



Tidings

OCTOBER 2009

First Church of Christ Congregational UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

In the heart of West Hartford
we are called by God to grow together,
inspiring and engaging one another
through worship, learning, fellowship and outreach.

We faithfully serve our diverse community and world,
welcoming and nurturing all people
in the living Spirit of Jesus.

PREACHING & WORSHIP PLANS OCTOBER '09

10:00 am - Meeting House
10:15 am - Church School

October 4

World

Communion Sunday
"The Never-ending
Table"

A Teaching Dialogue
on Communion
-Geordie Campbell
and Barbara Frey

October 11

"Prescription for a
Tired Soul"

-Geordie Campbell
preaching

October 18

"A Twin Tension"

-Geordie Campbell
preaching

October 25

"A Saving Faith"

-Susan Izard preaching



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page 4

Many Blessings

My Dear Friends,

I was ruffling through my desk at home and came across an old poem that I have always loved. Its opening line may mislead you, but through and through it speaks the truth of this congregation and our beloved First Church that we are privileged to share.

*i am a little church (no great cathedral)
i do not worry if briefer days grow briefest
i am not sorry when sun and rain make april*

*my life is the life of the reaper and the sower
my prayers are prayers of earth's own children
whose any sadness or joy is my grief or my gladness*

*around me surges a miracle of unceasing
birth and glory and death and resurrection
and I wake to a perfect patience of mountains*

*i am a little church
i do not worry if longer nights grow longest
i am not sorry when silence becomes singing*

*winter by spring I lift my diminutive spire
to merciful God whose only now is forever
welcoming humbly his light and proudly his darkness*

adapted ee cummings

We are blessed beyond measure by the presence and witness of this church of ours. It is so precious to behold. Please don't take its gift for granted or casually without thought. It is among the places of the heart that we all love and need. And please don't think that the church can continue without your support. Yes, I mean that financially! Many people make the error of assuming that it will always be here for them - even if it is not supported by them!

This month your Stewardship Ministry will be seeking your pledges in advance of our 2010 budget. Your generosity is needed now more than ever. A combination of economic realities of which we are all aware makes your gift especially important. I speak for all of us in saying "thank you!" if you have already pledged, and "please!" if you haven't!

Blest be the tie that binds,

Geordie Campbell
Senior Pastor

**CHURCH BULLETIN BOARD
AND FAMILY NEWS**



WEDDINGS

Will Mackey and
Karilyn Sweetland,
August 22



Corinne Landry and
Mark Santos, Oct. 3



CIVIL UNIONS

None Reported

BIRTHS

None Reported



BAPTISMS

Lillian Marie Chirdon,
daughter of Jessica and
Matt Chirdon, Sept. 20



DEATHS

Edward F. Nowicki
(former member) Sept. 2.
Arthur Blair, (Deb
Cunningham's father) Sept. 17.

If you have an announcement to share with your church family, please call the church office: 233-9605.

An Eagle Scout Project Designed for First Church

Thank You, Nathan Mitchell!

Nathan Mitchell, a life-time member of First Church is a Senior at Hall High School. He is a good student and active in lacrosse and other extracurricular programs, as well as Boy Scouts. He participated in the intergenerational mission trip to Kentucky in 2007. Nathan and his family have been active as a family at First Church for many years.

In appreciation for his First Church family, Nathan looked for an Eagle Scout project that would make a difference, and also have a long lasting benefit. For Boy Scouts, the Eagle Scout Award represents the highest achievement and requires a synthesis of many skills, relationships, leadership and service. The Eagle Scout Award represents excellence.

With that goal, Nathan designed and supervised the construction of the interior of a closet in a 4th floor classroom which included a shelving storage system. Nathan had observed that after the renovation on the 4th floor, one classroom gained a brand-new closet but it really was just an empty space. Please feel free to check out the closet inside the "Moved by the Spirit" workshop.

In addition to Nathan who directed this project, First Church would like to thank the adults, parents and scouts who lent a helping hand. Thanks also to the church leaders and boards who were Nathan's consultants. All projects require financing and so a special thanks to all the church members who contributed to this project. ❖



This is as near to a "last call" as we get! Thirteen of us, and possibly a few more, will embark on a journey to the Holy Land on January 25. We will return on February 3. It will be a life enriching pilgrimage to the land of so much of our Biblical heritage. If you would like to know more, call Geordie. But don't delay! Time is running out!

Third Mondays

We continue our "Third Mondays" in preparation for our trip to Israel and Palestine. These sessions are open to all - whether planning to make the journey with us or not. This month offers the treat of a guest presentation by a Professor of Biblical Archeology. Dr. Richard Freund is a noted author and teacher and will provide a program called "The Ten Most Important Archeological Discoveries in the Holy Land." This is made possible in co-operation with the John P. Webster Library. The date: October 19. The time: 7:30.

Please call the church office to sign up!



Help a Needy Child Stay Warm This Winter!

We will be collecting Mittens, hats, scarves, etc. for children at Klingberg Family Centers and Middletown DCF during the month of October. **Sunday, Oct. 18** will be the real kick-off day for our collection, with the Word for the Children message, although we will be collecting all month. Please consider donating new or "used-in-good-condition" items, all sizes. There will be boxes labeled "Mittens for CCC" in the church office and throughout the church starting in early Oct.

- Bev Truebig and Carole Carter

A Hundred Thousand Welcomes!

That's what an old Celtic proverb proclaims: a hundred thousand welcomes! Adapting it slightly, we at First Church offer nearly 600 welcomes! We certainly hope that any who are new to us are finding that spirit of hospitality and welcome!

If you are among those new to us and would like to consider membership at First Church, a special gathering will be held on Sunday, November 8 at 4:00 in the afternoon. A letter of invitation to new folks will go out toward the end of October. The goal of the gathering is simple: a chance to meet others who are also new, a time to learn about First Church, an opportunity to view a power-point presentation all about our programs and ministries, and a chance to ask questions. If, after attending that session you decide you would like to join, new members will be received into the church on Sunday, November 22. Questions? Give Geordie or Barbara a call. ❖

Please Welcome Lady - Our International Seminary Student

First Church is “Host Church” to an International Seminary Student.

This year FCCC is “host church” to **Lady Mandalika**, one of the students enrolled in the International Peacemaking Program at Hartford Seminary. Lady (yes, that is her first name) is from Indonesia and is interested in Interfaith Peacemaking Programs, especially with women. Throughout the year Lady will worship with us and participate in various church activities. We are looking forward to including her in our church family and getting to know her better! ❖



Email Blasts are Coming Soon! Don't Miss Out!

Please make sure the office has your current email address:
Jot a note to Sheila Harris, Church Secretary
sheila.harris@whfirstchurch.org

Caring at First Church is Like a Delicious Sunday Brunch with LOTS of Choices!

Our church family is multigenerational, made up of active persons of all ages with varied schedules and varied amounts of discretionary time. Therefore, caring connections are flexible and fit your time and talent and interests. You might be surprised how many of your brothers and sisters sitting in the pew with you are “caregivers.” Although we can be proud of our network of caring connections, the need for care within our church family is an ever-present reality.

Caring at First Church includes: flower delivery on Sundays and at Easter and Christmas; casseroles, birthday cards for members over 75; note writing at times of bereavement, births, weddings, illness, or significant life change or situation; friendly visits in person or by phone; care teams and Stephen Ministers.

Please consider how you can also be a “Caregiver” and choose a way that works for you. This sharing of time is a precious gift that can make a difference in the life of another person.

If you can help, call or e-mail Rev. Barb Frey who will help you make a “Caring Connection.” 860-233-9605 x102
rev.barbara.frey@whfirstchurch.org. Thank you. ❖



**First
Church
of Christ
Congregational**

An Open & Affirming Congregation

12 SOUTH MAIN STREET
WEST HARTFORD, CT 06107
P: (860) 233-9605 F: (860) 232-8183
www.whfirstchurch.org

JPWEBSTER LIBRARY (860) 232-3893

NURSERY SCHOOL (860) 232-2106

Tidings submissions are due on the 14th of every month for publication on the 1st of the following month. Please email submissions (including digital photos as jpegs) to editor/designer Joy Taylor: jtaylor@hometownmarketing.com.

Please share, save or recycle your
TIDINGS with your newspapers



Hear Our New Leader

Our newly-elected President and General Minister of the United Church of Christ will be the keynote speaker at the Annual Meeting of the Connecticut Conference. The Rev. Geoffrey Black begins his ministry with us on October 1st following the ten-year service of the Rev. John Thomas. Rev. Black expressed his optimism for the church in a recent interview. “In spite of the challenges this is a great time to be the church. I believe that our opportunities are far greater than our challenges.” Black calls for the church to adapt to twenty-first century realities, and reminds us that the UCC still senses the possible and listens to the “Still Speaking God.” The theme for the conference will be “Sacred Conversations on Race.” The meeting will be held in Middletown on October 23 and 24.

More information is available in the church office or at the Conference website:
www.ctucc.org. ❖

A Discipleship Opportunity!

That is the theme of this year's pledge campaign. Mark your calendars now for a kick-off brunch on October 18, immediately after the church service to learn all about it. Division Leaders are **Nan Streeter**, **Al Day** and **Ralph Worth**; and their captains are recruiting volunteers to make friendly visits to members' homes. Plan to be a visitor and also to welcome a friendly visitor into your home. You will learn how you can support the great programs offered by our church and express your commitment through your pledge. ❖



Bring your pets to:

The Blessing of the Animals



In honor of St. Francis's feast day, we will hold an afternoon service: **The Blessing of the Animals** on **Sunday October 4th at 4:00 p.m.** Held on the front lawn of the church, the service will be led by Rev. Geordie Campbell and Rev. Susan Izard. Everyone is welcome to bring their pets to be blessed. Please bring friends, and please have appropriate leashes or pet carriers for your pets!



**First
Church
of Christ**
Congregational

12 South Main St., West Hartford Center
233-9605 • www.whfirstchurch.org

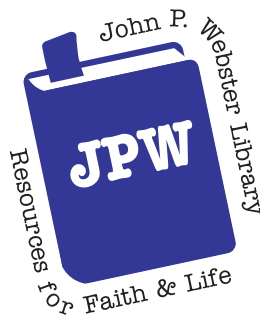
IN CASE OF RAIN, PLEASE MEET IN THE PARKING LOT

John P. Webster Library

Patricia Malahan, Director

(860) 232-3893 • Look for regular updates online: www.jpwlbrary.org.

HOURS: MON. - 9:00 - 5:00 • TU. 9:00 - 7:00 • WED., TH. 9:00 - 5:00
FRI. 9:00 - 3:00 • SUN. 9:00 - 12:00



Save the date! You'll Dig it!

Please join us in the auditorium on Monday, October 19 at 7:00 p.m., **Dr. Richard A. Freund**, a professor at the University of Hartford and author of the recent book, "**Digging Through Bible: Understanding Biblical People, Places, and Controversies through Archeology**", will present a lecture and slide show on the "**The Top Ten Archaeological Discoveries in the Holy Land.**" Dr. Freund's book is a *ForeWord Magazine Book of the Year Award* finalist in the category of religion. He has been featured on Nova, CNN, the History Channel, and the Discovery Channel and his lecture promises to be interesting for the general public as well as provide an educational preview of Geordie's group trip to the Holy Land in January. Copies of Dr. Freund's book will be available for purchase and he will sign copies after the lecture.

J. P. Webster Gallery

In September and October, the Gallery will showcase works created by **Rose Amodeo Petronella**, entitled "Sacred Circles", mandala artwork which represents the sacred inner journey. Rose is ordained in the United Church of Christ and is affiliated with the Spiritual Life Center in Bloomfield. She has been drawing mandalas since 2001 as a method of prayer and self-discover. The colorful and thought-provoking drawings and notecards are offered for sale and a portion of the proceeds will be donated to Heifer International. This is Rose's first exhibit of her inspirational artwork and we are very pleased that she chose the John P. Webster Gallery for this showing. Thank you to everyone who helped make the artist reception during coffee hour on September 20th such a wonderful fellowship event and a warm welcome for Rose and her family!

Christian Classics Book Group

Our group meets on Mondays at noon to discuss books on Christianity, religion, spirituality and other germane topics. We are continuing to read the latest book by Marcus Borg and John Dominic Crossan, "**The First Paul: Reclaiming the Radical Visionary behind the Church's Conservative Icon**" and our next book will be "**Wordy Shipmates**" by Sarah Vowell. Copies of the books are available in the library. Please bring a bag lunch; coffee and tea are provided.

Soup and Scripture

On each Tuesday from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., our group meets in the library. A basic meal of soup and bread is served, we then take turns reading scripture and have a brief informal discussion of the readings. We are continuing to read from Exodus.

Food for Thought Book Group

This popular book group discussion is held on the first Thursday of each month, from October through May, from 5:45 to 7:00 p.m. Participants are invited to bring their own "brown bag" supper and the library will provide beverages and dessert. Our first meeting of the fall will be on Thursday, October 1, when we will discuss "**The Shack**". During the year, we will also read "**The Boy in the Striped Pajamas**", "**The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society**", and "**The Wordy Shipmates**." Copies of the books will be available in the library.

New Resources

Adult Non-fiction

- CHRISTIAN ROME: EARLY CHRISTIAN ROME: CATACOMBS AND BASILICAS by Philippe Pergola
- ETERNAL ECHOES: EXPLORING OUR YEARNING TO BELONG by John O'Donohue
- FEARLESS: IMAGINE YOUR LIFE WITHOUT FEAR by Max Lucado
- LEARNING THE WAY: RECLAIMING WISDOM FROM THE EARLIEST CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES by Cassandra Carkuff Williams
- GOVERNANCE AND MINISTRY: RETHINKING BOARD LEADERSHIP by Dan Hotchkiss
- INTO THE REGION OF AWE: MYSTICISM IN C.S. LEWIS by David C. Downing
- IONA: GOD'S ENERGY: THE VISION AND SPIRITUALITY OF THE IONA COMMUNITY by Norman Shanks
- LISTENING FOR GOD: CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE AND THE LIFE OF FAITH EDITED by Paula J. Carlson and Peter Hawkins
- SYNAGOGUES IN A TIME OF CHANGE: FRAGMENTATION AND DIVERSITY IN JEWISH RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS edited by Zachary Heller

Children & Youth

- ANOTHER TREE IN THE YARD by Lucia Sera
- CLIMB UP THE TREE WITH ZACCHAEUS by Leena Lane
- DAILY LIFE AT THE TIME OF JESUS by Miriam Feinberg Vamosh

LET'S CREATE AN ADVENT BOOKLET TOGETHER! "BUILDING THE CRECHE TOGETHER" ADVENT 2009

In the true spirit of Advent, our First Church family is invited to create an Advent booklet together. This booklet will be created by a variety of family members to share thoughts, things, happenings and feelings. The selections can be prayers and devotions, special and meaningful traditions, an original poem or story, song lyrics, traditional holiday recipe or craft. The due date for contributions is November 1 so that a compilation can be ready for the first Sunday of Advent, November 29. ❖



Reach Out

(A column from Service & Outreach)

FOURTH SUNDAY SPECIAL OFFERING

Service and Outreach thought it would be helpful to provide a little more background on the Fourth Sunday Offerings. As we discussed reductions in the Service and Outreach budget at the budget meetings last winter, many suggested that we supplement the Service and Outreach budget through Special Offerings. To follow up, each Fourth Sunday of the month, we will sponsor a Special Offering to an organization with which our church members are directly involved. We will describe that organization and how it helps those in need in Tidings, a bulletin insert and the service on the Fourth Sunday so that you will more fully appreciate the many good things church members do and support outside the four walls of our building to care for those in need. And, it will give you a chance to participate by making a monthly contribution. We hope you will get in the habit of supporting those organizations our members work for and care about through a monthly Fourth Sunday contribution.

The Fourth Sunday offering is particularly designed to support those organizations in which church members are actively engaged as volunteers. So, if you work for an organization that needs our help, please let Service and Outreach know and we will get you on the Fourth Sunday schedule.



This month, the Fourth Sunday Offering will benefit Foodshare.

Foodshare works to end hunger in all 42 towns of Hartford and Tolland counties. Since 1982, Foodshare has served as our region food bank and distributes more than 15 tons of food each day to a network of nearly 400 local nonprofits that feed our hungry neighbors. This vital safety net

helps 100,000 people in our region who are at risk including seniors, the working poor and 40,000 children. For every \$30 that Foodshare receives they can provide enough food for a hungry person for an entire month and 95% of their resources go directly to ending hunger.

Foodshare in recent years has embarked on a rapid delivery program. Mobile Foodshare provides perishable food items such as fruits and vegetables to people in low income neighborhoods that need it the most. By working with a network of sponsoring agencies that provide

neighborhood sites and the volunteers to manage them, Foodshare has provided over three million pounds of produce in the past year. Mobile Foodshare currently operates 56 sites in 16 towns including Hartford, Farmington and West Hartford.

Your support is vital to ending hunger and creating a future where hunger will not be tolerated. We encourage you to consider a contribution to Foodshare in our "Reach Out" envelope on Sunday October 25th.

Thank you for your support.

Jenny Clark - Service and Outreach

Greetings from the Moderator's Corner! We at First Church have an important milestone to remember and celebrate this month - the adoption of our **Open and Affirming Statement** on October 15, 2006. This statement is included in this edition of *Tidings* (below). Please take a few moments to read and feel the meaning of this important message.

For those of us who experienced the teaching sermon shared by Geordie and Barb during our Homecoming service on September 13th, the message of extending hospitality to all comes through.

There's another important milestone we need to begin planning for - Our 300th anniversary. A while ago I asked for volunteers to join a work group to begin our planning for this milestone. We're about to get started, so let me know if you would like to join the work group.

Peace and healing, *Liz Spencer, Moderator*

Oct '09 Moderator's Corner



Open and Affirming Statement

Celebrating the Biblical mandate to "love your neighbor as yourself" (Luke 10:27) and aware that "God shows no partiality" (Romans 2:11), First Church welcomes and affirms each person regardless of age, disabling condition, economic standing, gender, nationality, race, or sexual orientation.

Our faith invites and challenges us to live the fullness of the Gospel as we affirm the following:

God creates us to be in community and encourages us to share openly and honestly in our common life and mission.

God blesses the diversity that is a reality in the world.

God calls us to seek justice in our church and world as we guard and celebrate the worth of each person.

God's love empowers us to respect and value each person as a beloved child of God.

Therefore, First Church of Christ, Congregational, United Church of Christ, West Hartford, CT, extends hospitality to each person who seeks inclusion in Christ's Church.

Adopted: October 15, 2006

NOVEMBER TIDINGS Deadline:

NOVEMBER Tidings submissions are due on OCTOBER 14th to
Joy Taylor. Email to: jtaylor@hometownmarketing.com Phone/voice mail:
231-7617, x12 or mail to: Joy Taylor, 21 Metacomet Road, Farmington CT 06032

A Look at Yoga at First Church

The Christian meditative yoga class is under way again at First Church. Each class is built around a theme, which is enhanced by readings at the beginning and end of class and by a guided meditation at the end of class. If you would like to try a class, please contact Nancy Murray 521-8186. There may be space for a walk-in student. The classes meet Tuesday evenings at 7:00 in the Auditorium and Wednesday and Thursday mornings at 9:15 in the choir room. For your reflection this month, here are some of the readings used in recent classes:

"There is nothing more beautiful than a rainbow - but it takes both rain and sunshine to make one. If it is to be rounded and many-colored, like a rainbow, both joy and sorrow must come to it" - John Muir

"God, wherever we find loveliness, goodness or peace, we see the imprint of your hand. And seeing signs of your presence, we rejoice and give thanks." - Virginia Rickeman

"Lo, I am with you always means when you look for God, God is in the look of your eyes, in the thought of looking, nearer to you than your self, or things that have happened to you."
- Rumi trans. Barks

Middle & High School October Events

Our Middle School Group meets Sundays from 4:00 to 5:30, and the High School Group meets 6:00-7:30 in the Youth Room (right off the parking lot). Friends are always welcome!

10/4: Blessing of the Animals

We will help out with this service that centers around our beloved pets. And of course...pets are welcome to join in on the fun!

10/11: NO MEETING, COLUMBUS DAY WEEKEND

10/18: Stewardship Luncheon

Youth will help out the Stewardship Committee by helping serve members during a luncheon after the service. A great chance to show our appreciation for those in our church who support us! Youth Group will not meet at the regular time since we will be taking part in this service event.

10/23 OR 10/24: Haunted Hayride

Date TBA. We'll have fun celebrating Halloween together by taking part in a fun haunted hayride & other fun activities. More information coming soon!

Looking ahead...

Mark your calendars—the Apple Pie Lock-In will be held November 6th through the 7th!

—Cindy Bemis and Katie Zabara, Youth Coordinators
youth.program@whfirstchurch.org

Church School News

Register Anytime!

The 2009-2010 will be our third year of the highly successful Workshop Rotation Model. We call our version of church school "Faith Journeys". Our children will learn as well as experience Bible stories in a variety of workshops during the church school year. Church school children will discover the relevance and impact these lessons and stories have in our present daily lives. "Faith Journeys" program will encourage and nurture the development of individual spirituality. If you have any questions, please contact:

—Colleen Mitchell

Associate in Christian Education
233-9605 ext 106,
colleen.mitchell@whfirstchurch.org

First Church Nursery School is once again filled with laughter, song, and lots of hands-on, developmentally appropriate learning activities! Our experienced and dedicated teachers are planning exciting opportunities for continued growth throughout the year. They have an incredible understanding of the powerful impact we have on these young lives!



In order to do some very seriously needed updating and to help protect against germs, the school has been able to install flooring that not only covered the old carpeting but that can be cleaned and bleached to keep our areas sanitized. The threat of "flu" has made our very germ conscious staff and families even more vigilant!

We are hoping to have an Open House for First Church members this fall so that you can see how we keep up the rooms with which you have entrusted us during the week!

We have several upcoming events for you to note. Please join us and tell your friends:

■ October 13th - 7:00pm, Friendship & Fellowship Rooms "Traveling the Continuum of Normal Speech and Language Development, Birth through Age Six: Where are Red Flags Indicated?" by Rebecca O'Neill, Speech Pathologist.

■ November 11th - 7:00pm, Auditorium "An Introduction to Autism Awareness" with Noreen Simmons.

■ November 16th: beginning of our In-House Registration for the 2010/2011 year

■ December 1st - Barnes and Noble Fundraiser 5:00pm- 7:30pm.

Blessed to be here! Ruthie Johnson, Director



OCTOBER 2009

Tidings

First Church of Christ

Congregational UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

12 SOUTH MAIN STREET
WEST HARTFORD, CT 06107

Wash Your Hands

We have lately been deluged with information about potential flu epidemics, pandemics and other demics [I hope one hasn't hit by the time you read this.] The front page of the New York Times the other day had an article about "Camp Swine," a quarantined dorm at a college. Unlike admonitions from your mother "back in the day" to wash your hands, the new fad seems to be antibacterial soaps, "sanitizers" and cleaners. While the good news, short term, is that they can kill "99.99%" of the germs floating around, the bad news, long term, is that those germs are a lot more adaptable than we are and, before long, those germs will become stronger and more virulent and eat those cleaners for lunch. Believe it or not, plain old soap and hot water works as well as anything. So, before we spend a lot of money on the latest antibacterial concoction, think about hand washing. Let's not give flu germs any more strength than we have to. ❖



Please join us as together we care for God's earth. If you have ideas to help us all become more green, please contact Bob Izard, rizard@izardnobel.com.



BLEST BE THE (PIZZA) PIE THAT BINDS !

FRIDAY, October 16 • 6:30- 8:30
MOVIE NIGHT "Come Meet Joseph!"
FUN! FELLOWSHIP! AND, OF COURSE, PIZZA!

FOR: FAMILIES which includes parents, grandparents, children, teenagers, aunts and uncles,...whether you have children home or not

---Please sign up so we can order pizza---
call church office at 233-9605

Please bring a salad or dessert to share