-23.

## Milestones

In the Life of Our Church Family

### Baptisms

Aubrey Jane Powers, daughter of Kieran & Jane Powers, June 7.

Sawyer James Mitchell, son of Glen and Kristina Mitchell, June 14.

Bianca Anne Primero and Kaila Marie Primero, daughters of Luis Primero and Tami Matos, June 14.

### Deaths

David Stockwell, father of Sharon Steers, June 3.

Ethel Prentice, June 6.

Polly Oxnard, the week of June 15.



## Thanks to the Bakers

The Lord loves a cheerful baker! And we have some marvelous bakers at First Congregational Church. We would like to thank the following bakers for our first annual cakewalk at the Strawberry Festival: Chris Fitzmaurice, Hope Reinhard, Kirsten Sullivan, Carolyn Brown and her daughter, Sandy Harmer, Susan Hostage, Christine Albrecht, Christine Pittsley, Patti Dickinson, Donna Mead, Jan Garthwait, Lara Ross, and Emilee Ziolkowski. Thank you (and apologies) to anyone we may have missed. Children and adults had a wonderful time participating in the 'cakewalk.'

*Beth Ross*

## 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](mailto:karin.arai@cox.net).

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## A Message of Thanks from the Adams Family

It is impossible to say thank you to our church family with those two words. You have been the ones who helped our family, cried with our family and prayed for and with our family. When you heard of the murders of Betsy's niece and sister-in-law you began the pager minister. To this day, almost 4 years later, this ministry brings fortitude to that family.

Our church family mentored, taught, inspired and loved our children. They are now both strong and independent women thanks to the community of love they received from First Church.

Betsy could not have survived two years of living apart without so many of you helping out with meals, rides and prayers. Those 3 words (meals, rides and prayers) again seem lifeless on the page. However, when you **feel** the love, the affection, the warmth that came with so many activities that were provided, that is to know the pure love our church has to offer.

The activities our family were involved in, teaching Sunday School, mentoring confirmands, chairing and sitting on committees, participating whenever and wherever we could, were done with the family spirit. First Church began as our place of worship and became the place we found our friends, our confidants, our healers and most importantly our family.

The move was made easier with our spirit-filled send off. We wish all of you our love and best. If you are ever in Parsippany, remember to look us up.

*With and through God's love, agape,  
Paul, Betsy, Paula and Nicole Adams*

## Thanks from Susan Hunter

I want to thank you all for the countless prayers via the prayer pager and in silent meditation. I cannot begin to convey how significant and meaningful the quiet vibration of the pager has meant to me both in my early days at the hospital, rehabilitation center and now at home recovering. From those gloomy rainy days in May and June to the bright sunny days ahead, I know much of my recovery is because of God's blessing of First Church.

Thank you for the card signed by so many of the church members, along with individual cards and flowers sent.

Alison, thank you for your visit at the rehabilitation center; it was unexpected and greatly appreciated. Also, the meal ministry team did an outstanding job making sure my family had weekly meals. We are truly blessed by the outpouring of love and compassion of First Congregational Church. Have a wonderful summer!

*Sincerely, Susan Hunter*