

THE PARISH POST

THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

CHESHIRE, CONNECTICUT
www.cheshirecongregational.org

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No. 6

David: Israel's Greatest King

By Dave Buchan, Interim Senior Minister

"The drama of David's life is the drama of life itself – intensified, amplified, glorified to be sure, but the drama of all our lives nevertheless."

-- H. Pat Albright

The Old Testament devotes more space to David than to any other figure. His life is a journey that is both thrilling and heartbreaking.

Here is a tremendously faithful and capable leader who brought his people from the brink of disaster to the heights of greatness in the Middle East. But here, too, is also a very cunning and ambitious man who is not above abusing his position, a very human man who knows first hand a parent's pain, a husband's failure, and a friend's care.

Intrigue, jealousy, love: all the powerful emotions are here set against the panorama of marching armies and power politics.

Much of the story of David, though it was edited to meet Israel's later needs,

goes back to the royal court of the day – and represents some of the earliest historical writing in existence.

The Jewish people believed that not only men and women but God was at work in the sweep of history and in the events of their daily lives.

History was the unfolding drama of the acts of God and should be recorded.

This June in our worship services, we'll be looking at the story of David, one person's life, to gain insight into the meaning of our own lives, our relations with others and our relationship with God.

The story of David is found in the books of 1 and 2 Samuel in the Old Testament.

Our services continue at 9:00 and 11:00 Sunday mornings. Won't you join us for worship this summer?

In Christ,
Dave Buchan
Interim Senior Minister

From The Interim Associate Minister

I'm happy to be covering Alison McCaffrey's role as associate minister during her sabbatical leave. Alison returns on July 14, so this interim will go by like a flash.

In keeping with Alison's usual schedule, I plan to take Friday as my day off. Phone messages for me may be left at extension 12, and I can be reached by email: pallen@cheshirecongregational.org. I look forward to ministering with you.

The Rev. Peggy Allen



Before You Go Away

Many in our congregation are lucky enough to be able to get away for the summer. That's one reason why, in July and August, we go to a 10:00 service on Sundays instead of the usual 9:00 and 11:00.

Summer may almost be here, but our church's financial needs don't take a vacation. Please, before you go away, fulfill your weekly pledge commitment in advance if you can afford it. Just because you won't be here when we pass the collection plate each Sunday, that doesn't mean the bills don't need to be paid. Sending a check before you leave helps.

Thanks in advance for keeping your church's cash flow secure during the summer months!

Worship Schedule For June

Sunday, June 1: Dave Buchan preaching on "David: Israel's Greatest King (1): In the Valley of Elah – David and Goliath" (1 Samuel 17). Communion Sunday; food offerings will be collected. Food of the month: Breakfast cereal.

Sunday, June 8: -- Peggy Allen preaching.

Sunday, June 15: Dave Buchan preaching on "David: Israel's Greatest King (2): Success and Envy" (1 Samuel 18)

Sunday, June 22: Dave Buchan preaching on "David: Israel's Greatest King (3): David at Engedi" (Psalm 142, 1 Samuel 24:1-4)

Sunday, June 29: Dave Buchan preaching on "David: Israel's Greatest King (4): Bathsheba" (Psalm 51, 2 Samuel 11)



Thanks for Cleanup

The Board of Trustees wishes to thank all those members and the Boy Scouts from Troop 92 who participated in the April 26th Spring Cleanup Day.

It was a great turnout and we accomplished all that we had expected to do.

The Board of Trustees

What Will You Do With the Rebate Check?

So we're in the process of getting our rebate checks from Uncle Sam in hopes of stimulating the economy. It's good to have an Uncle looking out for us.

It's even better having a Father looking out for us, and providing for our every need. That's the way it's always been, and it goes way beyond the economic outlook for the near term: Most of us have lived our whole lives in the glow of God's good bounty. You might call it the original trickle-down economic stimulus package. Or you might call it love.

What is our response? Well, we need to provide for our own needs, those of our children, those of our parents, and those of the organizations that are nearest and dearest to our hearts. So many good causes!

But there's another way to look at this issue than as one of pure prioritization. The church is not just an organization that is dependent on our generosity (although it certainly is that). A faith-disciplined response to God's bounty is always a return of a portion of that bounty to God with joy and gratitude in our hearts. It says we see that, no matter how tight things are for us, what God gives us is always more than enough to sustain us. He has come through for us yet again. And we see that He always will.

Frankly, this is one of the quantitative differences between mainline churches like our own Congregational church, on the one hand, and the fundamentalist churches



or even the so-called big-box churches, on the other. As a percentage of income, their giving is much higher than ours. Perhaps those churches go too far in "beating the bushes" for those dollars, but you've got to admire the faithfulness of the folks that belong to those churches. They put their faith on the line, the way we used to back in colonial times. Maybe it's why the Christian world is slowly tipping in their direction in this country.

So on the heels of our nearly unanimous vote to use up to \$30,000 from our permanent endowment to leverage three times that amount from the town to repave Church Drive – thus to refurbish our historical position at the center of Cheshire – it's good to think again about what we're going to do with those tax rebates. Are we still a faith community that channels God's love into this town?

The Board of Stewardship

Deacons: Hosting, Serving, Planning

The Deacons have been quite busy during the past two months.

We began March by hosting our UCC Conference Minister, Davida Foy Crabtree, with a reception between services and a wonderful luncheon with the church leadership following the 11 a.m. service.

Then came Holy Week, and we were very busy preparing for, and participating in, the Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Sunday services.

The opportunity to participate in these services, as well as delivering Easter Lilies after the Easter Sunday services, made Holy Week even more meaningful for all of us.

We began discussion about the summer worship service schedule, and continued discussion about the updating of the Senior Minister's job description. A subcommittee continues to work with the chair of the Personnel Committee on the job description, which has been somewhat ambiguous in the past.

We want to get it right. We also put the finishing touches on revisions to the new Deacons' Manual, and unanimously approved it.

In April, the Deacons hosted a reception for visit of our UCC Regional Minister, Mike Penn-Strah, and also hosted a luncheon for Mike with the members of the Executive Board.

At our April meeting, we approved a summer service schedule. In July and August, there will be an informal 8 a.m. service led by a clergy member (as available) or a lay person.

There will also be a regular 10 a.m. service led by clergy. The Deacons will work on the mechanics of the 8 a.m. service. We also voted to add acolytes to worship services in order to give the youth a greater part in the services. More on this later!

The Deacons are seeking ways to enhance the spiritual life of the church. In our meeting we discussed what would be different at First Congregational if Jesus were actually, physically sitting in the front pew every Sunday. It was a very interesting discussion!

If you would like to add some input to this discussion, please contact Senior Deacon Ford Cole at fcole7619@cox.net.

And finally, we are beginning work on planning the "Homecoming weekend" in September. *The Board of Deacons*



Hospitalized?

If you or family members are in the hospital, please make sure to tell First Congregational Church. Due to privacy laws, we can no longer obtain this information from the hospitals.

Trustees Report on Physical Improvements

There's lots of work being performed on church property these days.

The Trustees want to make sure everyone in the congregation is informed on our progress.

The following activity has been conducted over the past six months, and we are optimistic that we will complete the rest of the items by year's end.

We would also like to express our thanks to those members who have made special donations to make these improvements possible.

Many have requested their funds be utilized for specific projects such as the basement waterproofing, the HVAC system for the offices as well as the Church Drive Project.

Your help is greatly appreciated!

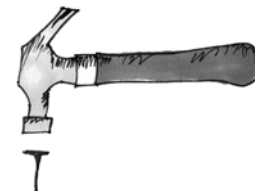
Completed Work:

- New Daycare tenant agreement signed
- Property needs assessment performed
- Parsonage upstairs bathroom renovated
- Parsonage hardwood floors refinished
- Parsonage fireplaces repaired
- Chapel side roof replaced and siding painted
- Spring cleanup completed
- Foundation drain and battery backup sump pump installed in the Parsonage

- Two new battery backup sump pumps installed in the connector
- Town agreement for the renovation of Church Drive approved

Work on the agenda for this year

- Whiting House upstairs bathroom renovation
 - Parsonage front porch renovation
 - Parsonage readiness cleaning for new senior minister
 - Church Drive project (curbs, sidewalks, roadway, Green walkway and parking lot rear driveway)
 - Replacement of office air conditioning unit
 - Repair of Whiting House and Parsonage furnaces
 - Handicap line painting for Whiting House
 - Parsonage exterior window trim painting (under warranty)
 - Replacement of the sanctuary and vestibule rugs
 - Replacement of the administrative office rug and painting walls

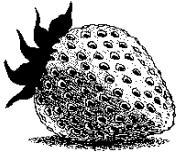


The Church Drive project will accommodate a plaque in the center of the Green walkway with a sitting area that would recognize the Ladies Aid and the town for their contributions.

The Board of Trustees

Strawberry Festival Help Needed Now

This year's Strawberry Festival is only a couple of weeks away, and the Festival Committee needs lots of volunteer help to make it the huge success it always is.



In addition to food servers, the Festival needs middle- and high-school age young people to help with kids' activities, and also adults to supervise. You may sign up for two-hour shifts, or more if you want to.

To volunteer for the Festival – which is always a great time – either sign up on the sheets at the church or phone Martha Lape at 272-9327. It would be a great help if all volunteers were to sign up or call by Wednesday, June 4. The Festival itself is on Saturday, June 14, from 11 to 4:30.

Check out the Church Web Site!

Do you want to know what's happening next week at the church? Need to contact one of the staff? Want to fill out a Church School form, study the revised by-laws, or read the Parish Post from last month or last year? It's all there on the church's newly expanded and updated web site, at www.cheshirecongregational.org.

Perhaps the biggest new improvement is the addition of a complete calendar of church events. Just click on "Calendar" at the top of the home page, and at a glance you'll see everything that's happening at the church, including worship, committee meetings, and community happenings such as Boy Scouts.

Be sure to visit the web site regularly to keep up with all that's going on at First Congregational!

College Scholarships

Attention High School Seniors: College Scholarship Applications are available in the church office Monday through Friday between 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.

Four scholarships of about \$500 apiece are available. They are awarded by a small committee to high school seniors heading for college who have been active in the church.

Year 2008 scholarship applications are available in the church office. The deadline for returning them to the church office is June 30, 2008. The scholarships will be awarded in August.

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

Music During Summer Worship: A Time to Participate

Summer is a great time to become involved in the music program. As our choirs begin summer break after a long year of singing, the months of June, July, and August provide perfect opportunities for those in our congregation to share their talents as singers or instrumentalists during summer worship services.

If you would like to participate and provide a musical offering during a service, please see me when you attend church on Sunday or during the week, or give me a call at 272-5323, ext. 18.



If you ever had interest in singing with the Senior Choir but found yourself either too busy or somewhat intimidated, please consider joining our summer choir for the 10:00 Worship Service on the following Sundays: June 22, July 20, and August 17. All you need to do is to show up at 9:00 to learn an easy anthem, and enjoy singing!

Members of our Senior Choir will be there to help you along and make sure you're comfortable with the music. We especially hope to see members of our congregation who do not normally sing with us come and try it out!

Thank you to our wonderful vocal and handbell choirs for another tremendous year of singing praises to God. The dedication and enthusiasm shown by those who participate in music at First Congregational Church is so uplifting. They provide a great service to our church and community. I look forward to seeing everyone together again in the fall.

Joe D'Eugenio

Youth Group News

The YUTES hope that the congregation found Youth Sunday to be an uplifting and joyful experience. The Praise Band is working on some new music that they hope to share in a contemporary worship in the near future. We'll keep you posted.

We will hold our end of year picnic on July 13 at the Brunettis'. The pool will be open! Please bring a snack or dish to share. We will provide hot dogs, hamburgers and beverages. The picnic will be combined with a Tool Training event that is mandatory for everyone going on the Mission Trip. If you're going on the trip, it's important to keep this date open. Find directions and more information online at www.yutes.org.

Parish Care Update: Ministry Given and Received

In an effort to keep the congregation informed on what the Parish Care Committee is doing, a report will appear regularly in the Parish Post. This is the first one. To catch everyone up since January, here is what has been done so far in 2008:

Baptism/Infant Committee: Seven baptisms have been held. In each case, a plaque was given and, if the family is a member of the congregation, a hand-knitted baby blanket was also given. Four blankets have been given since the beginning of the year. Also, cards are sent on the first anniversary of each person's baptism.

Bereavement: In this, our newest ministry, Jan Garthwait visits with a newly bereaved and provides resources with a caring and listening heart. She has had one such visit since March.

Cards: So far this year, 75 cards have been sent for situations such as: get well, sympathy, thinking of you, anniversary of a loved one's death, birthday, thank you, encouragement, and congratulations.

Caring Christians: This involves monthly visits to persons in the congregation who are homebound or at nursing homes. All five available Caring Christians have been assigned and have attended to 10 people since January.

Chores: Three chore sessions have been held.

Meals: 40 meals have been delivered.

Pager Ministry: All six pagers have been assigned to eight people since January.

Rides: Three rides, to church and to doctor's appointments, have been given.

Stephen Ministers – All 12 Stephen Ministers have been assigned and have met with 14 care receivers since January.

*Donna Mead
Parish Care Coordinator*



The Gospel of Mark

Mark, the oldest of the four gospels, is also the shortest. Come to a Bible study focusing on this part of the New Testament with Peggy Allen on Thursday evenings started May 29 and ends July 10 (no meeting on July 3).

We meet at 6:30 p.m. in Room 10. Bring your Bible and an inquiring mind. A sign-up sheet is available at the table near the offices.

**Summer worship hours
in July and August
8 o'clock (informal service)
10 o'clock (regular service)**

Summer Church School

Church School doesn't take a vacation--we are here in the summer. Join us when you are in town. The theme of this year's Summer Church School is "Treasure Hunters: Digging into the Bible." Participants are children from age 3 through 3rd Grade. Youth helpers are students in Grade 5 and up.

Summer Church School started May 25, and runs through Labor Day weekend. In June, there are worship services at 9 and 11 o'clock as usual; in July and August, services are at 8 and 10 a.m., and the Church School is offered only at the 10 o'clock service.

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 Bible snacks.

Volunteer Teachers will be needed each week. If you are interested in joining us with your gifts of teaching, please contact Emilee Ziolkowski at 755-3390 or Debbie Gravell at 272-5323, ext 16. Please consider checking your calendar and volunteering for a Sunday in the summer.

Volunteers Needed: Noah's Ark Nursery is looking for volunteer caregivers to work one Sunday (10:00 service) during the months of July or August. You will 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 to age 3.

If you are interested, please contact Nursery Coordinator Elaine Daly at 272-

8646 or Commissioned Minister of Christian Education Debbie Gravell at 272-5323, ext. 16.

Next Year's Confirmation: An informational meeting will be held on Monday, June 23, at 7 p.m. in the Parish Hall for families interested in participating in the 2008-2009 confirmation process.

If you are unable to attend that meeting but you and your youth are considering being a part of this year's confirmation process, please contact Debbie Gravell at 272-5323, ext. 16, as soon as possible to make an appointment to hear about the program and the commitment involved.

It is important to know before the fall who is participating, so each confirmand can be matched to a mentor.



2007-2008 Confirmation

Congratulations to the young people who were confirmed on May 11! They are



Michael Dickinson, Patrick Hackett, Connor Jason,

Amanda Massa, Almariet Palm, Jeanne-marie VanHeerden, Eric vonFischer, Karen Brunetti, Kimberly Cavallaro, Meghan Fackler, and Jillian Stronk.

We warmly welcome each of these as our church's newest members!

Notes from the Executive Board

Congregational Meeting: The congregational meeting held May 4 was the first of the two required to accept revisions to church by-laws. Dennis Lape, Chair of the By-laws Committee, led the informational meeting, highlighting the proposed changes. The meeting was productive, with thoughtful comments and a number of questions raised by attendees.

Initially, the By-laws Committee and the Executive Board envisioned that a second meeting would be held next, to vote on the proposed by-law changes. However, after consideration, it was determined that members of the congregation should be given time to read, review and consider the proposed changes, and to bring questions and concerns to a public forum. Therefore, a June 8 church meeting will be held to allow a full discussion of the proposed by-law changes.

A meeting to formally accept the revised by-laws will be scheduled for early fall; its date is yet to be determined. The By-Laws Review Committee is Dennis Lape, Bill Gordon, Mark Sullivan, and June Webster.

The second item on the agenda for the May 4 meeting was to approve the Trustees' use of up to \$30,000 from unrestricted endowment funds for priority church maintenance.

Rich Kruczek and Ed Albrecht showed pictures of the work needed on Church Drive project and explained the cost-sharing and collaboration with the town,

whereby the church will recognize significant savings by participating at this time. The item was passed, with one person abstaining.

Editor's Note: After the May 4 meeting, an anonymous benefactor donated several thousand dollars to the church. It therefore may not be necessary to tap into the endowment funds for the Church Drive project. In addition, it was announced at the meeting that Ladies Aid has donated \$8,500 to the Church Drive renovation. Our thanks to these generous contributors.

Annual Budget: Treasurer Walt Ryan announced the beginning of the 2009 budget process. He is convening the Budget Committee who will, among other steps, be in contact with boards and committees to determine their projected financial requirements for the upcoming program year.

The Budget Committee deliberates throughout the summer to allow them to present a preliminary budget to the church in the fall.

Congregational Input: Input from any member of the congregation is always welcomed by the Executive Board. Please feel free to contact Church President Bob Mead, or any member of the Board: Christine Albrecht, the Rev. Peggy Allen, Susan Bishop, the Rev. Dave Buchan, Lisa Canas, Ford Cole, Anthony DePaolo, Kathy Duffendack, Mark Hall, David Hostage, Rich Kruczek, Addie Marx, Bob Porter, Lynn Ryan or Walt Ryan.

Update From the Membership Committee

On March 30, we welcomed into membership Regan Huntley, Stacey and Chad Groshart, and Kristen Hallett.

In addition to the reception for the new members and their families following the service, all were invited to a potluck dinner hosted by the Membership Committee at the home of Jan and Chris Cowles on April 14. All enjoyed a wonderful evening of food and fellowship. Ted and Tracy Bloschichak, who will join the church shortly, attended with their family.

The Membership Committee, a representative from Deacons, and the senior minister were there to welcome them. If you have not introduced yourself to any of our new church family members, please do so (look for the purple name tags).

The Membership Committee is planning to have a table at the Strawberry Festival to offer information about joining First Congregational Church. Please come by to say hello, and if you know people who might be considering church membership, please ask them to stop by.



Handbell Choir News

The Senior Handbell Choir (teens and adults) is still looking for both new and experienced players. It rehearses on Wednesday evenings. Don't worry if you have never played handbells or chimes before; we will teach you.

Outreach in June and July

Matthew 15:32 – Then Jesus called his disciples unto him, and said, I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with me now three days, and have nothing to eat: and I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way.

For the months of June and July 2008 First Congregational Church will be reaching out to help the FISH food bank in New Haven and GWIM's food bank and soup kitchen in Waterbury. You may remember that last summer the cupboards were bare at the food banks, and this year will be worse with many people out of



work and the high cost of life's essentials. Also, children are out of school and do not receive

school lunch. In many cases, that school lunch is their only substantial meal each day.

Boxes will be placed around the church for June and July where you can place nonperishable food. Monetary donations will also be taken; be sure to label the recipients of these funds. There will also be a collection area at the Strawberry Festival.

Jesus is calling his disciples. Please help!

Mark Your Calendar For Homecoming II

On Sunday, September 7, First Congregational Church will hold its second Homecoming Sunday.

It will start with the 9 and 11 a.m. services, with hymns we know and love; recognition of our 50-year members; church picnic at noon; activities, music, and games. Be sure to save the date and join us.



Lectionary Readings for June

Sunday, June 1: Genesis 6: 9-22, 7: 24, 8: 14-19; Psalm 46; Deuteronomy 11: 18-21, 26-28; Psalm 31: 1-5, 19-24; Romans 1: 16-17; 3: 22-31; Matthew 7: 21-29.

Sunday, June 8: Genesis 12: 1-9; Psalm 33: 1-12; Hosea 5: 15 to 6: 6; Psalm 50: 7-15; Romans 4: 13-25; Matthew 9: 9-13.

Sunday, June 15: Genesis 18: 1-15, 21: 1-7; Psalm 116: 1-2, 12-19; Exodus 19: 2-8; Psalm 100; Romans 5: 1-8; Matthew 9:35 – 10: 8.

Sunday, June 22: Genesis 21: 8-21; Psalm 86: 1-10, 16-17; Jeremiah 20: 7-13; Psalm 69: 7-18; Romans 6: 1-11.

Sunday, June 29: Genesis 22: 1-14; Psalm 13; Jeremiah 28: 5-9; Psalm 89: 1-2, 15-18; Romans 6: 12-23; Matthew 10: 40-42.



Milestones In the Life of our Church Family

Births

Meena Lily Groshart, daughter of Chad and Stacey Groshart, May 9

Deaths

John Davies (father of Diane Visconti), April 21

Kacey Rose Mitchell (daughter of Glen and Kristina Mitchell), May 5

Arthur Clementsen, May 8

Jack Altobello, May 9

Ann Williams (mother of Pat Turner), May 9



Mark your calendars! This year, Relay for Life will be held on June 6 and June 7, and we are looking for people who would like to be on our team.

Again this year, members of your church family will take part in one of the largest relays in New England. Last year Team SteepleChase (that's us) was Number 7. Each member of the team is doing individual fundraising and the team has had a successful Tea & Chocolate Party as well as our Tag Sale on May 31st. We will be continuing our Parish Hall Book Sale to raise money; please visit us weekly, as our collection changes frequently.

During the Relay, a representative from our team will always be out on the track walking while other members camp out along the track enjoying entertainment, activities and camaraderie. You are invited to come and visit any time during the Relay.

You are also invited to our Sunrise Service on Saturday morning, June 7. We ask you to pray for and with us. You may contact Carol Ploch (272-5959), Rich Grudzias (272-2483) or Betsy Adams (271-1872) at any time with questions.

Watch for further information in the Bulletin and the Parish Post.

HOT DOGS & HAMBURGERS ✪ KIDS' GAMES ✪ CLOWNS
MAGIC SHOW ✪ PONY RIDES ✪ MUSIC ✪ PETTING ZOO
AND STRAWBERRY SHORTCAKE!



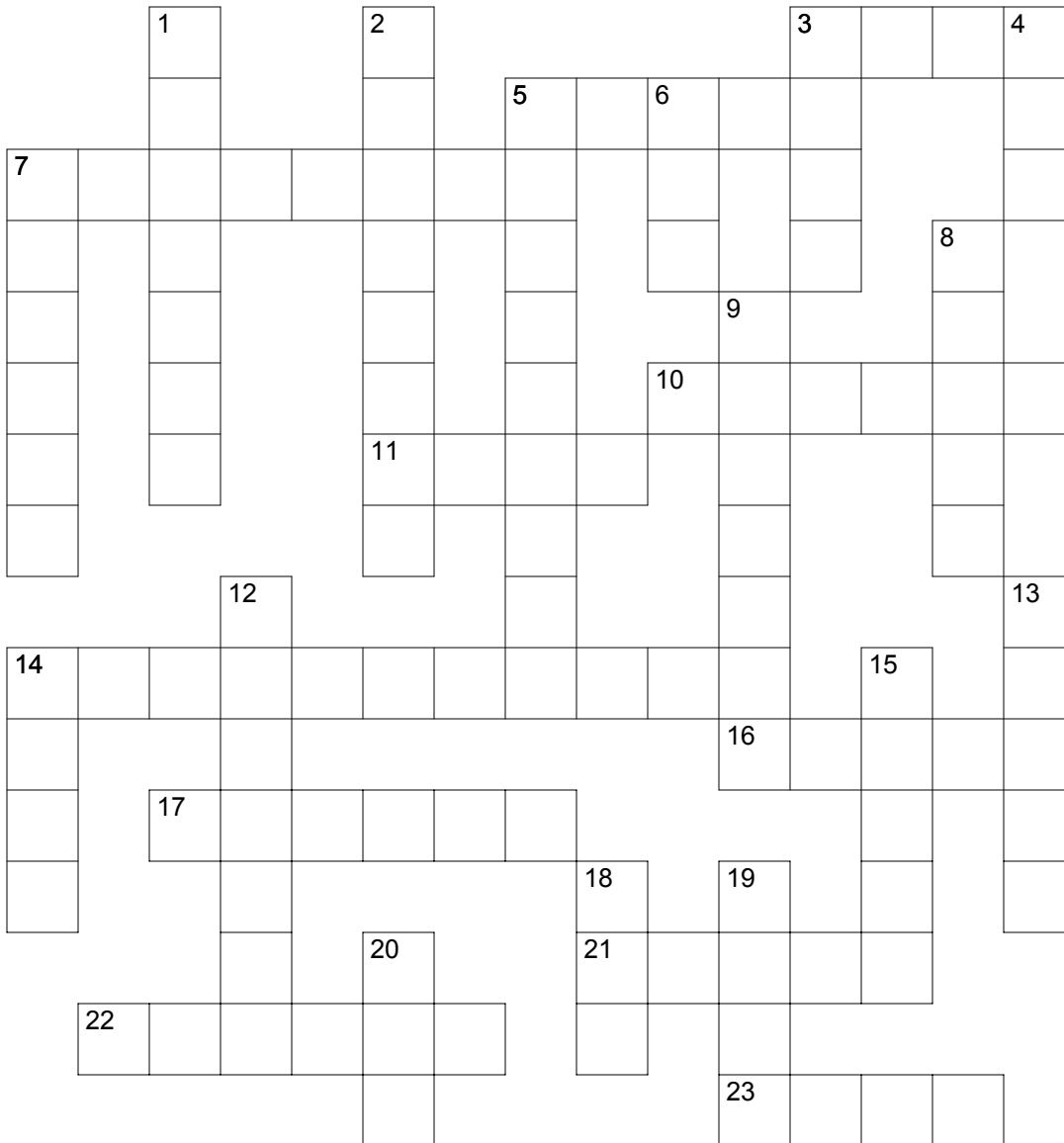
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
CHESHIRE
STRAWBERRY
FESTIVAL

SATURDAY, JUNE 14
ON THE GREEN IN FRONT OF THE CHURCH

11 A.M. TO 4:30 P.M.

RAIN MOVES THE FESTIVAL INDOORS

Matthew, Chapter 7, Puzzle 1



Across

- 3. sweet, pear-shaped fruit
- 5. not true
- 7. perform
- 10. carnivorous mammals
- 11. wicked
- 14. shrubs with spines
- 16. abode
- 17. flabbergasted
- 21. scaly, legless reptile
- 22. parts of a whole
- 23. present existence

Down

- 1. gauge
- 2. weedy plant with prickly leaves
- 3. used for walking
- 4. vision
- 5. vicious
- 6. rule of conduct
- 7. jewelry made by clams
- 8. food made of wheat
- 9. thoughtless
- 12. crush underfoot
- 13. fragment
- 14. rip
- 15. public official who decides cases of law
- 18. inquire
- 19. tumble down
- 20. not many

Word List

- amazed
- ask
- bread
- evil
- fall
- false
- feet
- ferocious
- few
- figs
- foolish
- house
- judge
- law
- life
- measure
- pearls
- pieces
- practice
- see
- snake
- speck
- tear
- thistles
- thornbushes
- trample
- wolves