



SEPTEMBER 2011

# Tidings

## 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

10:00 a.m. - Worship

#### September 4

Labor Day Weekend  
Service in The Chapel  
Susan Izard  
preaching

#### September 11

Homecoming Sunday  
"Memory and Hope"  
Geordie Campbell  
preaching

**Interfaith Service  
for Peace  
5:00 p.m.  
in the Chapel**

#### September 18

Christianity, 21  
1. "How deep  
is the sky?"  
-Geordie Campbell  
preaching

#### September 25

Christianity, 21  
2. "Who was before  
everything?"  
-Geordie Campbell  
preaching



## My Dear Friends,

Among the delights of my summer was carving out a large enough block of time to create and self-publish another book of my photographs. This one, now my third, is a devotional photo-journal that I have titled "Thin Places." It captures in both picture and narrative a few of the times and places along my life's way when the mystery of God has seemed to close that I found myself caught up in a "thin place" as the Celtic tradition calls them - moments when God's realm and presence have been nearly palpable.

Most often "thin places" have come to me in moments of great joy. They have inspired me with gladness and hope. The births of our children were like that for me, or an experience of particular insight, or the sky being on fire with a sunset, or running before the wind in a sailboat, or the sights and sense of love, or unexpected lessons from unlikely places. Each of these somehow conveyed to me the assurance that God was and is very near.

Sometimes, though, "thin places" are sparked by the sudden visit of anguish or the sting of profound challenge. These are moments when God is near but in the depth of loss, or in the unity of sadness shared with others. Still close for me is the "thin place" of my Dad's last days with us, or the passing of Pam's parents. And, different too, are the searing memories of national loss burned indelibly into my heart and mind forever: November 22, 1963 when the President was assassinated, January 28, 1986 when the Challenger blew up, September 11, 2001 when the Twin Towers collapsed.

Carl Jung, the father of analytical psychology, put it just right. Over the door in his home and eventually on his tombstone were the words: "Bidden or unbidden, God is present." This is a core affirmation that Christian Faith offers us - the awareness that no matter what may happen along life's way, God does not leave us alone. And, come what may, in moments of joy or anguish, gladness or loss, memory or hope God is never far from us.

I look forward to another church year together as we come back home to First Church, and as we learn to grow deeper and closer as a family of God. Even more, I look forward to finding some of those "thin places" with you!

Abundant Blessings!

Geordie Campbell  
Senior Pastor



see page 6

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and Flickr



flickr

**"Bidden or unbidden,  
God is present."**

C.G. Jung

**CHURCH BULLETIN BOARD  
AND FAMILY NEWS**

**BIRTHS**



- **Porter**, born to **Dave** and **Courtney Ricard**.
- **Connor James**, born to **Brittany** and **Joshua Dworman**.

**DEATHS**



- **Dunlap Hayward Slater** died on July 19th. A Service of Thanksgiving was held in the Meeting House on July 23, 2011.

*If you have an announcement to share with your church family, please call the church office: 860-233-9605.*



**CHURCH VAN NEEDS MORE DRIVERS**

We would love to use the van even MORE for youth events, church related trips and programs, and occasionally, a substitute driver is needed for Sunday mornings. Due to new insurance restrictions, anyone who drives the church van must have a special van license. On Sunday mornings Mary Miller is the driver. A special thanks to Cindy Bemis who received her van license several years ago to help with field trips. However, more licensed van drivers are needed.

**Would you consider becoming a volunteer licensed van driver?**

The church will assume any costs involved.  
If interested, please call Barbara Frey

**Reservations for Sunday morning van rides can be made by calling the church office by Friday at noon.**

**JOURNEYMEN:  
September 18th**

The "Journeyman" men's group meets at 8:15 a.m. in the Fellowship Room. Contact Ken Taylor for more information: 860-243-2502

**Christian Meditative YOGA**

Sponsored by the C.E. Board  
Classes now in session.  
Please call Nancy Murray  
860-521-8186 for more information.

**Faith on the Grow with Geordie**

Over the stretch of years I have had folks say things to me like . . . "I wish you would offer a kind of Confirmation Class for Adults" . . . or . . . "How about a seminar on Christian Basics?" . . . or . . . "I feel like I missed a kind of 101 approach to this faith stuff."

Well, brand new this year are at least two fresh ways to get that basic foundational understanding in place . . . two "come as you are" opportunities to grow your faith! One will be by way of the pulpit on Sunday mornings, and the other in the form of a class on Wednesday evenings.

**Beginning on September 18th** . . . and following in a series of sermons, 12 in all, that will stretch into June . . . is Christianity, 21. These will be sermons that stand alone by themselves, and add up to a course in Christian Basics. There will be roughly one per month with a few more added in here and there. I'll be starting with some wondering about faith on the 18th . . . and then muse about the reality of God on the 25th. Each sermon will begin with a question . . . and then muse toward some response. I think you will find them both helpful and challenging.

**Beginning on October 12th** . . . and following on alternating Wednesdays (roughly twice a month) is Living the Questions 2.0. This will feature DVD presentations that will lead us into discussion on the major claims, questions and beliefs of the Christian faith. The DVD series features some of the best and brightest minds in the world today . . . Marcus Borg, Karen Armstrong, Desmond Tutu, and Brian McClaren to name just a few - so we will have great "teachers" to get us thinking. It is an engaging series aimed at folks just like us. *I look forward to being on the grow with you as you are on the grow with your own faith!* - Geordie ❖

September 11, 2011

**Interfaith Taize Worship Service**

...to pray for Shalom, Salaam, Frieden, Paz, Paix, Peace

Spiritual Life Center  
*Walking Together with the Spirit*

Sunday, September 11, 2011 @ 5:00 p.m.  
In the Chapel @ First Church, West Hartford Center.  
Rabbi Debra Cantor, Rev. Susan IZard, Aida Mansoor and Sister Cathy Murtha, DW. will be leading the service.  
Participants are invited to walk the outdoor labyrinth after the service. All are Welcome.

First Church of Christ  
Congregational

## Church School News

Fifty children from a variety of churches in the West Hartford community joined us for a week long **Vacation Bible School (VBS)**. The Panda themed week reminded kids that "God is Wild About Us!" Children were part of mixed age groups led by 6th - 8th grade crew leaders. They began their mornings with upbeat songs and dance and then worked their way through a 5-station rotation. With the help of our high school and adult station leaders, kids heard a story from the Bible, played games, created crafts, watched a daily movie mystery clip, recorded their "God Sightings" and shared a yummy snack. Kids learned 5 Bible points: **God Made You, God Watches You, God Listens to You, God Loves You No Matter What, and God Gives Good Gifts.** Our VBS families generously contributed to our mission to support the West Hartford Food Pantry. On the last day, we delivered hundreds of non-perishable food items to our Town Hall.



### AN OPEN & AFFIRMING CONGREGATION

Rev. Dr. C. Geordie Campbell, Senior Pastor

Rev. Barbara Frey, Associate Pastor

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

Please share, save or recycle your  
**TIDINGS with your newspapers.**



The week was a true blessing! A warm thank you to our fellow church members who helped make the week such a success: **Maureen Martin, Amy Sarzen, Monique Asselin, Olivia Mitchell, Abigail Mitchell, Grace Bugos, Molly Bugos, Janey Lorenzo, John Punt, and Lizzie Quinn.** A special thanks go out to our helpers from area churches as well: **Joyce Clark, Kylie Bell, Cole Hollant, Bridget Williams, Chloe Williams, Anna Lafreniere, Emily Lafreniere and Marcos Garcia.** A huge thanks to West Hartford VBS for their generous grant contribution. The funds went a long way in providing all that we needed to run a successful program.

### Faith Journeys, A New Year!

A Little Background: Our Faith Journeys program on the 4th floor is designed for children entering Kindergarten through 7th grade. Children remain in church through "Word for the Children" and are then dismissed to their classrooms upstairs.\* A "rotation" is approximately 4 weeks long. During the 4 week period, children have the opportunity to learn about a particular Bible story or theme by visiting 4 different workshops: *Moved By the Spirit, Gather Round the Community Garden, Bible Quest and Jonah's Workshop.*

\*On Communion Sundays, children

begin in Church School at 10:00 a.m. and are then reunited with their families for Communion.

### Schedule: September

- **September 11th:** Homecoming Sunday-visit classrooms, meet teachers
- **September 18th:** First Day of Church School - "Many Members, One Body" 1 Corinthians 12:12
- **September 25th:** Regular Church School - Communion Education

### Live BIG! Our Preschool Church School Program

Children ages 3-4 are invited to room 214 for a church school experience created



just for them! Our **Live BIG** curriculum was designed for the preschool child. The lessons are set up to introduce 3 and 4 year olds to Bible stories through hands on activities and then help them to connect the stories to their everyday lives. Children remain in the service until Word for the Children and are then led down to their classroom by their teachers. **Live BIG** is organized into monthly themes.

### September Theme:

- Genesis: The Beginning of the Story.

### Infants and Toddlers

Care for infants through age 2 is provided in Room 216 from 9:45 a.m. through the end of the church service. Children are supervised by adult/parent volunteers. Our mission is to provide a safe and nurturing environment for our families and visitors with small children.

### HELP! It's Fun!

Wondering how you may be able to help with the above programs? There are so many ways! We need volunteers for each of our programs. For more information contact:

**Dawne Quinn, Church School Director:**  
dawne.quinn@whfirstchurch.org  
860-233-9605 x206.



**SENIOR YOUTH GROUP  
(Grades 8-12) UPDATE**

*Calling parents &  
church members:*

**WE ARE STILL SEARCHING!**

*Can you help as an interim leader so  
that our Senior Youth Group can  
begin this fall?*

*Support and ideas will be provided  
by Barb, Dawne, and Cindy.*

**A CLASSIFIED AD**

First Church of Christ Congregational Church, UCC, West Hartford seeks a Youth Coordinator for the senior youth (grades 8-12) ministry program. This person will also be the support staff person for the junior youth (grades 5-7) ministry program to provide safe church compliance. 10 hours per week. Coordinator will provide a creative, interactive youth ministry with a balance of fun, fellowship, service, and discussions that support the faith journey of our youth. A supportive and active church environment encourages creativity and flexibility and is open to new models of youth ministry. The candidate(s) should have experience with youth, enthusiasm, willingness to work in collaboration with others, and love for Christ.

Contact: For job descriptions and further information, please call Rev. Barbara Frey at 860-233-9605 x102. or e-mail rev.barbara.frey@whfirstchurch.org. Resumes may be sent to the church: 12 South Main Street, West Hartford, CT 06107; attn. Youth Coordinator Search.

Iona, Scotland is the home for the Iona Community, an ecumenical Christian Community that focuses on worship, service and environmental concerns. We travel to Iona in order to worship in historic Iona Abbey and experience the weekly worship cycle that the community follows. We will stay at the St. Columba Inn, just down the road from the Abbey, known for its delicious meals and Scottish hospitality. We will participate in the weekly Iona Community pilgrimage around the Isle as well as daily informal group discussions led by Rev. Susan Izard and Cathy Murtha, DW.

In addition, we will be traveling with Scott Bailey, a research geologist stationed at the Hubbard Brook Experimental Forest in New Hampshire. He studies relationships between geology, soil and water quality, and their influence on ecosystems. He is also interested in the geologic and human history of serpentine. He will teach us about the 3 billion year old serpentine that is found on Iona and the geological history of this ancient Isle.

The mystery and wonder of Iona is historic. The purpose of this pilgrimage is to immerse ourselves in worship and spirituality and open our hearts to the story of being a pilgrim in an ancient land. ❖



**Do you have a friend, a neighbor,  
coworker, or relative going  
through a difficult time?**

A Stephen Minister may be able to offer support he or she needs. Stephen Ministers are members of our church trained to provide emotional and spiritual care to people who are hurting.

To learn how you can help a friend receive care, talk with a pastor or one of our Stephen leaders (**Richard and Linda Moffitt, Suzanne Carnes**).

**"As I have loved you, so you must love one another." John 13: 34b**

**JUNIOR YOUTH GROUP  
(Grades 5-7) UPDATE**

A big fall welcome to all the Junior Youth Group both past and new. I am excited to be back and ready to do some more fun and eventful meetings this year. Hoping you all had a great summer and are looking forward to our JYG.

So, to start the year off with a bang, mark your calendars. JYG will be from 4:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. every Sunday unless noted. Remember, friends are always welcome.

- **September 11th:** Homecoming Sunday. No JYG
- **September 18th:** Let's meet in the Youth Room and make homemade ice cream from scratch. It's so yummy.
- **September 25th:** Hike the Reservoir. We'll travel in the van and if time allows go for a "treat" before we return to Church.

I'm looking forward to hearing about your summer excursions

**-Cindy Bemis**  
*cindy.bemis@whfirstchurch.org*



# JOHN P. WEBSTER LIBRARY

Resources for Faith & Life

**Patricia Malahan, Director**

(860) 232-3893

HOURS:

Sunday - 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon

Monday, Wednesday & Thursday - 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Tuesday - 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Friday & Saturday - Closed

Please stop by the library, either before or after the service on Sundays, visit us during the week, or plan on attending one of our programs! The library is located on the second level of the building, just below the Meeting House. The library has a diverse collection of resources for religious, educational and leisure reading for both adults and children, and has relaxing spaces to sit and read, reflect or come in and just browse our collections.

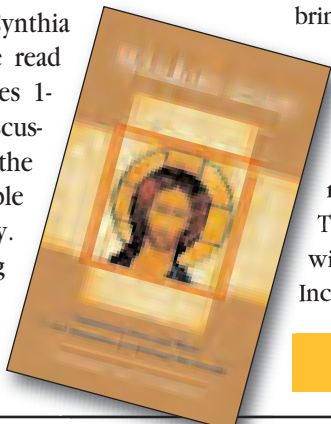
### New Logo

We're very pleased to introduce a new library logo on our updated bookmarks and rack cards! Thanks to Joy Taylor for recommending a terrific graphic design company: gariphic visual communications. Local graphic artist, Gary Holmes, designed a bold and colorful logo for the library and we'd love to hear what you think about it! Gary also designed a new rackcard and bookmark to update the library's image to communicate our programs and services to church members and the community.

### UPCOMING PROGRAMS

#### Christian Classics Book Group

Our group, led by Rev. Susan IZard, meets on Mondays from noon to 1:30 p.m. to discuss books on Christianity, religion, spirituality and other germane topics. On Monday, September 12th, we'll begin discussing "The Wisdom Jesus" by Cynthia Bourgeault. Please read chapters 1-3 (pages 1-40) for our first discussion. Copies of the books are available in the library. Please bring a bag lunch; coffee and tea are provided.



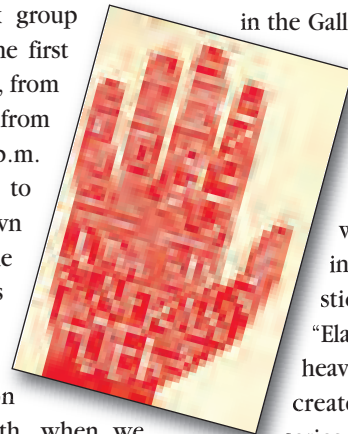
Author Cynthia Bourgeault is an Episcopal priest, teacher and retreat leader as well as an author of several books including her most recent, "The Meaning of Mary Magdalene", "Chanting the Psalms" and "Centering Prayer". In "The Wisdom Jesus", Bourgeault discusses the ministry of Jesus and places him in historical and geographic context to better understand his teachings. She goes on to discuss The Mysteries of Jesus and focuses on incarnation, the passion, the crucifixion and the great Easter fast. Bourgeault concludes by discussing five wisdom practices Christians can use to deepen our relationship with the Holy: Centering Prayer, Lectio Divina, Chanting and Psalmody, Welcoming and Eucharist.

#### Soup and Scripture

On Tuesdays from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. a basic meal of soup and bread is served, and our group reads scripture and has a brief informal discussion of the readings. On Tuesday, September 6th, please join us as we conclude our readings from the Book of Isaiah.

#### 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 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Participants are invited to bring their own "brown bag" supper and the library provides beverages and dessert. Our first meeting will be on Thursday, October 6th, when we will discuss "Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close," by Jonathan Safran Foer.



Foer tells the story of an intellectually curious and precocious 9-year-old boy, Oskar Schell, whose father died in the September 11th attack on the World Trade Center. Oskar finds a hidden key left by his father and his obsession to locate the lock that matches the key takes him on a journey around New York. Intertwined with Oskar's quest is the story of his grandfather, who survived the bombing of Dresden in World War II. Foer uses "humor, tenderness, and awe" as well as a creative graphic style to convey grief, loss and recovery.

During the year, we will also read "The Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet", "The Art of Racing in the Rain", "The Postmistress", "The 19th Wife", "The Kitchen House", and "Stranger in a Strange Land". Copies of the books will be available in the library.

#### Art Gallery

The John P. Webster Gallery currently features an exhibit of paintings by local artist Virginia Lynn Anderson, entitled "The Inner Landscape: Inspirations from Nature and the Visionary Art". The exhibit is on display until September 30th. The library will host fellowship hour and an artist reception in the Gallery immediately after worship on September 25th until noon.

Please stop by to meet Virginia, view her work and visit the library.

Virginia is a self-taught artist who uses a variety of mediums including watercolors and oil paintsticks. Her work is signed as "Eland'Ra", which means "bringing heaven to earth." Recently, she has created a children's picture book series. Illustrations from her latest book, "The Flying Phlox", will be on display in her show. ❖

**New Resources Added Regularly. Visit today!**

# Reach Out

(A column from Service & Outreach)

## Fourth Sunday Special Offering:



This month the Fourth Sunday Special Offering will benefit Habitat for Humanity. Habitat is a nonprofit, ecumenical Christian housing ministry through which volunteers donate labor, money and materials to build and renovate housing for those with no place to live. Habitat is not a “giveaway” program as home owners work alongside volunteers to invest “sweat equity” in their homes. First Church members have been very active over the years in devoting their time and energy to Habitat.

Service and Outreach sponsors a Special Offering every fourth Sunday of the month to benefit a service organization that helps those in greater need than ourselves. In this time of economic uncertainty, we hope you will be able to support those who most need our help. If you support organizations that need the Church’s wider support, please let us know. To make sure that your contribution is properly allocated, make sure to check the “Reach Out” box on the “Your Gift” envelope. Thank you. ❖

## Electronics Recycling

West Hartford now has a new electronics recycling program. Rather than recycle computers and televisions only twice per year, you can now do it 6 days per week. Drop them off at the Green Monster recycling facility, 150 Brook Street in West Hartford. Hours: Mon.-Fri. 7:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.; Sat. 8:00 a.m. - noon. ❖



If you have ideas to help us all become more green, please contact Bob Izard: [izard@izardnobel.com](mailto:izard@izardnobel.com).

## Troop 12 News: September 2011



Troop 12 Scouts and leaders in their official troop picture at Camp Yawgoog.

■ During the last week of July five members attended our favorite Scout camp—Camp Yawgoog, located just across the Connecticut border in Rockville, RI. They had a terrific time swimming, boating, singing, fishing, kayaking, and making new friends from Connecticut, Rhode Island, New York, and New Jersey. In addition, the five earned a total of 17 merit badges, and passed requirements for rank advancement. One Scout became an ACS certified Swimmer. Two Scouts earned the Totin’ Chip and the Firem’n Chit patches, allowing them to use jack knives, saws, and axes and to help build campfires on campouts.


The camp week’s theme was Halloween. Campsites were decorated with plastic jack-o-lanterns, skeletons, and all sorts of ghoulish things. Each troop appoint-

ed one member to compete in the costume contest. Although he didn’t win, we felt that scout James Sarnese was terrific as a gorilla.

■ Two former Troop 12 Scouts have been appointed Assistant Scoutmasters. Both Chris Allen and Adam Brown are Eagle Scouts. While attending Camp Yawgoog they took leadership courses to help them become top quality Scoutmasters.

■ Troop 12 Scout meetings will begin on Tuesday, September 13 and First Church members between the ages of 11-17 who might be interested in becoming a Boy Scout are welcome to visit. ❖

*Troop 12 meets weekly on Tuesdays from 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at First Church’s Youth Room and welcomes all boys 11 to 17. You may contact Scoutmaster Fred Brown ([fredbrown3@aol.com](mailto:fredbrown3@aol.com)) for more information.*



the annual

# mum sale

All proceeds to benefit



**The Annual MUM SALE to benefit HopeWorks, Inc. September 10-11, 2011 \$8.00 per plant**

Hardy field-grown mums in 8" pots. Your choice of 4 beautiful colors; yellow, white, burgundy and pink. Reserve your hardy field-grown mums with Bob Izard: 860-521-2304 or [rizard@izardnobel.com](mailto:rizard@izardnobel.com)

# Looking for a Church to Call Home?

- *Why does joining a church matter?*
- *Can't I just come and remain anonymous?*
- *What does it mean to say "yes" to First Church?*
- *Is having a spiritual address really necessary?*

Those are five good questions we can help you to answer as you consider membership at First Church!

On **September 25th** the first of two meetings will be offered for folks who are new to us - or just wanting to know more about us. It will be held in the Friendship Room at 11:30 a.m. (after worship and a brief stop at coffee hour). A Powerpoint presentation, "Whoever You Are," will get your mind going with possibility and opportunity as we tell our story and respond to any questions. As is our style, this is a "no strings attached" meeting . . . come find out . . . and then decide if membership is for you.

On **October 16th** at 11:30 a.m. the second meeting will take place and it is intended for those who came on September 25 and would like to take the next step toward joining - or learning more. A different Powerpoint presentation, "The Way Things Work," will help to interpret how First Church is able to do as it does. It will also help you to learn about our building, staff, programs and finances.

New members will be received into the church on November 13th. If you would like to be included please let Geordie or Barbara know! ❖



# Lectio Divina

Lectio Divina is an ancient way of praying with scripture. Each Monday morning we gather in the Chapel at 11:00 a.m. to listen to the scripture for the following Sunday. As a small group, we read and reflect on the scripture passage using the lectio format of three readings. During our silence and shared reflections we come to a deeper understanding of the meaning of the scripture passage. It is a time to encounter God's compassion as the Word is revealed. All are welcome. ❖



## Blessing of the Animals

Save the Date! The Blessing of the Animals will be held a 4:00 p.m. on Sunday, October 2nd. ❖



## Plant Sale 2012

*One gardner's Summer 2011 harvest from First Church tomato plants!*

We are repeating the Plant Sale in 2012! Come to a short meeting after church on **September 18th**. Grab a coffee and join us to discuss:

- What you will grow
- How you can help
- How can we improve the event
- What date to hold the sale

*We are hoping for lots more plants*

Can't come on the 18th? Contact Betty Leete or George Stone to let them know how you want to participate. ❖

## THE BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION IS SPONSORING A FIELD TRIP

To Heifer Project's Overlook Farm  
In Rutland, MA (about an hour away)

### FUN for All Ages "HARVEST FEST"

Saturday, October 1, 2011  
11:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.



A hay maze, hayrides, and other children's activities will be available. You can watch a goat milking and come face to face with goats, sheep, cows, water buffalo, a yak, llamas and even a camel.

Also, explore the homes in the 8 Heifer Global Villages to learn about traditional harvest celebrations in Peru, Poland, Kenya, and more.

Purchase a home-cooked lunch prepared from their farm products or bring your own picnic. The event will continue in the event of light rain.

**Admission:** Children 12 and under are admitted free; all other attendees are \$5.00 per person. Car pools can be arranged and the church van will be available. Sign-up with the Board of Christian Education at their Heifer Project Table on Sept. 11, 18 & 25.

**We hope to see you there!**

**A fun time was had by all who attended last year!**

## Knit, Knit, Knit

*The Knitting Ministry will resume meeting on September 19th  
(3rd Monday of the month from 7:00 p.m. - 8:15 p.m. in the Quiet Room, 4th floor.)*



SEPTEMBER 2011

# Tidings

## First Church<sup>of</sup> Christ

*Congregational* UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

12 SOUTH MAIN STREET  
WEST HARTFORD, CT 06107

## Don't Forget! September 11th is our "Welcome Home" Sunday

Your spiritual "home" welcomes you  
and hopes that you will experience hospitality here  
and you will also share that hospitality with others.

### Welcome Home!

Welcome to a new year of ministry together!  
"A Special Homecoming Picnic"

We hope that you will join your entire church family for worship at  
10:00 a.m., with a festive gathering and fellowship immediately  
afterward, hosted by the Board of Christian Education

There will also be fun activities for the kids to share!!

**Sandwiches, chips, dessert and beverages provided.**

**Please bring a salad or casserole to share.**

**SEE YOU ON THE 11TH!!**



## Another new year has begun!

Thank you to our church members for sending friends and neighbors our way. If anyone would like to substitute (for pay) or volunteer, please call Ruthie Johnson, FCNS Director at 860-232-2106.



Whoever you are,  
wherever you are on your life's journey,  
you are welcome at First Church!



## 2011 – 2012 PROGRAMS & ACTIVITIES

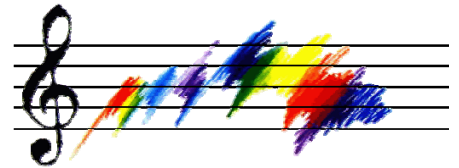
### Shaping Up . . .



**Worship is the heartbeat of First Church!** We gather to grow in faith, to be inspired and challenged, and to find a Christian center for our lives. We are an open and affirming congregation and celebrate the diversity of our membership.

**Sunday worship is at 10 AM.** Children begin with their families in the Meeting House and after a Children's Sermon go to our innovative "Christian Education Center" on the 4th floor, or the Preschool Center on the 2nd floor. However, on the 1st Sunday of every month children begin in their classrooms, and later rejoin their family for worship and celebration of Holy Communion.

**Music** enhances our worship experience in its many expressions: an awesome organ, our Adult Choir, our Whitechapel Handbell Choir, our Children's Choir, and a number of ensembles.



**Special Worship Events:** Taizé Worship once a month, A Summer Soulstice Celebration, Carillon Concerts, a Blessing of the Animals, and others.

### Starting Young . . .

We are a community of learning as we teach and practice our faith. Education and Christian Formation are offered for all ages – and with inviting variety.



**Church School** runs concurrent with worship for all children from Preschool & Kindergarten through 8th Grade. Adult supervised childcare is available each week for our youngest children. **Confirmation Class** is offered for youth, as well as our Junior (Grades 5-7), and Senior (Grades 8-12) Youth Ministry. We also sponsor one of the oldest **Boy Scout** troops in the country!

**First Church Nursery School** has been serving the community with an impressive menu of programs since 1941, and we are proud of the many children who are nurtured in our care.



### Going Deeper . . .

Faith keeps growing as long as we do! Our special focus on **Spiritual Life** provides Lectio Divina, Knitting Ministry, Labyrinth Walks, Christian Meditative Yoga, Women's Retreats, and "Journeymen" - our men's group.



JOHN P. WEBSTER  
**LIBRARY**  
Resources for Faith & Life

Book groups of all sorts are provided by our unique **John P. Webster Library**:

- **Christian Classics** – Monday afternoons
- **Soup and Scripture** – Tuesday evenings
- **Food for Thought** – 1st Thursday of every month

**JPW Library Art Gallery** exhibits paintings, sculptures, photography and handcrafts from Hartford area artists on a monthly basis. The library hosts fellowship hour after the worship service to welcome the artists and provide the congregation an opportunity to view their creations.

**"Living the Questions 2.0"** an overview of Christian Faith – led by our Senior Pastor on the 2nd & 4th Wednesday evening of the month from October through May.

**"Families, Faith, Fun & Fellowship"** – Opportunities for children and adults include field trips, parent forums (with childcare provided), seasonal programs, and more.

## Reaching Out . . .

We are fortunate to have received such goodness in life and we encourage active service in our church, community and world as our way of giving back.

Our **Stephen Ministry** equips and supports a program of person-to-person caring. In addition we have a number of ways to reach to our members who are not able to be with us on Sundays – flowers, cards, and phone calls.

Our **Service & Outreach** efforts include hands-on and financial support to a broad variety of needs: Habitat for Humanity, HopeWorks, Covenant to Care, Youth Mission Trips, Alex's Lemonade Stand, Disaster Aid, Silver Lake, and the United Church of Christ – just to name a few.

And we are proud to have among our members those who take their faith with them in daily measure, serving in ways and places that we can never fully know!



## Meeting Up . . .



Community, fellowship and family are core to our congregation and we look forward to times to be together! A meal with one another is always popular as our **“Gather Round the Table”** friends have discovered. There are picnics on Homecoming Sunday and Church School Day, Pizza Nights, Pancake Suppers, and Holiday Specials – not to mention our weekly Hospitality Hour.

In addition, we find that being active in the life of the church enriches us in unexpected ways and so we encourage all sorts of involvement: Greeting, Ushering, Volunteering in the office, teaching, singing, ringing, or serving in any number of leadership opportunities.



## Going Beyond . . . (Opportunities for Immersion & Travel)

Two opportunities for international travel are a part of our plans this coming year, each offering a broader perspective and experience of faith. Please call for more information!



**Sacred Story Journey to Israel and Palestine** - late February - led by Dennis Dewey, renowned Biblical Storyteller, and Geordie Campbell.

**Pilgrimage to Iona** - late April into early May - led by Susan IZard and Cathy Murtha.



**First Church is on [FACEBOOK](#) and [FLICKR](#). Check us out!**

On your **Facebook** home page, type in the search box: **First Church West Hartford**



To find us on **Flickr**, go to [www.flickr.com](http://www.flickr.com) and search for the GROUP called **“In The Heart of West Hartford.”**

### **First Church of Christ Congregational**

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860-233-9605  
[www.whfirstchurch.org](http://www.whfirstchurch.org)

### **John P. Webster Library**

860-232-3893  
[www.jpwlbrary.org](http://www.jpwlbrary.org)

### **First Church Nursery School**

860-232-2106  
[www.whfirstchurch.org](http://www.whfirstchurch.org)