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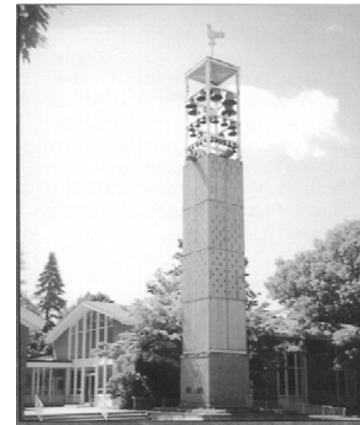
First Church website - www.firstnewbritain.org

First Church News

First Church of Christ, Congregational United Church of Christ

830 Corbin Avenue
New Britain, CT 06052
860-229-3709
www.firstnewbritain.org

April 2010



OFFICE and GALLERY HOURS

Monday - Thursday 9:00 am – 3:00 pm

Friday 9:00 am – Noon

PROGRAM STAFF

The Rev. Jack Cook, Senior Minister

Sharon Chamberlain, Coordinator of Christian Education

James Gower, Director of Music Ministries

Sarah Flythe, Coordinator of Youth Programming

Please go to our website, www.firstnewbritain.org for staff contact information

Copies of sermons and additional newsletters are available in the information rack outside the church office.

UPCOMING LENTEN AND EASTER DATES

- Thursday, April 1, Traditional Soup and Bread Supper at 6:00, followed at 7:00 by a Maundy Thursday Service of Communion and Tenebrae in the Sanctuary.
- Friday, April 2, Building Closed in observance of Good Friday
- Sunday, April 4, Easter Sunday and Communion Sunday.
There will be NO church school classes on Easter Sunday! The toddler room will be open for children up to age 5. There will a Second Hour Egg Hunt for Sunday School Children.

First Church provides worship and education that deepen the understanding and living of the Christian faith to promote spiritual growth, hospitality, and service to others.

GREETINGS FROM THE PASTOR

Dear Friends,

What about this week we call “Holy”? What’s it all about? And why specifically is it “holy” (which means set apart, special, sacred, consecrated, devoted to God’s service)?

We all know that Holy Week, beginning with Palm/Passion Sunday, marks the final week of Lent. On this day, we celebrate Christ’s triumphant entry into Jerusalem, an anticipation of Christ’s passion (i.e., his suffering and death). This year, on March 28, our children will share in the leadership of worship with their re-telling of the Palm Sunday story.

The traditional chronology of Holy Week includes these important events—

On Monday, Jesus cleansed the Temple.

On Tuesday, Jesus gave the First or Great Commandment.

On Wednesday, the chief priests and scribes plotted with Judas Iscariot to betray Jesus.

Then Maundy Thursday commemorates the institution of Holy Communion and the giving of the new commandment that people should love one another as Christ loves them. On April 1, our Diaconate and Worship Working Group will offer their traditional soup and bread supper at 6:00 P.M. in the Fireside Room, followed at 7:00 P.M. by a Service of Communion and Tenebrae in the sanctuary.

On Good Friday, we remember Jesus’ trial, crucifixion, death, and burial.

On Saturday, Jesus’ tomb was secured and the “theft hypothesis” was promulgated (see Matthew 27: 62-66).

And, of course, Easter is the most joyful of all the celebrations of the church year, as we proclaim the resurrection. On April 4, we shall celebrate the sacrament of Holy Communion and also receive our special Easter mission offering to benefit the Friendship Service Center of New Britain.

Holy indeed is this week that awaits! And may *your* presence in worship make it even more special!

See you in church! Blessings always!

Jack

COUNCIL CHAIR’S REPORT

For the first time this year we have had a few days in a row with temperatures in the 60-degree range. This means that Spring is right around the corner and it cannot come too rapidly to suit me! Soon we will be celebrating Palm Sunday, then Easter and along with these Church celebration events come sunny days and the season’s message of renewal.

Speaking of renewal, the Property sub-group has met and they are in the process of lining up contractors for the work that will be done to the Fireside Room and the lighting enhancement to the Choir Loft. As I noted last month, we will also be doing some work to the Courtyard adjacent to the Parlor and Fellowship Hall.

The Eight-To-Eat groups are set and will soon be enjoying meals together at each other’s homes and restaurants in the area. It’s a great way to get to know your fellow members and have a good time while doing it.

Lastly, I am also looking for one or two persons to help with the Nominating Committee. Most of the work is done by telephone in the Fall, but we have to set up the committee at this time of the year. If you are interested, please contact me at home (860-225-1124) or e-mail me at donrober1@sbcglobal.net. Thank you.

Don Robertson
Church Council Chair

FIRST CHURCH MISSIONS

MISSIONS AND CONGREGATIONAL LIFE UPDATE

Please mark your calendars and plan to participate in the following upcoming events:

April 24 – Rebuilding Together (see Glenn Anderson or Peter Oshana to sign up)

May 2 - “Sneaker Sunday”. Join the Missions Team in a Food Walk immediately following our worship service. All money raised will go to the Friendship Center.

May 22 - First Church Tag Sale.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Hospitality needs a few more members. If you would like to help serve coffee during 2nd Hour and/or help out at other social events, please contact Joyce Anderson.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Annual Easter Egg Hunt

The children are invited to participate immediately following the worship service. Please meet at the playground door in the CE wing and wait for instructions!

REMINDER: There will be no church school on Easter Sunday. The toddler room will be open for children thru age 5.

“Break Fast” With Rev. Jack!

Church school students are invited to celebrate the Easter season by having a special meal with Rev. Jack. It will include one of his favorite foods! Join him on **April 11th at 9:15, in the Fireside Room to find out what that might be!**

Registration forms for “**The Good News Clues Detective Camp**” will be available on Sunday, April 25th, in the church office. The camp is open to children entering kindergarten thru 5th grade in the fall and will be held July 12th – 16th.

Congratulations to **Austin Zemsta** and **Hannah Mangan** for perfect Sunday School attendance during the month of February!

See you in church,

Sharon Chamberlain
Coordinator of Christian Education

YOUTH GROUP NEWS

We will be having our 30 Hour Famine from April 24-25 and will be participating with Rebuilding Together for our community project. Berlin Congregational hosted First Church youth group for a great pasta dinner and auction. Aarin Flythe and his friends Angela and Chris attended. The March 5th youth group hosted by First Church was a great success; 14 youth were in attendance. Carol Cyr, youth group leader of BC, came with four kids.

Sarah Flythe,
Youth Group Coordinator

YOUTH GROUP DATES

- March 28, 11:15 am: Parent’s Meeting to discuss 30 hour famine; kids will help stuff Easter Eggs for the Egg Hunt on Easter Sunday.
- April 23rd – April 25th: 30 Hour Famine and participating in Rebuilding Together for our community project.

CHURCH NEWS

WE ARE PLEASED to announce the appointment of three new section leaders in our Adult Choir. Their musical leadership will enhance and support our efforts and greatly increase our musical possibilities.

Betty Knorr (Alto) brings vast experience as a professional singer. A resident of Newington, she is a long-time member of CONCORA (Connecticut Choral Artists) and has sung in many church choirs in the region. Among those, she sang here in the choir of First Church under the direction of Lorraine Revelle.

Harry Phillips IV (Tenor) is a 4th year student at Western Connecticut State University in Danbury. A native of Norwalk, CT, Harry is a tuba performance major, and also sings with the WCSU Choir.

John Janeiro (Bass) is also a student at WestConn, where he is active in the Opera program, and is a vocal performance major. John is also a member of CONCORA, and the Hartford Chorale. He lives in Terryville.

OSGOOD FOOD PANTRY

Good news! We delivered 12 bags of food to the Food Pantry during the month of March! Thanks to all! In April, we will be concentrating on three types of foods (of course, any food is appreciated at any time). The Food Pantry is looking for cereal, baby food and jelly. They have an abundance of peanut butter, but no jelly to go with it. If you could help by bringing in a few items, we can continue to donate each month. Thanks so much, the Missions Committee.

THE SHAMROCKS WERE SHAKING!

Many thanks to all who participated in the St. Patrick’s Day Social last Saturday night. There was plenty of food, fellowship *and* fantastic music by DJ Craig Turbacuski. Here’s hopin’ we’ll be doing it again!

Patty Gacek and Sharon Chamberlain

2010 OPEN DATES FOR MEMORIAL FLOWERS

The fourth Sunday of August is available as a permanent, annual, opening for memorial altar flowers. The fifth Sunday of January, fifth Sunday of August and fifth Sunday of October are open for this year only. Please contact the church office (860-229-3709) if you are interested in any of these dates. Thank you.



UPCOMING EVENTS

CHURCH GROWTH

Can our church grow? Recent demographic studies indicate that 60-75% of the population in our Connecticut communities are “de-churched”—people who have grown up in the church but left it as adults. Even though they do not attend church regularly, the majority of these folks describe themselves as “spiritual,” meaning they believe in God, they pray regularly, and they read the Bible and participate in some kind of regular devotional experience. Many of them say they would probably attend a church if someone they know invited them!

How can we reach out to the de-churched people in our community? Come to a Church Growth Workshop on Saturday, May 15, from 8:45-1:30 and find out! The workshop will be led by the Reverend Dr Michael Penn-Strah, our South Central Regional Minister. A sign-up sheet is at the front desk in the Church office

The Reverend Dr. Michael S. Penn-Strah has been our South Central Regional Minister of the Connecticut Conference since August 1, 2007. Dr. Penn-Strah received his M.Div from Chicago Theological Seminary and his Th.D. from Boston University. In more than 40 years as an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ he has served suburban and inner-city congregations from 120-1200 members, including a new church start he co-pastored with his wife, Reverend Dr. Sara Penn-Strah.

SAVE THIS DATE – MAY 22ND

It’s time for spring cleaning! **On May 22nd**, First Church will have a giant **Tag Sale** as a fundraising event. Either rent a space for \$15 in the parking lot to sell your unwanted clothes, furniture, sporting goods, etc. or donate your items and we will sell them for you. Further information on purchasing your space and dates for accepting donations will be publicized in upcoming church bulletins and the May newsletter.

FUN GARDENING RETURNS

Got a green thumb? The FUN gardening group is seeking serious gardeners to “farm” eight vegetable garden plots near the playground at church. Plant veggies for personal use, share produce with family and friends, or share that overly abundant zucchini crop with the food bank.

This year the soil is prepared for eight (6x9’ approx.) plots. Cost \$20. Plots are available on first come basis, so be sure to get further details and commit with Judy Robertson or Nancy Cook.



SNEAKER SUNDAY MAY 2, 2010

Everyone can join the FIRST CHURCH Team! Thousands of people will be walking against hunger in Hartford’s Foodshare walk on May 2nd.

First Church adults, families and youth will have the unique opportunity to walk against hunger here in New Britain on SNEAKER SUNDAY, May 2 at 11:30 am. Wear your walking shoes to church. We will leave FCC after church, walk to Walnut Hill Park, make the loop and return to church for a provided sandwich lunch. Walk the 2+ mile course or walk as far as you wish at your own pace.

Can’t join us on walk day? No problem! Consider making a donation to support our very own FCC walk against hunger. All pledges will go to the Friendship Center to help end hunger in New Britain.

Did you know.....Friendship Center facts

- \$30 cost of food for 1 person per month
- 225 meals served each day in soup kitchen
- 61,400 meals served a year in all programs

SIGN UP AT COFFEE HOUR. T-shirts will be available to first 25 committed walkers. SO, join the FIRST CHURCH Team Tri-Captains, Sharon Chamberlain, Mabel Yeterian and Nancy Cook, along with the Missions and Congregational Life Working Group (Judy Robertson, Joyce and Glenn Anderson, Amy Belliveau, Joan Cromwell, Martha Moses and Arlyd Munoz-Snyder) on SNEAKER SUNDAY to walk against hunger in New Britain. First Church can make a difference!

PRESCHOOL EXPO

The Cooperative Nursery School of New Britain is hosting a “Preschool Expo” on Saturday, April 10th, from 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. It will be a *one stop* opportunity to learn more about services and programs available to your children in the central Connecticut area and it’s taking place right here at First Church – in Fellowship Hall! Over 30 businesses and agencies have been invited to attend. Hands on activities for young children will also be provided. Hope to see you there!

Sharon Chamberlain

Co-Director

CHILDREN'S CHOIR RETURNS!

Attention Parents: The Children's Choir will meet for rehearsal on the following Sundays: April 18, April 25, and May 2. Rehearsals are from 11:15 to 11:45 am. It's important that children wishing to sing attend all three rehearsals. The choir will sing in church on Mother's Day, May 9. Hope to see your child there! Contact me at the church if you have any questions.

Jim Gower, Director of Music Ministries

GET TO KNOW YOUR WORKING GROUPS: DIACONATE WORSHIP AND GROWTH WORKING GROUP (DWAGWG)

Hello from the DWAGWG.

With “March Madness” in full swing (did Kansas and Villanova sink your brackets?) and Easter right around the corner, the DWAGWG is making plans for two other events in the near future.

Maundy Thursday: On Maundy Thursday (April 1st, at 6:00pm) members of the DWAGWG will be hosting the traditional soup and bread dinner. Our very own Marietta Guidone will be preparing two delicious soups for the dinner, but you will need to be there to find out what they are. Thank you, Marietta!!

Growth Workshop: With Church Growth now part of the DWAGWG, this sub group, headed by Sylvia Lucas and Mike Gorzock, is helping to coordinate the workshop featuring the Reverend Dr. Michael Penn-Strah. **The workshop will be held on Saturday, May 15, from 8:45 – 1:30.** A Focus on church growth and membership is one of First Church’s highest priorities. This workshop is a first step in addressing methods and strategies to empower the entire congregation to attract and retain new members. We are looking for a minimum of 40 people for the workshop so that Rev. Penn-Strah can focus the workshop specifically on the needs of First Church. As of this writing, just over 20 people have signed up. Don’t hesitate to contact the church office to sign up. Lunch will be served!!!

More to come on the workings of other sub-groups in future newsletters.

Happy Easter!!!!

Bill Allen

On behalf of the DWAGWG members: Mike Chamberlain, Lois Zink, Peter Gacek, Joni Anderson, Sylvia Lucas, Mike Gorzock, Mitch Miller, Steve Anderson and Meg Nieman.

HEARTS FOR HAITI

On March 10th, First Church received a thank you note from the Rev. Davida Foy Crabtree, Conference Minister, with the Connecticut Conference, UCC.

She wrote . . . “Thank you for being among the compassionate who have heard the cries of our sisters and brothers in Haiti and have responded with a generous donation to the UCC Haiti Earthquake Relief Fund. Your gift of \$3822.00 will do much to help alleviate the suffering of those who struggle to survive among the earthquake’s devastation.” . . . “UCC-supported efforts will include the construction of temporary water systems, providing water purification materials, tents and food packages. Additional efforts will be announced once assessments are completed. Thank you again for sharing your gifts with the people of Haiti.”

Thanks to all who contributed to this cause and to the Aston Fund for their generous donation.

ADULT BIBLE STUDY

The early church, located in Asia Minor (now Turkey), lived among the pagans. They were a small minority with different beliefs and customs. Discover the passion and commitment early believers displayed, as they claimed Jesus in the face of fierce consequences and powerful adversaries. Yet, they would become a stronghold for God and Jesus. Certainly, they prospered (we’re here aren’t we?). How did they do it? Was their situation any different from ours? The effectiveness of the early believers is amazing and raises a host of questions with great implications for our world today.

Come and learn more . . . starting Monday, April 12th at 7:00 pm, in the parlor. Each Monday is self-contained, hence attending all sessions is not necessary. Ray Vanderlaan will be our guide on these excursions.

April 12 *Everything to Lose, Nothing to Gain*; filmed in Caesarea Philippi
April 19 *The Salt of the Earth*, filmed in Sardis
April 26 *Where Satan Lives*, filmed in Pergamum
May 3 *The Mark of the Beast*, filmed in Ephesus
May 10 *Hot or Cold*, filmed in Laodicea
May 17 *Fool Proof Living*

*Please join us for a
Retirement Party*

In honor of

*The Rev. Dr. Davida Foy Crabtree
Sunday, May 2, 2010*

*Open House 3 - 6 pm
Program at 4:30 pm*

*The Old State House
800 Main Street
Hartford, CT*