

PARISH POST

THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

CHESHIRE, CONNECTICUT
www.cheshirecongregational.org

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No. 8

Flying to Providence

By Dave Buchan
Interim Senior Minister

Patty and I once were flying from Nantucket to Providence, Rhode Island. We had had a wonderful vacation with our children and grandchildren, and now we were flying back home again. I had the chance to sit up in the cockpit with the pilot.

The weather was fine as we climbed up over the Atlantic. The water below glistened in the afternoon sunlight. The clouds were patches of cotton in the sky. But during the crossing there was also a time when we were flying through thick cloud, the rain streaming across the windshield, a creamy gray all around.

Although there was no sight of land or sea, I was cool. I was not afraid. This was fun – though I was a bit disconcerted when out of the side of my eye I saw the pilot pick up the instruction manual for the plane and start reading it! But not to worry – she knew exactly what she was doing. The pilot banked the plane and down we came through the clouds. And

there, right before us, were the lights of the Providence runway. We were on target, lined up perfectly with the center of the runway. And the wheels hit the pavement for a very smooth and safe landing.

Like that plane, our church is on a flight to Providence (a very good Christian word). On our flight there will be beautiful sunshine, but also times of fog. However, we have God as our pilot, and He knows what He's doing. Our Senior Minister Search Committee is right on schedule, preparing a profile of the church. By late fall or early winter, the search for a candidate for our pulpit will begin. In the meantime, First Congregational Church is preparing to receive its new minister.

Our plane is gliding through the clouds. The lights of Providence runway are in sight, and we are right on target.

Join us for Homecoming Sunday on September 9. Fall Church School starts up; the choir will be back; services will be

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at 9:00 and 11:00 once more. My sermon will be “Coming Home – A Theology of Baseball.”

See you in church.

*In Christ,
Dave Buchan*

September Worship Schedule

Note: On September 2 (Labor Day weekend), there will be one service at 9 a.m. Starting September 9, we return to having worship services at 9 and 11 a.m.

Child care and Church School will be provided.

Sunday, **September 2:** Dave Buchan preaching on Esther (readings from the Book of Esther). Food offering Sunday.

Sunday, **September 9:** Homecoming Sunday; Dave Buchan preaching on The Theology of Baseball: Coming Home.

Sunday, **September 16:** Dave Buchan preaching.

Sunday, **September 23:** Dave Buchan preaching.

Sunday, **September 30:** Alison McCaffrey preaching.

Open House at God's Place

Sunday, September 9, is Homecoming Sunday at First Congregational Church! Here's what will be happening.

Worship will be at 9 and 11 a.m. – casual dress. We will honor 50-year members in worship and at the coffee hour. Music will be provided by the Galvanized Jazz Band, and familiar hymns will be sung. Please bring canned goods for the soup kitchen or personal items for our overseas service people.

This will be followed by an all-church picnic at noon. Those with last names A-M are asked to bring salad and chips to share. Last names N-Z, please bring dessert and beverages to share. Hot dogs and hamburgers will be provided.

In the afternoon, there will be family photo opportunities; an all-church photo will be taken at 2:00 p. m. There will also be children's games, face-painting, storytelling; all-church relay races, volleyball, barbershop singers, knitting lessons, church tours, and an expert presentation on our Japan chestnut tree.

A Vespers service will be held at 4:00 p.m. So that we may plan food amounts, please call the church office, 272-5323, to let us know you're coming to the picnic.

Notes from the Executive Board

At its August meeting, the Executive Board received updates from boards and committees, including these:

Deacons are planning the Homecoming celebration for September 9, which promises to be a fun and exciting event (see Page 2 of this Parish Post).

In addition to other issues, **Trustees** are focusing on immediate maintenance required for the Parsonage as well as looking at the long-term plan for the main church building.

Outreach has many opportunities for hands-on work: Mission Day will be Saturday, October 13. First Sunday of each month: Food Collection for Greater Waterbury Interfaith Ministries Food Pantry and FISH of East Haven. Columbus House Meals, on fifth Wednesdays (next one is October 31). Covenant to care – needs are posted in the Sunday church bulletin. In addition, Outreach and **Fellowship** are collaborating to purchase coffee through the UCC in a program called Good Coffee for a Good Cause.

Christian Education continues to work with the Director of Youth Ministry Search Committee and the manuals and policy for the Safe and Nurturing program

In addition to the Music on the Green evening in July and the Organ recital in August, the **Board of Music** is planning an exciting 2008.

Stewardship is preparing for the fall pledge campaign. Communications will be coming out soon, including a postcard with the calendar of events.

In addition to working with the search committees and closing items on the Response Team report, **Personnel** is updating the employee handbook and providing input for changes to the by-laws.

Membership is gearing up for the New Member Orientation in October and creating a new member handbook.

By-Laws Review has assembled all the by-law revisions into one master draft, readying it for final format.

The Committee on Delegates thanks all the volunteers (more than 20 from our church) who helped out at the UCC General Synod in Hartford in July.

Nominating continues to fill positions, as board and committee members change throughout the year in the normal course of things. **Library** is keeping the shelves full of new and interesting books. **Flower** works to keep the sanctuary beautiful for each Sunday service, and **Ushers** faithfully pass out the bulletins. Other committees may not have formal reports to give each month, but are active with their normal duties and are a vital lifeblood of the church.

And these other reports:

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Response Team: Work continues on the recommendations made by the Response Team, which include improvements to a number of policies and processes. (These recommendations were outlined in a letter sent to the congregation in May.) Each recommendation has identified the board or committee which is responsible for following up and status is tracked until closure.

Preliminary Budget: A budget proposal developed by the Budget Committee was reviewed by the Executive Board. This budget was created in response to concerns raised about the use of endowment funds. It was accepted by the Executive Board, and will be presented at the next congregational meeting, now being planned for Sunday, September 23. A formal notice of the meeting will be posted.

Ideas and suggestions from the congregation are always welcome. These can be discussed or forwarded to Susan Hostage or any member of the Executive Board – Christine Albrecht, Donna Andrews (interim), Will Arpaia (interim), the Rev. Dave Buchan, Kathy Duffendack, Bob Giddings, Mark Hall, Dennis Lape, Addie Marx, Bob Mead, the Rev. Alison McCaffrey, Howard Murphy, Bob Porter, Beth Ross, Walt Ryan, and Laura Whinfield.

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

Ask, Thank, Tell

Ask, Thank, Tell, by Charles R. Lane, is a book that the Board of Stewardship has been reading and has passed on to Executive Board members. The book's main idea is that everything we have is God's, and He has made a gift of everything to us. We are simply His stewards, the managers of His wealth. We've been trusted with everything, but nothing is ours alone. There's been no transfer of ownership as God gives humans dominion over His Kingdom.

So the giving question then is not, "How much can I spare to give to God and his work?" The real question is, "How much do I dare to keep for myself? None of what I have is mine to begin with." We're not giving to God, we're returning the wealth with thanks and praise—and profit.

Sure, the church needs our time, talent, and treasure – but because none of these are ours to begin with, we need to keep what we need to take care of our obligations, and return the rest to God with a good increase for all He does for us.

Growing in discipleship and relationship with God means focusing on God rather than on money. As Jesus reminded us, we can't serve two masters, and God comes first. If you'd like to know more about this book, ask a board member – we're happy to talk! More about *Ask, Thank, Tell* in the coming weeks.

Ruth MacDonald

Youth Group News

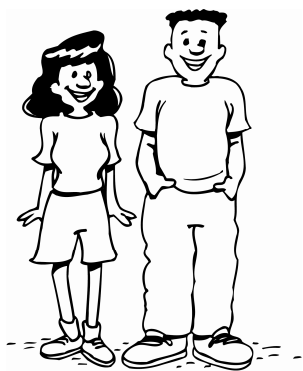
Our church's Youth Group is getting ready to launch a new year of friends, fun and faith! To get things off on the right trajectory, there will be a Blast Off Picnic (OK, enough of the rocket references!) at the Brunettis' house (directions available on www.yutes.org) on Sunday, September 16, from 3:30 to 7:30 p.m.

All 7th through 12th graders of the church are encouraged to attend. Whether you are a long time member of the Yutes or

have never been to Youth Group in the past, this is a great opportunity to rekindle friendships or make some new ones and see what Youth Group is all about. The hot dogs, hamburgers and refreshments are free. So is the pool, and the Ultimate Frisbee game. So save this date and plan to stop by. (Please bring a food item to share if you can.)

The Yutes' regular meetings are held Sundays from 5 to 7 p.m. in the Parish Hall, with dinner provided. Those will start the following week, September 23. New youth are especially welcome. We hope to see you there!

For other questions and news, check out the First Congregational youth group web site, www.yutes.org.



Adult Volunteers Needed

The Youth Group is a vital component of our church family, but it doesn't run by itself. Adults of all descriptions are needed not just to help run programs but to simply be a presence. There is no commitment other than to show up when you can and enjoy some fellowship with our youth. The effort is small, but the rewards (as any of our volunteers will attest) are huge. Please speak to any of the church staff or current adult volunteers if you're interested. We need you!



Caring Crafts Ministry

The Caring Crafts Ministry will be meeting again this year on the last Monday of every month at 7 p. m. The first meeting will be on September 24 at Donna Mead's home, 15 Conifer Drive, Hamden. Her phone number is 248-9576.



We are always welcoming new members into our group - whether they know how to knit or not. If people don't know how to knit, we teach them. Those who don't want to come to monthly meetings but would like to contribute their handmade articles to the church, please call Donna so she can keep track of what our membership is doing. Hope to see you!

Coffee Hour Schedule

The Fellowship Committee is in the process of scheduling coffee hours for the Fall season. Letters are going out to the small groups requesting that they host on a particular date. Our goal is to create a schedule that will carry over from year to year. For example, one group has



volunteered to always take the first Sunday after Labor Day; another always takes the Sunday after Thanksgiving. We want every group to have its own Sunday. We think that a set schedule will work to everyone's

advantage.

We thank all of you who contribute to the coffee hours. We would also like to say thank you to a family who has generously and anonymously donated the coffee we have enjoyed for the last three years.

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

Save These Musical Dates

The annual candlelight Service of Lessons and Carols will be held on Sunday, December 16, at 4 p. m.

Memorial Music Sunday will be March 2, 2008, at 10 a.m. (one service that day).

Food, Fellowship, And More

A series of periodic church suppers will begin on Thursday, September 20. Good food, fellowship, and a variety of “info-tainment” presentations will be featured.

Sign-up sheets for each supper will be prominently posted in the Connector, or you can call Donna Mead at 248-9576 to make your reservation. (If you call, please leave your name and say how many will be attending.)

These are not potluck dinners, so the cost will be \$7 for adults and \$2 for children aged 5 to 12; there’s no charge for those under the age of 5.

For those who have made reservations, the dinner tickets may be purchased at the Coffee Hour on the Sunday before the dinner, or at the door on the night of the event.

The guest speaker at the first dinner on September 20 will be our new Regional Minister, Rev. Michael Penn-Strah, who will be speaking on the history and development of the United Church of Christ. Come join us.

Photographing God: An Upcoming Show

Where do you see God? In nature? In relationships? In actions? In service?

First Congregational Church invites you to be part of a Photography Show called "Where Do You See God?" to be held Saturday, November 3, from 6 to 8 p.m. in the Parish Hall.

Here's what to do: First, be on the lookout for God between now and mid-October.

Take a photograph of where you see God. Submit a print of your photo, anything from 4 by 6 inches to 11 by 14 inches.

Please submit prints only; do not e-mail digital images. The prints may be in color or in black and white. Include a one-sentence description of each picture.

Please submit all photos by Sunday, October 14. We will then mount, arrange, and display them, and all are invited to the showing and gala reception on November 3.

All ages and skill levels are invited to participate; anyone can use a camera! Prints from both amateurs and professionals may be submitted. You, your friends, families, and neighbors may participate; all are welcome!

For more information, please speak with Hope Reinhard or the Rev. Alison McCaffrey. This event is sponsored by the Parish Life Team.

Senior Minister Search Committee Update

The surveys are coming! The surveys are coming! The Senior Minister Search Committee wants and needs your input, so watch for the survey in September. Please fill out the survey as soon as you thoughtfully can do so, and return it to us so we can gather the congregation's ideas and opinions.

The survey will be available on line or on paper. You are welcome to remain anonymous, or you may add your name. You may also speak to us in person. We will continue to have focus groups in order to gather as much information as possible before and during the reading of candidate's profiles.

The search for a new senior minister is a long process, and we are being careful to not rush. As much as we all want our new settled senior minister here, we want to be thoughtful about matching our congregation with the right person for us. We thank you for your continued patience as we work through this process.

As we gather information from you through the survey and focus groups, we will compile it and hope to look at senior minister profiles in the first quarter of 2008, followed by the interviewing of the candidates.

Join us for focus groups, thoughtfully fill out the survey, and keep us in your prayers, as we keep you in ours.

The Christian Education Program in September

Here's what's happening in various facets of our Christian Education program this month:

Preschool, Kindergarten and First Grade Teachers and Helpers:

Wednesday, September 5, 6:30 p.m., Room 11. This is an important meeting for all working with Preschool 3 – 1st Grade classes. We will review the new Safe and Nurturing policies and procedures. Orientation to the curriculum, curriculum will be handed out and rooms will be open for bulletin board decorations. Teams are asked to bring their calendars to begin scheduling for the fall.

Nursery Caregivers: Thursday, September 6, 7 p.m., Church Nursery. This is an important meeting for all who will be caregivers in the nursery this year, including substitutes. We will review the new Safe and Nurturing policies and procedures, and ask each caregiver to review the volunteer form and initial it as updated. We will also orient everyone to the nursery and its procedures.

Confirmation Mentors: Saturday, September 8, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., Whiting House. Lunch will be served. We will review the new Safe and Nurturing policies and procedures. We will watch the new DVD of the curriculum introduction and go through various ideas for working with the youth from October through April.

Confirmation for 2007-2008: An informational meeting was held June 11

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

We will begin this year in October. If you haven't signed up in advance, your child will need to wait until the following year. The model being used for this year's process has been revised, and it is important to know before October who will be participating.

Church School: Summer church school for Preschool 3 through 2nd grades will hold its final session on Sunday, September 2 at the 9 a.m. service. Regular Church School begins on September 9 with services at 9 and 11. All Church School volunteers will be commissioned that morning in both services.

Church School brochures with enrollment forms in the centerfold were mailed in mid-August to all families. Please be sure that you have enrolled your children for church school this year. We do work with foods and need to know about food allergies as well as any special needs of your child.

Please mail or bring the form to the church office before September 9. If you bring it on September 9, please give it to

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the church school teacher or helper who will place it in the attendance folder to be picked up by the office.

Bible Journeys for Grades 2-6: This workshop rotation program is for children and youth entering grades 2 - 6 this fall. Children will know which workshop to go to by the schedule below, the bulletin, or the Bible Journeys Board in the hallway across from Room 8. Grades 3-6 will go to class when dismissed from church. Grade 2, at 9 a.m. service only, will leave for Chapel in the early part of the service. After Chapel they will go with their Shepherd to their Bible Journeys workshop. Parents may find their children at the end of Church School in the classroom listed in the bulletin.

**Bible Journeys September Rotation:
Abraham and Sarah**

Thou Art: This lesson is a science investigation. Children will experience that God keeps his promises by reading scripture, through science and through our own life knowledge. They will identify the promises that God made to Abraham.

Red Sea Productions: The children will study the story of Abraham and Sarah in Egypt, and the consequences of lying. They will read the story as a group from the Bible and then they will have the opportunity to re-enact the story with puppets.

Desert Tales: Students will watch a video of Abraham and Sarah and then

have a discussion about the basics of the story. They will put the story in order after they have discussed it to help them to remember the story.

Gospel Games: Since this is early in the church school year, the students will use "Bongo Loves the Bible" to learn some basic Bible skills they will use throughout the church school year.

Third Grade Communion Potluck: Students in grade 3 and their families are invited to attend a potluck supper on September 30 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. in the Parish Hall to discuss communion. Children will begin receiving communion with their families on October 7. A letter will be sent to each Third Grader. If you don't receive yours, please call the church office.



Women's Bible Study: This begins Wednesday, October 3, at 10 a.m. in the parlor. The facilitator is Debbie Gravell. All women of the church are invited.

We will be using the Life Guide Bible Study Series – Book of Hebrews. The cost of the Bible Study Guide is \$4.50. Please call Debbie in advance if you need child care.

Church School Schedule for September

9:00

Date	Thou Art	Red Sea Prod.	Desert Tales	Gospel Games
Sept. 9	Grade 6	Grade 5	Grade 4	Grades 2 & 3
Sept. 16	Grades 2 & 3	Grade 6	Grade 5	Grade 4
Sept. 23	Grade 4	Grades 2 & 3	Grade 6	Grade 5
Sept. 30	Grade 5	Grade 4	Grades 2 & 3	Grade 6

11:00

Date	Thou Art	Red Sea Prod.	Desert Tales	Gospel Games
Sept. 9	Grade 6	Grade 5	Grade 4	Grades 2 & 3
Sept. 16	Grades 2 & 3	Grade 6	Grade 5	Grade 4
Sept. 23	Grade 4	Grades 2 & 3	Grade 6	Grade 5
Sept. 30	Grade 5	Grade 4	Grades 2 & 3	Grade 6

NOTE: The grade combinations have changed for this year. The two smaller classes are 2nd and 3rd grades this year, and will be combined so that there are more exciting classes at this level with more students.

Safe and Nurturing Policy Update:

We as a church body aspire to be a Christ-centered fellowship where all can seek a closer relationship with God. We recognize that all persons are created in the image of God as stated in Genesis 1:26. Both the Old and New Testaments instruct the faithful to do justice and to care for all persons, especially children. To that end, the First Congregational Church of Cheshire is committed to providing a safe and nurturing environment for the children and youth who are entrusted into our care in order to

foster a positive Christian learning experience.

We adopted in December 1999 a Safe and Nurture Policy for Christian Education. It was revised in February 2003 and October 2004. Recently, a sub-team of the Board of Christian Education has been working to update the Policy once again to assure that we are keeping most current with the vision of our mission for a safe and nurturing environment and with the UCC Insurance Board requirements.

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The policy will be reviewed by the entire Christian Education Board and voted on. If you are interested in reading the policy, copies of it are kept in the Church Library, in the Parlor, Church Office, and the offices of the Senior Minister, Associate Minister, Director of Christian Education, and Director of Youth Ministry. Updated copies will be in the notebooks as soon as possible.



The Lectionary

Here are the Lectionary readings for September:

September 2: Jeremiah 2: 4-13; Psalm 81:1, 10-16; Psalm 112; Hebrews 13: 1-8, 15-16; Luke 14:1, 7-14.

September 9: Jeremiah 18: 1-11; Psalm 139: 1-6, 13-18; Deuteronomy 30: 15-20; Psalm 1; Philemon 1-21; Luke 14: 25-33.

September 16: Jeremiah 4: 11-12, 22-28; Psalm 14; Exodus 32: 7-14; Psalm 51: 1-10; 1 Timothy 1: 12-17.

September 23: Jeremiah 8:18 – 9:1; Psalm 79 1-9; Amos 8: 4-7; Psalm 113; 1 Timothy 2: 1-7; Luke 16: 1-13.

September 30: Jeremiah 32: 1-3a, 6-15; Psalm 91: 1-6, 14-16; Amos 6: 1a, 4-7; Psalm 146; 1 Timothy 6: 6-19; Luke 16: 19-31.

Mission Trip Thanks

This is an excerpt of a letter Emily Cowles received after this summer's Youth Mission Trip:

Dear Emily,

I would like to thank you for all your group did for me, my son, and our house. Since we didn't get a lot of time to get to know one another, I would like to tell you about Justin and myself. I have been a single mom since Justin was four months old; he is now four years old. One day, Justin's father went to work and never came home. A month later, I packed a small U-Haul trailer with our belongings and drove from Texas to New York state.

Justin was born with bilateral club feet. His treatments consist of operations, casts, and braces after braces after braces. It is a struggle for me on a daily basis. His father does not pay the court-ordered child support.

I bought this trailer in April 2006. It was so run-down and beat up, it took me every day for a month just to make it livable. This past winter, my pipes were frozen 90 percent of the time. And then God stepped in. In the three days all of you were here, you changed our lives so much. The changes I saw each time I got home were a tear-jerker, but the wind machine you made for us and the flower bed you planted made me cry a river. All of you will be in my heart forever. It is a long road ahead, but somewhere down that path I do see a light.

Diana and Justin

Counting Our True Membership Numbers

How many members are there at First Congregational Church?

That is the question tackled this year by a special task force, consisting of Don Lee for the Deacons, Ruth MacDonald and David Hostage for Stewardship, Peggy Allen for Christian Education, and Alison McCaffrey for the staff.

It's a seemingly simple question, but the answer has turned out to be not so simple.

The Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ asks for an annual dues payment of \$4.00 for each member. Our current payment is \$4,176, which translates to 1,044 people. But does our church really have more than 1,000 members?

The numbers change all the time. People move into and away from the Cheshire area. People come to us from, and leave us to join, other churches. People are born, and people die. And some people remain on the books even though they haven't fulfilled the three basic membership criteria in years.

According to the bylaws of First Congregational Church, those who are members of the church shall (1) share in the worship life of the congregation; (2) actively support its ministries through prayer and participation; and (3) support its financial needs according to their abilities. This is our covenant. We're all in need of a reminder of our promises in

support of this wonderful community of faith.

Last January, at the annual meeting, the work of the task force to review the membership rolls and covenants began with verifying names, addresses, phone numbers, and emails of all at the meeting.

Over several months, members who haven't been seen much were contacted by letter about their intention to remain active. About 180 members were moved to membership in other churches or were moved to inactive status.

Additionally, the task force contacted about 60 families and friends on the mailing list about their continued interest in our church, and removed about 55 of those.

The task force was especially concerned for our confirmands from the late 1990s, who are expected to graduate from college soon. Members contacted their families to see what the status for the future might be. Recommendations for changes in status were sent to the Board of Deacons, who are responsible for the final decision.

A complete list of membership changes will be published in the annual report next January. But preliminarily, the church's membership rolls now show a few less than 800 actual members, with some more work to be done in 2008.

One question that should be addressed by the Deacons, the Executive Board, or

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the congregation in general, is how to encourage the approximately 200 people now considered members who do not regularly attend worship, participate in church activities, or contribute financially. An vital, active faith community like ours can always do more!



Music in September

September is a busy month for the music program at First Congregational Church as the Youth, Senior, and Bell Choirs start up.

Wednesday nights are music nights at First Church. If you've thought about joining one of our choirs, or at least have considered stopping in to see what they're all about, please attend a rehearsal this month! All are welcome to join us. To have your questions answered ahead of time, please contact Joe D'Eugenio, Music Director at 272-5323, x.18. Here are the details:

September 5: Senior Choir Rehearsals begin in the Choir Room, 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. Adults and High School students are encouraged to join.

September 5: Bell Choirs begin in the Parish Hall: 5:15 to 5:45, Hand Chimes, boys and girls in Grades 2 and 3. 5:45 to 6:30, Junior Bell Choir, boys and girls in Grades 4 to 8. 6:30 to 7:30, Senior Bell Choir, high school students and adults.

September 9: Homecoming. The Senior Choir will begin the season by singing at the 9:00 and 11:00 services.

September 12: Youth Choir Rehearsals begin in the Choir Room: 6 to 6:30 p.m., Primary Choir, boys and girls in Grades K to 3; 6:30 to 7:15, Junior Choir rehearsal, boys and girls in Grades 4 through high school.

September 16: Small Groups Expo. Come find out more about the choirs at the Small Groups Expo between services.

A special thank you to everyone who provided music at worship during the summer. Because of your talents and willingness to share them with our congregation, our summer worship services were greatly enriched!

Transitions

in the life of our church family

Baptisms:

Jayden Fernando Quintero, child of Diego Fernando and Ivonne Perez Quintero, July 1.

Weddings:

Kathena Nennering and Scott Brewerton, July 7.

Kimberly Heiligman and Michael Kelly, July 14.

Deaths:

Patricia Mitchell died June 28; the service was July 2.

Norton Birdsall died August 7; the service was August 10.

Parish Life Expo And 'Church Thursdays'

Please join us on September 16 for the Parish Life Expo at both coffee hours. The parish hall will once again be filled with tables full of excited people ready to share their small group opportunities, information about upcoming events in the church, and activities to take part in. There are many ways to grow in faith and fellowship during the upcoming year. The Parish Life Opportunities booklet will be available in early September.

Thursday nights are "Church Thursdays" starting this fall. The basic format of the evening is a shared dinner



with our church family at 6:00 p.m., followed at 7:00 by either a large group presentation

or a series of small groups. Our evenings end at 8:45 with a brief closing worship. Dinners will be held in the Parish Hall or in the parsonage, according to our schedule of events. Please see the Parish Life booklet for a complete listing of other presentations and small groups.

We kick off Church Thursdays on September 20. For more details, please see the item headed "Food, Fellowship, and More" elsewhere in this issue of the Parish Post.

Letters of Thanks

From the bottom of my heart, I thank you sincerely for your thoughtfulness. At a time of sorrowful loss of my lifetime partner of 52 years, Betty, my wife, I deeply appreciate your kind sympathy.

Sam Wang

Thanks to so many members for their prayers, thoughts, and cards, and for the visits by Alison, David Buchan, and Donna Mead. Thanks also for the stunning bouquet delivered to me at MidState. Finally, things are beginning to look more cheerful each day.

Mary Hartman

Thank you for the beautiful flowers and the get-well cards you have sent to Fred since he has been sick. Jim Louys and his daughter Emma brought flowers, and we had a good visit. Also thanks to Matt McCaffrey for hospital and home visits. We never feel alone.

Fred and Doris Mullaney

The floral arrangement Robin brought to Roland for his birthday was just lovely. Thank you so much for thinking of him. We also enjoyed Robin's singing him "Happy Birthday" – she has a beautiful voice – and we enjoyed visiting with her.

Lorna Fowler

Joy Deegan came to my door yesterday with flowers from church to celebrate my birthday. I so appreciate my gift, and also I must tell you the Sunday service has awakened my love for reading the scriptures and how lucky I am to worship with you.

Dorothy Hazard

Letters of Thanks, Continued

I would like to thank the members of First Congregational Church for your kind words, thoughtful cards, and many prayers, the many ministries for their comforting help, for food when cooking was nearly impossible. The prayer shawl is much used and very comforting, as was help from the Stephen Ministry when thinking was painful. God bless you all.

Jack Burton

The Board of Outreach would like to thank Hannah and Emma Louys for going around their neighborhood and collecting 20 bags of food for the Greater Waterbury Interfaith Ministry Food Pantry.

Beth Ross

**Sunday, September 2
is Food Offering Day.
Don't forget to bring
food items to church!
You may also donate
bottle and can return
slips for our Malawi work.**

Do you know of a worthy organization that needs funds for a special project?

In the Spring of 2005, many of you made gifts to the Martha Lape Outreach Endowment Fund in honor of Martha's retirement as office manager of our church. In the Fall of 2006, the first grant of \$500 from the interest generated by the fund was given to Back Bay Mission in Biloxi, MS (a UCC Health and Welfare Agency). The money will be used in the mission's rebuilding effort as they reconstruct the seven buildings destroyed by Hurricane Katrina. The congregation was given an opportunity to add to the \$500 and nearly \$800 was sent to Back Bay.

Now we are ready to make our second grant. If you know of an agency or non-profit organization that needs funds for a special project, please let us know. We will consider all suggestions given to the Committee. You may submit requests by email to mlape@aol.com or by letter to the church office, attention Martha Lape Endowment. Deadline for submission is October 30.

Martha Lape, Leah Sanders, Pam Euerle