



SEPTEMBER 2014

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.

SUNDAY, ON CENTER

10:00 AM Worship
in the Meeting House

September 7

"The Power of
a Fresh Start"
Geordie Campbell
preaching

September 14 Homecoming Sunday

(Notice date change)
Nanette Pitt
preaching

Taizé Service

5:00 p.m. Chapel

September 21

"Can Trees
Really Sing?"
Geordie Campbell
preaching

September 28

"Nine Easy Words"
Congregational
Conversation on
Forward in Faith
Geordie Campbell
preaching

Celtic Evening Eucharist

5:00 p.m. Chapel

¡Darle la Bienvenida a Manantiel de Gracia!

Dear friends,

As the days shorten and our activities take shape around a new program year, I trust and pray that any moments of relaxation and joy you experienced this summer will remain with you well into the busyness of the months ahead.

This fall promises many exciting opportunities and new developments at First Church, as you'll read in this edition of *Tidings*. Of the most notable is the outcome of our discernment with the Hispanic UCC church, Manantiel de Gracia (Spring of Grace). In August, our Church Council voted unanimously to approve a Covenant presented by the Outreach Pod of our Forward in Faith process that begins:

"We, First Church of Christ Congregational West Hartford and Manantiel de Gracia, desire to enter into an intentional and relational covenant, supporting one another in our respective and joint ministries to grow together and learn from each other as we move forward to spread God's love, peace, and justice in our communities and around the world."

This follows months of prayerful discussion and exploration between the churches stemming, on our part, from the goals the Forward in Faith team heard First Church articulate. These included our being responsive to the needs of the wider community, reaching out in new ways to learn about and be in relationship with those who are different from us, and being welcoming of diversity in more active and engaged ways.

Entering this intentional and covenanted relationship means that Manantiel de Gracia will find a home at First Church for their activities and worship (Sundays at 11:00 a.m. in the Chapel). And most importantly, expresses the desire of both communities, as sister-UCC churches, to understand ourselves as part of one larger diverse, yet unified, faith family.

Please join me in welcoming and engaging members of Manantiel de Gracia warmly and in thanking the members of our Forward in Faith Outreach Pod who led this effort on our behalf: **Eleanor Wight, Betty Leete, Terry Schmitt, Ginny Vocelli, Carol Lorenzo, and Courtland Lewis.**

In faith,

Nanette

Nanette Pitt, Acting Associate Pastor



CHURCH BULLETIN BOARD AND FAMILY NEWS

DEATHS



● **Polly Merritt O'Leary** passed away on 7/12/14. Her service was held in our chapel on

July 17.

● **Helen 'Marilyn' (Felske) Sousa** passed away on 7/31/14. Her brother is Ned Felske. A memorial service will be held September 6th at 11:00 a.m. in the Meetinghouse.

● **Martha Savides** (Nanette's mother-in-law) passed away on 7/23/14 in South Africa.

CELEBRATIONS



● **31 Back Packs!**
Thank you to everyone who stepped up to fill up the back packs. See p. 3.

Do you have news of a birth, baptism, death or celebration?

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

PRAYER CIRCLE

Do you yearn for a little quiet time in your week, a space for reflection that adds to your sense of the holy amid your everyday life? Consider dropping in to join a small group of church members who gather each Thursday morning from 9-9:30 a.m. for a time of silent reflection and spoken prayer in the 4th floor Quiet Room.

You Are Invited to

A Night of Elegance!

On Saturday, September 27, 2014, from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m., please join the entire youth group to raise funds for the renovation of the Youth Room.

Our goal is to update and improve the utility of this important space used by our youth groups and guest users from the community.

SILENT AUCTION DONATIONS NEEDED

The event will include a silent auction and we need your help in obtaining items. We are seeking items such as: Weekend getaways, chauffeur, golf outings, sports events. All donations are welcome ... no donation is too small!

Suggestions: restaurant gifts cards, movie passes, a bottle of wine or some babysitting time. Themed items for our "Cool Treats" could be a gift card to Sweet Frog, Ben and Jerry's, or Robeks, AND an ice cream scoop, cool ice cream bowls, etc. ... you get the idea! Please contact **Cindy Bemis** at 860-232-9161, or **Margaret Sitkowski** at 860-570-1072.

Communications at First Church

TIDINGS: Tidings submissions are due on the 14th to Joy Taylor: JoyT@WestHartfordMagazine.com
SUNDAY NOTES & WEEKLY EMAIL Submissions are due each Wednesday at noon to Gerry Whitehead: Gerry.Whitehead@WHFirstChurch.org

MUSIC! MUSIC! MUSIC!

The Music Ministry has mapped out the "Arts in The Center" plan for the year! Here's a peek at the first few dates, so you can mark your calendar. Watch *Tidings* and *Sunday Notes* for updates.

● **October 19 @ 4:00 p.m.** (Freewill donation) - **Church Music Ministry Benefit Concert** - The music ensembles of First Church perform solo pieces, in small ensembles, and a performance of J.S. Bach's "Jesu Meine Freude"

● **November 16 @ 4:00 p.m.** (\$10, children free with food donation) - Existing in the tension between tradition and frontier, Telluride Bluegrass Festival Band Contest winner and Prairie Home Companion guest, **Run Boy Run**, exceeds the sum of its parts with touches of classical, jazz, and folk.

● **January 25 @ 4:00 p.m.** (\$10, children free with food donation) - **Voce CONCIATO** is an early music vocal ensemble based in Hartford. The ensemble began taking shape when a group of friends who share a mutual love of early music began to explore the genre more thoroughly.

● **February 13 @ 5:30 p.m.** \$20 - Valentine's Day Swing Dance and Spaghetti Supper, featuring **The Little Big Band**. Come enjoy dinner, a swing dance tutorial, and a good old-fashioned evening of music from a dynamic 15-piece swing band

● **March 1 @ 4:00 p.m.** **The Jolly Beggars.**

● **April 19 @ 4:00 p.m.** **Paul Winter's "Missa Gaia."**

● **June 7 @ 4:00 p.m.** **Asylum Quartet.**



**ARTS IN THE
CENTER**

Thanks for the Backpack Supplies!

Thank you to everyone who filled a back pack or contributed school supplies for Covenant to Care. A total of 31 back packs were distributed to needy children in the Hartford/ New Britain area. Marcia and Steve, our CCC social workers, are so appreciative of your support for their clients.

It's still the end of summer, but winter will soon be here. This is a heads up especially for you knitters. While we certainly will collect non-handmade donations, consider this an advance notice that we will be collecting mittens, hats, and other warm things for CCC (sizes infant- older teen) between Oct. 1- Dec. 31.

-Bev Truebig and Carole Carter



Celtic Evening Eucharist services will be held at **5:00 p.m. in the Chapel**, on the fourth Sunday night of the month. The Celtic Evening Eucharist is a candlelit service with beautiful Celtic music, prayer, reflection and Holy Communion.

All are welcome to the table at First Church.

2014

September 28
October 26
November 23
December 28

2015

January 25
February 22
March 22
April 26
May 24



First Church of Christ Congregational

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

OPEN & AFFIRMING CONGREGATION 

Rev. Dr. C. Geordie Campbell, Senior Pastor

Rev. Nanette Pitt, Acting Associate Pastor

Suzanne Nardi, Administrative Assistant

12 SOUTH MAIN STREET
WEST HARTFORD, CT 06107



www.whfirstchurch.org

P: 860-233-9605

F: 860-232-8183

J.P. WEBSTER LIBRARY 860-232-3893

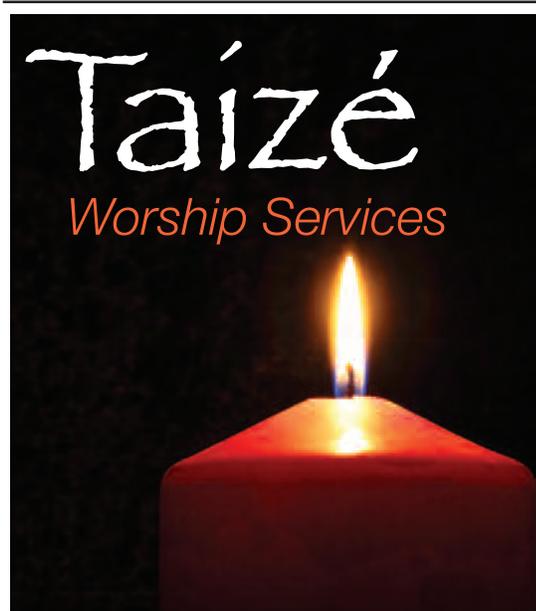
Patti Malahan, jpwebsterdir@snet.net

NURSERY SCHOOL 860-232-2106

Ruthie Johnson, fcnswh@att.net



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Co-sponsored by:



2014

September 14
October 12
November 9
December 14

2015

January 11
February 8
March 8
April 12
May 10

Taizé services are held at **5:00 p.m. in the Chapel**, on the second Sunday night of the month. Taizé Worship is an ecumenical, contemporary, contemplative service with song, silence, scripture and prayer. The Taizé Community was formed at the end of World War II in Taizé, France with the purpose of promoting peace and understanding through common worship. The influence of the Taizé Community has now spread all over the world. The quiet, reflective services are a lovely interlude in our busy lives.

Invite your friends...The services are open to the wider community.



JOHN P. WEBSTER LIBRARY

Resources for Faith & Life

Patricia Malahan, Director • Email: JPWebsterDir@snet.net • (860) 232-3893

LIBRARY HOURS:

Monday-Thursday 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Sunday 9:00 a.m. – noon.

The library will be closed on Monday, September 1st and Sunday, September 21st.

John P. Webster Library Ministry

The JPW Library is a ministry of our church which touches people's lives and feeds people's minds and souls, thanks to the vision and generosity of Miss Florence Crofut. The library provides rich resources for First Church boards, ministries and members; it also reaches out beyond our community, bringing visitors of all ages, friends and seekers into fellowship and learning. Recently, the JPW Library was honored by the Spiritual Life Center as one of 30 area organizations that "Support and Nurture Spiritual Growth and Community Well-Being."

The library fulfills the mission of the church and the vision of Miss Crofut to be "an outstanding New England Church Library" by providing a wide range of services and programs:

- Selects, purchases, maintains and provides faith-based and secular resources for church members, and the community. The library has an excellent children's collection that supports the First Church Nursery School and has strong collections on Eco-justice, Interfaith, Spirituality and Church Leadership, as well as popular fiction.

- Provides outreach and fellowship; facilitates book discussions and programs for the church and broader community; sponsors guest speakers, theologians, authors, and other special events. Previous programs have included Celtic authority Rev. John Philip Newell, storyteller Onawumi Jean Moss, who enthralled us during the kick-off program and dinner celebrating the church's 300th anniversary; a 9/11 memorial and talk by a World Trade Center survivor and author Michael Benfante; and a co-sponsored program with Congregation Beth Israel with the authors of "The Faith Club."

- Manages the church archives, which are full of historical documents related to the church's 300 years in the heart of West Hartford. The archives are a great source for genealogical research, information on the church's past, and important events in the history of West Hartford. Thanks to Esther Spafard and Barbara Goodwin, the archives are kept well organized and relevant to the needs of the church.

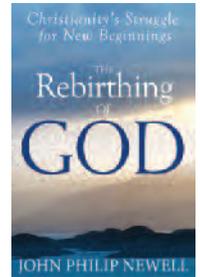
- Financially contributes to the operations of the church, purchases and maintains media equipment available for loan to church staff and members, and provides numerous "in kind services". The library ministry contributed \$50,000 to the Elevator Campaign, over \$20,000 for the church archives, and over \$10,000 for media-related equipment.

For more information on how the library can touch your life's journey, please stop by to visit—we're located on the second floor, down the stairs from the Meeting House—call, or email. If we don't have the resource you need and it fits our mission, please let us know and we'll do our best to find it for you!

For a complete list of upcoming programs, and late-breaking news, please go to the library tab on the church website: www.whfirstchurch.org.

Awakening the Spirit Book Discussion Meets Mondays at Noon First meeting: September 22

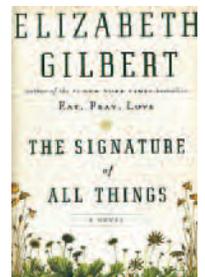
Our discussion of chapters 1 and 2 of John Philip Newell's new book, *The Rebirthing of God*, will be led by Susan Izard. Newell invites us "to ask what is trying to be born that requires a radical reorientation of our vision. What is the new thing that is trying to emerge from deep within us and from deep within the collective soul of Christianity?"



Copies of the books are available in the library. Please bring your lunch; beverages and dessert will be provided.

Food for Thought Book Group Meets First Thursday of each month at 5:30 First meeting: October 2

The Signature of All Things "is the story of Alma Whittaker, who—born in the Age of Enlightenment, but living well into the Industrial Revolution—bears witness to that extraordinary moment in human history when all the old assumptions about science, religion, commerce, and class were exploding into dangerous new ideas."



Copies of the books are available in the library. Please bring a light dinner; beverages and dessert will be provided.

Save the Dates! February 27 & 28, 2015 Perennial Wisdom with Rabbi Rami Shapiro

Rabbi Shapiro will be with us on Friday evening for a special worship and fellowship time, and will lead a retreat on Saturday. This Interfaith program will be open to the community. More details to follow!



First Church Nursery School is starting its 73rd year as a ministry of First Church. This year, we will serve more than 80 families; many will depend on us for full-time care, as well as pre-school. We look forward to a year filled with joy, laughter and learning.

A major focus is teaching children from infant/toddler age through age 5 how to share and care for others. Working with the church and others, we strive to give to those in need. Classroom and whole-school celebrations encourage children to learn how blessed they are.

As always, we are thankful for the amazing space we have and for the chance to offer volunteer opportunities to church members. If you would like to share your time with our classes, please call Ruthie Johnson, Education Director: 860-232-2106.



Seeking volunteers...
Please Watch your Sunday Notes,
Facebook and E-Mail News for
an update on the annual mum sale.



“Gather Round The Table” Gatherings are Back!

Gather Round the Table provides wonderful opportunities for First Church members, including couples and individuals, to take turns hosting groups of 5 to 11 people for a meal in their homes, and to attend three meals at other hosts' homes. Because the emphasis is on hospitality, social time and fellowship, the meals can be anything a host chooses. Hosts will provide the location, beverages and entrées, and guests will bring appetizers, veggie side dish, bread, salad, dessert or whatever else is needed for the meal.

These small group events have traditionally worked well to widen the circles of long-time and new church members, alike. Please join us! We are seeking hosts, and there are also spots on the list for substitutes if you can't commit to hosting.

The experience offers a great way for small groups to enjoy good company and tasty meals! The four, two-month cycles are: Oct/Nov, Dec/Jan, Feb/Mar, and April/May.

Gather Round The Table Sign-up form

Please return completed form to: **Bob or Martha Calef, Bob or Jane Cave, Betty Knowles or Eleanor Wight** (or to the church office).

1. I/We would like to host a Gather Round The Table this year.
2. I/We can invite _____ (between 5 and 11) to my/our home.
3. I/We will be away or not available during these months: _____

Name(s) _____

Address: _____

Phone #: _____ Email: _____

Reach Out

A column from Service & Outreach



Hands On Hartford HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

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: 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. First Churchers are pictured above at 271 Laurel Street in Hartford this past summer during an interfaith Building on Faith day.

Thank you for your support.



SPECIAL NOTICE OF MEETING Sunday, September 28, 2014 11:15 a.m. in the Auditorium

Notice is hereby given that a congregational meeting of the First Church of Christ Congregational, West Hartford CT is called to hear an update from the Sustainability group for the Forward in Faith Implementation. The meeting will begin at 11:15 a.m. in the church auditorium on Sunday, September 28, 2014, following the 10:00 a.m. worship service.

Given August 17, 2014

Lynn Huntington, Clerk of the Church

YOGA

Sponsored by the Christian Education
Ministry of First Church

Please join us for Meditative Yoga!
Take a break from the stress of life and connect with your body, mind, and spirit.

Through yoga postures, breathing, and meditation techniques, quiet your mind and learn to hear the quiet voice of spirit, while strengthening your body.

This all-levels Kripalu yoga class, taught by Nancy Murray, E-RYT 500, is appropriate for students at all levels, including beginners.

Fall series starts the week of
September 1.

Three different 7-week classes
will be offered:

Tuesdays: 7:00 p.m. – 8:15 p.m.

Wednesdays: 9:15 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

Thursdays: 9:15 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

Please call Nancy Murray, 860-521-8186,
for more information, including suggested
donation, or to sign up.

HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH GROUP

Youth in grades 9-12 are always welcome, as are friends, classmates, groupies, or random acquaintances! Join us for fun, conversation, service projects and faith formation activities.

Youth Group is led by Rev. Nanette Pitt, together with mentors Matt and Chelsey Worth. We typically meet on the first and third Sundays of each month from 11:30-1 p.m. in the Youth Room. Additionally, Nanette is always available for conversation, questioning, and support at nanette.pitt@whfirstchurch.org, or 860-233-9605 x102.



SEPTEMBER EVENTS

Saturday, the 20th: Canoe, kayak, paddleboard outing on the Farmington River. Leaving from First Church at 10 a.m., we'll travel to Collinsville Canoe & Kayak...parent drivers and chaperones are needed. We'll finish the outing with lunch at LaSalle Market & Deli and return to church at 3 p.m.

Saturday, the 27th: Evening of Elegance. We're hosting a fundraiser for improvements to the Youth Room. Put the date for this evening event in your calendar and come support! (See page 2 for more information.)

Troop 12 News: September



Troop 12 Scouts and leaders at Camp Yawgoo, RI, in July.

At the end of July and the beginning of August, 15 Troop 12 Scouts with four leaders attended Camp Yawgoog for a week. Seven Scouts, new to the troop, attended and were initiated into the fun of Boy Scout summer camp. All seven of them began work on rank advancement and all of them earned their Swimming merit badge. The eight Scouts returning to camp earned 35 merit badges while also enjoying canoe, kayak, and sailing trips on the lake. Some went fishing, played basketball, and hiked during the week.

On Friday night, we celebrated the retirement of Mr. DePerry of Troop 16 (our "brother" troop from Westerly, RI) during our annual cookout. Mr. DePerry began attending Camp Yawgoog as an eleven-year-old, went on to become an Eagle Scout in high school, became a troop leader (including Scoutmaster for many years), and retired as Troop Committee Chairman in order to move closer to his grandchildren in NJ. Mr. DePerry's 42-year tenure at Camp Yawgoog was worthy of celebration and we were happy to be a part of it.

The week after summer camp, three Scouts attended Camp Webster after being accepted in the National Youth Leadership Training program sponsored by Boy Scouts of America. Emory, Aidan, and Alex learned and practiced communication skills, goal setting, problem solving, decision making, and conflict resolution through classes, games, and outdoor activities.

Troop 12 Boy Scouts meet weekly on Tuesdays from 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at First Church's Youth Room; we welcome all boys 11 to 17 years-old. You may contact Scoutmaster Fred Brown at fredbrown3@aol.com for more information.



Homecoming Sunday Sept. 14

Your spiritual "home" welcomes you and hopes you will experience hospitality here and that you will also share that hospitality with others. The Christian Education Board would like to invite you all to a welcome back picnic on the labyrinth immediately following worship on September 14th. Sandwiches, chips, beverages and dessert will be provided. We'll have face painting and glitter tattoos for the kids! Please bring a side dish - fruit and salads would be great!



Join us for a Blessing of the Backpacks Sept. 14

School is upon us! It is time for our students to return to their classrooms and for other fall schedules to resume. First Church will be having a Blessing of the Backpacks celebration on Homecoming Sunday, September 14th. Children and youth are asked to come to the service with their backpack or another kind of student bag. The blessing of the backpacks will include students, parents and caregivers to be present for recognition and prayers. Every parent wants his or her child to have all the advantages possible for a good education. This year, that includes a blessing!

Welcome Back to Church School!

Church school will begin with a meet and greet on Homecoming Sunday, September 14th. Children will be dismissed to Church School after the children's sermon. They will have the opportunity to meet and greet each other and their teachers. We ask that all families fill out a registration form if your children will be participating in church school at any age level. Forms are available on our website. Schedule is as follows:

Infant/Toddlers: Care for infants through two year olds will be available from 9:45 am until the end of worship in room 216. Our infant room is equipped with a rocking chair, diaper changing area and age appropriate toys. Care is provided by loving adult volunteers assisted by youth.

Three and Four Year Olds: Children will meet in room 214 after the children's sermon. Children can be picked up in room at the end of the service. Our three and four year olds will be exploring Bible stories each week. Using the Spark: Activate our Faith curriculum, children will hear a story, participate in songs, games and activities related to that story, and most importantly, have time to get to know their fellow church school friends.

Kindergarten through 6th grade-Faith Journeys: Children will meet on the 4th floor after the children's sermon. Kids can look for their grade level flags outside of the workshop rooms. Children can be picked up in rooms at end of the service. Official rotation workshops will begin on September 21st. Our first rotation will be "All About the Bible." This rotation will explore the history of the Bible as well as fun games to help learn how it is organized and how to use the Bible.

Seventh and Eighth Grade: Youth will meet in the Community Room on the 2nd floor near the JP Webster library. They can either be picked up or arrange to meet parents at a set location after the service. On September 21st, they will embark on their pre-confirmation program using the Spark Connect curriculum. The year will begin with stories from the Old Testament in a unit called Beginnings.

Growing Faith At Home

Teaching children to be caring and compassionate is an important part of Christian parenting. As parents, we can teach our children about stewardship by encouraging them to bring an offering to church each week. This year, our church school will collect money or items each week to support a variety of outreach missions. During the months of September and October we will collect money and toiletry items for Hands on Hartford's Community Pantry. Involving your entire family in outreach and mission projects is a wonderful way to grow your faith at home. Stay tuned for opportunities for involvement here at First Church. Everyone, at any age, has something to offer. Whether it's a helping hand with groceries, visiting, or simply sharing a smile. No act of kindness is too small!

*-Dawne Quinn,
Director of Faith Formation.*

CONFIRMATION CLASS OF 2015

All 9th graders and any older youth who wish to attend are invited to join this year's Confirmation experience. The program is an opportunity to explore questions of faith, learn more about Christianity and the church, and to deepen your relationship with God.

To participate, youth need to complete the sign-up form available online at www.whfirstchurch.org. Families, both youth and parents, are invited to attend an Orientation Meeting on Sunday, September 14, 4:5-5:30 p.m., in the fourth floor Quiet Room.

Weird Animals Vacation Bible School - Awesome Week!

Sixty children and twenty youth volunteers experienced a week long VBS at First Church this summer. Our program "Weird Animals," helped kids to know that Jesus' love is one-of-a-kind. The children, representing our church and many others in West Hartford, played games, sang songs, danced, did science experiments and created snacks. Each day, the children were inspired by God's word and were challenged to go out into the community and demonstrate their faith. Coins were collected for Operation Kid-to-Kid's Clean Water for India mission. VBS was able to donate \$347.38 to the cause! Special thanks to **Donna Dobbins, Jimmy Quinn** and **Kim Carbone** for their help.



SEPTEMBER 2014

Tidings

First Church of Christ

Congregational UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

12 SOUTH MAIN STREET
WEST HARTFORD, CT 06107



First Church Pop-Ups!

**Sometimes it seems we have the best kept secrets in town!
It's time to wake up ourselves and others to all that we have going on here!
Amazing initiatives are popping up in and around First Church!**

- ✓ **Rejoice** with our new partner Manantial de Gracia as they begin on 9/7.
- ✓ **Welcome** our International Peacemaking Student from Hartford Seminary on 9/14.
- ✓ **Celebrate** the rededication of our Memorial Garden (to be announced).
- ✓ **Support** our Youth at their "Evening of Elegance" fundraiser on 9/27.
- ✓ **Worship** at our new Sunday Evening Celtic Eucharist beginning on 9/28.
- ✓ **Bless** your beloved pet at "All Creatures Great and Small" on 10/5.
- ✓ **Engage** with Geordie in "Before It's Time," a planning series for your memorial service.
 - ✓ **Chant** and pray with our Taizé Service on 10/12.
- ✓ **Embrace** the Spirit with Nanette and Geordie in a new series on spiritual formation.
 - ✓ **Listen** as our Arts in the Center Series begins again on 10/19.

**And these are just the opportunities that begin our new season!
Stay tuned for more information!
Help us to get the secret out!**

Greg Wilfrid needs your help with a new folk music research project!

Greg has recently started his Masters in Music Education degree at the Hartt School. One of his classes is "Folk Song Research," and the year-long project entails collecting fifty folk songs from various sources. Greg would like to use First Church as his main resource, so he is asking for volunteers who would be willing to talk with him for 5-10 minutes (in person or by phone) about a song from their childhood or adolescence. These songs could be play songs, lullabies, ballads, songs learned from a family member, songs learned at a childhood camp, etc.

Let's enrich our community by learning a bit about where we all came from and what music we bring with us!

Please contact Greg Wilfrid if you are interested in participating - find him on a Sunday morning, call 774-364-0492 or email him: gregwilfrid@gmail.com.