

THE PARISH POST

THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

CHESHIRE, CONNECTICUT
www.cheshirecongregational.org

Volume XXIV

June, 2007

No. 6

Take Time to Laugh

By Dave Buchan
Interim Senior Minister

There is an old prayer that goes:

Eternal God, give us a keen sense of honor
that we may be specially just to those we find it hard to like,
and a keen sense of humor
that the healing power of laughter may relax life's tensions.

In biblical times it was noted that "a merry heart doeth good like a medicine." Our health is affected by our outlook. A scientific study by Lorn Whittaker discovered that cheerful people resist disease better than chronic grumblers. One psychiatrist said that he has had to treat very few people who were really able to laugh at themselves. Jeanne Calmont, one of the world's oldest people – who died at 122 – attributed her longevity to "olive oil, port, and laughter."

Above one of the door of the abbey where Sir Walter Scott is buried is the inscription: "Sweeten bitter things with

gentle laughter." Though we cannot laugh off every problem, we can laugh off over-seriousness. The ability to perceive and appreciate life's incongruities can ease the weight of life's problems, relax muscles, and relieve stress. Laughter and a sense of humor can serve as shock absorbers, easing the bumps of life. They can help us transcend life's difficulties.

Laughter is also one of the most infectious things in the world. It spreads to other people. And a good test of a company or a school or a church is how much it laughs. Where there is kindly laughter, there is little chance of trouble. Our church is blessed with a good sense of humor. There is much kindly laughter and gentle kidding in the halls and meeting rooms of First Congregational Church.

Karl Barth, the major Protestant theologian, said, "Laughter is the closest thing to the grace of God." I think he is right. It is one of the great gifts God has given to us.

In Christ,
Dave Buchan

If You Go Away, Please Pre-Pay

As we enter the lazy, hazy, crazy days of summer and prepare for vacations, barbecues and weekends away, remember that First Congregational Church doesn't go on vacation. The church needs our pledges through the summer because all of our expenses exist whether we're here or not.

Listen to this contemporary psalm written by Albin Anderson:

Blessed are the church members who pay their pledges before their vacation cometh.

They then go forth with a light heart.

They wear casual clothing as they wander in pleasant places;

They anoint their bodies with sun tan lotion and insect spray;

They sit beside the still waters, hoping that the fish will bite and the insects will not;

They build a fire of charcoal and place savory meat thereon, and the wind wafteth to their nostrils a pleasant scent;

They eat thereof and are satisfied.

Night cometh.

They close their eyes in glad tiredness with thanksgiving to God. And their sleep is undisturbed. For they know that the good work of their church will not be diminished while they are away.

Worship Schedule

Services are at 9:00 and 11:00 a.m.
Child care and Church School are provided at each service.

Sunday, June 3 – First Sunday after Pentecost; Trinity Sunday. Alison McCaffrey preaching. Communion will be celebrated and food offerings will be received.

This summer, Dave Buchan will preach a series of sermons on the life and times of St. Paul, one of the most powerful personalities of church history – indeed, of world history.

Sunday, June 10 – Second Sunday after Pentecost. Dave Buchan preaching on “Encounter on the Damascus Road.” (Acts 26:12-16, 9:17-19)

Sunday, June 17 – Third Sunday after Pentecost. Dave Buchan preaching on “John Mark.” (Acts 12:24 -13:3,13; 15:36-41, 2 Timothy 4:11)

Sunday, June 24 – Fourth Sunday after Pentecost. Dave Buchan preaching on “Athens.” (Acts 17)



Please note that starting next month, we will go to a summer schedule. Worship will be celebrated at 8 a.m. in the Chapel and 10 a.m. in the Sanctuary during July and August.

A Message from Former Yale Intern Lynda Bigler

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

My graduation from Yale Divinity School has been a time of great joy mixed with feelings of sadness as I pull up the roots I have set down these three short years.

Some of the stronger roots I set down were ties with this congregation, especially those who befriended me and shared conversation while driving me back to Yale each Sunday. I take with me not only the lessons I learned while interning at Cheshire, but also many wonderful experiences and memories.

Recently, I had my ordination interview back home in Oregon and I was the only candidate to pass. My Ecclesiastical Council, the more public version of that interview, is set for July 8. I will be ordained as soon as I receive a call to a church. I will send news of my call and ordination date once they have been determined.

Should any of you wish to stay in touch, my email address is: libigler@easystreet.com. For those who prefer snail mail, my address is: 17641 Brookhurst Dr, Lake Oswego, OR 97034-5093.

May God work with us and through us as you search for a pastor and I search for a call.

*Blessings,
Lynda Bigler*

Attention, Everyone Whose Last Name Starts with P to Z!

The Fellowship Committee will hold another Alphabet Sunday (P-Z) on June 10. We are asking members whose last names begin with P-Z to provide the goodies for coffee hour on that date.

We are in the process of scheduling coffee hours for the 2007-2008 season. A letter will go out to the small groups requesting that they host on particular dates. The dates will be provided by the Fellowship Committee and will be based on the time each small group hosted this past year. Our goal is to create a schedule that will carry over from year to year. This schedule will be flexible in order to accommodate the needs of the hosting group and the dates of holidays and special events.

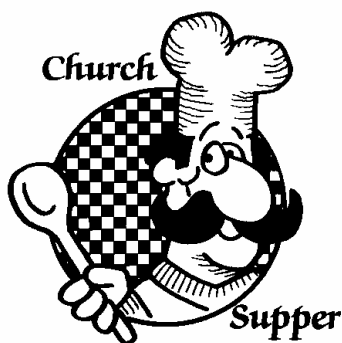
We thank all who have contributed to the coffee hours this year. There is no doubt that this time of fellowship has become an important part of our church life.

*The Fellowship Committee
Marianne Eagleson
Jaclyn Hissick
Martha Triplett-Strollo
Carol Tucker
June Webster*

Fellowship, Food a Good Match at Last Month's Supper

About 60 members and friends of the church participated in the May 4 dinner and conversation in the Parish Hall. The evening consisted of a variety of hearty soups, fresh salads, and most importantly, a large helping of Christian fellowship.

The event was co-hosted by the Senior Minister Search Committee and the Strategic Planning Committee. Although the crowd needed no help in engaging in lively conversation, each table of eight was



given a short list of discussion topics to guide them in thinking about the attributes of a new senior minister.

After the meal, some of the following ideas were discussed:

Beyond good preaching, in a senior minister we seek someone who:

- Ministers as a vocation, not just as a job; has a strong personal faith;
- Is reachable, approachable, compassionate, and is a good listener;
- Builds relationships and unites us;
- Has a strong embrace of music and youth ministry;
- Can motivate and challenge us to be the church all week long;

- Has a sense of humor, has good supervisory and administrative skills, and is skilled in stewardship building.

Other comments and suggestions included ways to increase membership participation, to actively engage new members, to bolster our outreach/mission efforts, and to expand worship opportunities.

The most repeated theme throughout the night, however, was: "Hey, this was fun. We ought to do more of these."

Learn About Prayer Net

Prayer Net is an e-mail Prayer Chain ministry. When a prayer need arises, members of Prayer Net are e-mailed with a confidential prayer request and the need is prayed for. Anyone can bring a concern to Prayer Net for prayer. Simply e-mail Alison McCaffrey (see below) or let her know, and she will pass the request on to the Prayer Net members. If you would like to be a member of Prayer Net, contact Alison, and she will fill you in. Call 272-5323, ext. 12, or e-mail Alison at amccaffrey@CheshireCongregational.org

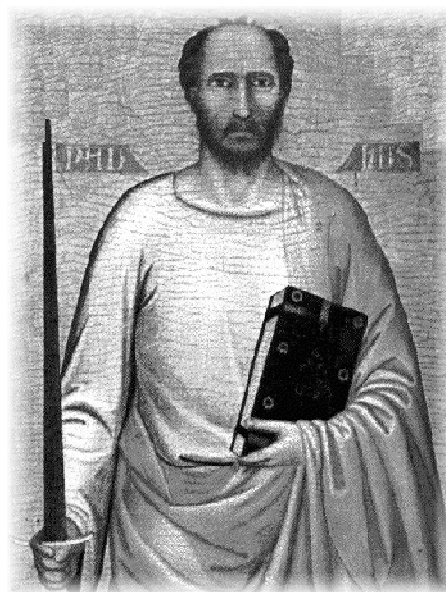
The Food of the Month for our next Food Offering Sunday (June 3) is **breakfast cereal**. Please bring boxes of cereal to church that Sunday – this ministry to the poor is an important one.

What Should We Pay A Senior Minister? (Part 2)

As part of our ongoing congregational conversation about the real costs of clergy and staff, here are some details about the non-salary parts of a senior minister's compensation, provided by the Board of Stewardship. At the present time, we have been paying:

- A parsonage allowance of \$4,500, if the minister chooses to live in the current parsonage;
- A Social Security allowance of \$5,493 (based on a salary of \$47,000), since the minister doesn't pay in directly;
- A retirement annuity of \$10,052;
- Health Insurance costs of \$14,646 (for a family);
- A disability insurance payment of \$1,077;
- An equity payment to compensate for the minister's having no equity build-up in a family-owned home: \$4,300;
- A yearly travel allowance of \$2,000.

We also figure in four weeks of vacation; a sabbatical leave after six or seven years of service; and professional development expenses (at conferences and seminars) of \$1,000.



“Saint Paul” by Bernardo Daddi

All About Paul

Historian Michael Grant has this to say about St. Paul: “Without the spiritual earthquake brought about by St. Paul, Christianity would probably never have survived, or, if it had, it would have assumed a very different form. Yet Paul’s importance extends very widely beyond the religious field. His effect upon western thought has been immeasurable. He has to be considered not only as a religious figure of exceptional power but as one of the outstanding makers of history.”

Learn more about St. Paul in a series of sermons to be preached by Dave Buchan starting this month. The dates and subjects of June’s sermons may be found in the Worship Schedule box on Page 2 of this issue.

Notes from the Executive Board's May Meeting

The following items were discussed at the May meeting of the Executive Board:

Congregational Meeting

A church-wide meeting is being planned for early June. A presentation will be made regarding the need for the Parish Care Minister (a position which existed until August of 2006) as well as the potential funding of that position. A vote is planned to approve the reactivation of the search team.

This meeting will also provide an update on the staff searches for settled Senior Minister and Director of Youth Ministries. Information will be shared regarding the research that has been done by Boards and committees on job responsibilities, salary and benefit packages for these positions.

The call to the meeting will be posted in the church bulletin as well as being read during upcoming church services. Discussion of staff positions in our church is important to the future of our church. Please plan to attend and make your opinion known.

Budget

The budget planning process for 2008 is now underway. All boards and committees are being asked to provide their budgets to the Budget Committee, which is a subcommittee of the Executive Board.

The Budget Committee is composed of the Treasurers and a representative from Trustees, Deacons, At-Large and

Stewardship, with the President serving ex-officio. This committee's task is to review all budgets submitted by church boards and committees, and to put together a draft budget to be reviewed by the Executive Board and eventually to be presented to the congregation for approval.

A preliminary budget will be presented to the Executive Board at the end of the summer with the plan to present it to the congregation at a church meeting in September. Stewardship activities are in planning stages for the fall campaign.

Membership Verification Team

Letters have been sent out requesting feedback from inactive members – whether they want to be removed from our rolls, to move to 'inactive,' to transfer membership, or to confirm membership. Those who do not respond to the first letter will receive a second request letter before action is taken regarding their membership status. The team's goal is to have this task substantially completed by mid-May.

Communication Task Force

The focus continues to be streamlining production of the Parish Post and improvements to the church web site. As all of our search teams expect that candidates will want to access our web site for information about the church, we want to ensure that the site is current, full of

Continued on the next page

Continued from the previous page

useful information about the church, and easy to use.

Planning Team

A church supper was held on May 4 to get feedback from the congregation on issues important to them (see the details elsewhere in this issue). Although this meeting was kicked off by the Planning Team, the information will also be helpful to the Senior Minister Search Team in preparing the senior search profile. Further opportunities for discussion among congregation members is planned.

The Executive Board

Summer Music On the Green

This year's evening of music and dancing on the church's green, hosted by the Music Board, will be on Saturday, July 28. Please bring a picnic and find a spot on the lawn to enjoy an evening of music, dancing, and community. The green will open at 6 p.m. for picnics, and the entertainment will begin at 7:15. The acclaimed dance band "Higher & Higher," featuring our own Jennifer France as lead singer, will perform hits from the 50's to today – something for everybody. And when your feet start tapping, you'll be welcome to start dancing the night away. Refreshments will be sold. Admission: \$12 general; \$8 students and seniors; under 14 years old, free. Rain date is Sunday, July 29.

Bikers Wanted

Are you interested in joining a group of bikers for weekly, biweekly, or monthly bike rides? This could be an evening event, or could happen on weekend afternoons, depending on the group's interest. Contact Kathy Duffendack at 272-2885.



Nursery Help Needed

The church's Noah's Ark Nursery is looking for volunteer caregivers to work one Sunday (10 a.m. service only) during the months of July and/or August. You would be one of a two-person team. We offer child care for ages 6 weeks up to 3 years old. If you're interested, please contact Elaine Daly, nursery coordinator, at 272-8646 or Debbie Gravell, commissioned minister of Christian Education, at 272-5323.

Audio Bibles Available

The church now has audio cassettes of the Bible for anyone who is visually impaired. They are in the library and can be borrowed. If you would like to borrow them and are unable to come to the church, please call the church office and we can bring them to you.

New in the Library

The following books are new in the Church Library:

Congregation: The Journey Back to Church by Gary Dorsey. This former Hartford Courant writer has captured the quietly invisible, mystical inter-connectedness of the everyday church. (It's about First Church in Windsor, Conn.)

The Helper by Catherine Marshall. An ideal devotional guide for Lent, for personal study, or for group discussion.

How to Pray by R.A. Torrey. Your prayer life can be what God intends it to be!

Making Life Work by Bill Hybels. Putting God's wisdom into action.

Portraits of Perseverance by Henry Garipey. 100 meditations from the Book of Job

The Student Bible, New International Version. Includes introductions to each book, plus "where to find it" reference sections. (Will be located in the parlor "S" section: Sr. High students.)

New Children's Videos

These animated stories from the New Testament are available:

The King is Born; John the Baptist; The Prodigal Son; The Good Samaritan; The Miracles of Jesus; Saul of Tarsus; He is Risen.

Memorial Music Thanks

The Board of Music would like to thank those members and friends of the church who contributed goodies and their time to arrange such a lovely reception following the Memorial Music Sunday Service.

Thank you, too, to those who offered their time moving risers and pianos and all of the fine details unknown to make this special service a memorable one.

The Board of Music

Rummage Sale Impact

The proceeds from our church's rummage sales are used for Ladies Aid projects. The women's shelter is given much needed items for women who are establishing new lives with little money. The Masons are given the unsold coats, to be distributed to those in need of winter warmth. Many of those attending the sale find clothes, toys, and household items they otherwise could not afford. A large assortment of containers for the frozen food ministry were made possible by the rummage sale.

A great deal of hard work is done by Addie Marx and her dedicated crew, who make the rummage sale a success. Thanks to Addie and her wonderful helpers for making the rummage sales happen!

Board of Outreach Ministry Opportunities

Fifty-three boxes of cereal collected at First Congregational Church were delivered to **FISH of Greater New Haven** on May 10. A box of cereal goes into every bag of groceries; it is a very simple meal to prepare and each box provides several meals. (Cereal is the Food of the Month for the Food Offering to be collected on Sunday, June 3) For many people, this one bag of food is all they have for a week. These bags are prepared by an 85 year old woman, who's been doing this work each week for the past several years.

FISH volunteers deliver a week's worth of groceries to families, elderly, and disabled people who call for food assistance. FISH is in great need of several additional two-person teams to make deliveries. If you or someone you know can volunteer for a total of only 1½ to 2 hours per month, please contact Marsha at 469-8967 or by e-mail, FISH@fishgnh.org



The 11th annual **Cook & Care Walk-A-Thon** will be held October 18, 2007. This fun event provides major funding for four organizations that feed and support those in need in the New Haven area, including FISH, the Community Soup Kitchen, the Downtown Evening Soup Kitchen, and Interfaith Volunteer Caregivers. More information in future Parish Posts.

Put on your old clothes and join us for **Mission Day 2007**. Tentatively set for Saturday, October 13, we will be doing small chores for Columbus House, Safe Haven of Greater Waterbury, Chrysalis and New Haven Community Christian Action.

Want to help the **Malawi Breakfast Program**? Turn in your bottle and can deposit return slips to Amy Web-Mower or put them in the container on the Board of Outreach bulletin board. Five cents can turn into dollars and go a long way.

Don't forget to support **Relay For Life** on June 8 and 9. Sponsor a member of "Team Steeplechase." (That's our church.) Purchase a quilt square to honor cancer survivors or in memory of cancer victims. Visit the book sale table in the Parish Hall.

Thank you to Lisa Canas and Amanda Roke for all their hard work with the **Church World Service Blanket Day**. Thank you to everyone who supported the offering.

◆ Lectionary Readings

June 3: Proverbs 8:1-4, 22-31; Psalm 8; Romans 5:1-5; John 16:12-15

June 10: 1 Kings 17:17-24; Psalm 30; Galatians 1:11-24; Luke 7:11-17

June 17: 2 Samuel 11:26-12:10, 13-15; Psalm 32; Galatians 2:15-21; Luke 7:36-8:3

June 24: Isaiah 65:1-9; Psalm 22:19-28; Galatians 3:23-29; Luke 8:26-39

Our Members and Friends Say ‘Thank You’

Thank you for the beautiful flowers brought to me by Deacon Jackie Cole. I very much appreciate your remembering my 89th birthday. God bless you.

Mary Hartman

I would like to thank everyone who helped us during my surgery and recuperation. We appreciated all the calls, cards, visits, flowers, and meals. A special thank-you to those who made sure our driveway and sidewalk were cleared of snow so I was able to get to the hospital and to doctor visits. Thank you for the rides when I couldn't drive. We are so blessed to belong to such a loving church.

Rich and Barb Grudzias

Thank you to everyone for the wonderful reception and gifts to acknowledge my retirement. I appreciate your support and encouragement during my many years of service in the church office. God bless you all.

Jessie Waszmer

The lovely lily brought to my husband, Roland, is still so fragrant, and being appreciated and enjoyed by both of us. Thank you so much for thinking of him.

Lorna Fowler

A special thank you to Dave Buchan for hospital and rehab visits, and to Jackie and Ford Cole for delivering flowers – also to all those who sent cards, made phone calls, and offered prayers.

Mickey Wheeler

I received a beautiful lily from my church on Easter afternoon, and I want to thank old friends for remembering me. A special thanks, also, to Sue Mancinelli for delivering it. Such gifts always create a warm and happy feeling.

Dorothy Shultz

I would like to thank the church community for all the donations that I received. I collected over 700 books from church, friends, and family. My mom and I delivered them ourselves to Troup School in New Haven. All the children were happy and very excited. Some of the kids sent me pictures they made, and thank-you notes. Two of the teachers sent nice notes too. Thanks to everyone who donated. It was a very fun project!

Gillian Reinhard

Transitions

in the life of our church family

Baptism:

April 29, Jordan Nicole Bokon, daughter of David Nicholas and Kristina Zwack Bokon.

Deaths:

April 21, Carolyn Engle Roberts.

April 25, Sarah Arline Appel.

April 26, Sally Ann Nettleton.

April 30, Phyllis B. Eddy.



RECIPES FOR THOSE UPCOMING POTLUCK DINNERS

Beans Supreme

Preparation time: 15 minutes

Temperature: 350 degrees

Ingredients:

1 can B&M beans
can green lima beans
1 can buttered lima beans
1 can kidney beans
1 c. chopped onion
1 c. brown sugar, packed
1/2 c. vinegar
1 lb. bacon
garlic salt

Instructions: Saute bacon & onions; drain. Drain juice off all the vegetables except the B&M beans. Combine all in casserole dish.

Broccoli Cheese Squares

Number served: makes 4 dozen 1-1/2 inch squares

Temperature: 350 degrees

Ingredients:

3 T. butter
2 10-oz. pkg. frozen broccoli
3 large eggs
1 c. milk
1 c. flour
1 t. pepper
1 t. baking powder
1 t. salt
1 lb. mild cheddar cheese, shredded (4 cups)
2 T. finely chopped onion
seasoned salt

Instructions: Grease 9x13 inch baking pan with butter. Steam broccoli until partially cooked, about 3 minutes. Cool and press dry. Beat eggs and milk until frothy. Thoroughly mix flour, baking powder and salt. Stir into the egg mixture, mixing well. Fold in broccoli, cheese & onion; spoon into baking dish spreading evenly. Sprinkle with seasoned salt. Bake in preheated oven for about 35 minutes or until set and lightly browned. Let stand 5 minutes, then cut into bite-size pieces."

Cheese and Pepper Potatoes

Number served: 6

Preparation time: 20 minutes

Temperature: 250 degrees

Ingredients:

12 potatoes
1/2 lb. Velveeta cheese
1 green pepper
1 onion
1 c. oleo
garlic croutons

Instructions: Cook potatoes with the skins; let cool. Melt oleo in skillet; add green peppers and onions. Cook until tender. Cut potatoes in small bite size pieces. Place in a 9x13 inch greased pan. Pour melted oleo, peppers and onions over the potatoes. Cut Velveeta cheese into chunks; drop on top. Bake for 1 hour, uncovered. Add garlic croutons to top just before serving."