

# THE PARISHIONER

THE FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST, WOODBRIDGE 1738-2010

Sunday Worship 10:00 a.m.

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April 2010

## Church Council

Your Church Council met on March 1, 2010. Dave Schneider came to offer a preliminary proposal for our consideration as we think about updating our by-laws. Are there ways to update our by-laws to better serve the needs of our congregation and our ministries?

We are continuing our work to put into place a system of volunteer church openers and church closers on Sunday mornings. In the meantime, Charles will be with us on Sunday mornings through the month of March. Our thanks to the volunteers who have offered to help.

There is incredible excitement about the 2010 Youth Mission trip. More of our youth have expressed interest and some adults have expressed interest. Isn't this exciting? Our visioning process named three focal areas and this important outreach combines two.

Our next meeting is scheduled for April 5, 2010 at 7:30 p.m. We will continue discussions of ways we might update our by-laws. – Janet Maley, Clerk



BRING BELLS TO CHURCH ON EASTER SUNDAY  
SO WE CAN RING IN THE GOOD NEWS

## HOLY WEEK

**March 28: Palm/Passion Sunday;** Red Hymnal Hymn Sing at 9:50. Luke 19:28-40  
(Jesus' triumphal entry in Jerusalem) Luke 22: 14-23:56 (The Passion Story).

**April 1: Maundy Thursday;** Holy Communion with a service of "Tenebrae" or "Shadows." Join us in the Parish Hall at 6:30 p.m. for a potluck supper followed by worship at 7:15--a moving service of candlelight and darkness.

**April 2: Good Friday;** Meditative Worship in Our Chapel at Noon and then on the Labyrinth.

**April 4: Easter Sunday;** Intergenerational Worship.

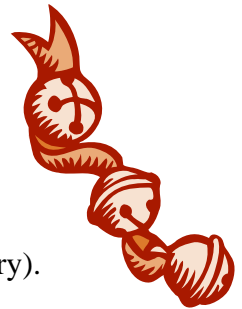
**6:15 a.m.** Easter Sunrise Worship on the Green.

Note earlier time so that we can experience the sun's rising in worship together.

Worship on the Church Green conducted by Mike and Sara Penn-Strah.

**10:00 a.m.** Holy Communion; Music from our Junior and Senior Choirs and the Handbell Choir. John 20:1-18 (Mary Magdalene encounters the Risen Christ in the garden.)

**BRING A BELL!**



# Pastors Corner

The Rev. Dr. Sara E. Penn-Strah

My Dear Friends,

We have been talking in this newsletter and in our church board meetings about change—both about its fast pace and about how the mainline church ought to respond to change in our culture. Last month I wrote to you about two tensions that influence how we respond to change: the tension between *what is* and *what was* compared to the tension between *what is* and *what should be*.

As Christians we pay attention to our past and take it very seriously. The past grounds us in the ways God has held us in love and care, has liberated us from oppression, and offered us new life. But as Christians we are called to center our life in the tension between *what is* and *what should be*, that is, the difference between the reality of the world today and what God has in store for the world.

On May 8 we are all invited to learn about ways we can do that more faithfully at the Spring Annual Meeting of our Connecticut Conference, which will be held at the First Congregational Church of Madison, where the theme for the day will be “God’s Church is a Strange Land: 7 Ways to Thrive.” Come for help facing the challenges of today’s church. Learn ways to grow the church and be equipped to lead the church of today and tomorrow.

If you go to <http://www.ctucc.org/news/AnnlMtg10/10spring-workshoplist.html> you will find an amazing list of workshops to sign up for on that day (or just go to [www.ctu.org](http://www.ctu.org) and click on the “Annual Meeting” tab at the far right of the screen). Spiritual nurture, social media, vital confirmation classes, integrating new members, generous giving, appreciative inquiry, and hands on mission are just a few topics being covered.

This meeting marks the last time our Conference Minister, the Rev. Dr. Davida Foy Crabtree will be with us in that capacity, so I expect that the registration may fill up quickly. I hope you will consider taking a day to nurture yourself with what I can assure you will be a moving and meaningful day.

Blessings on the journey,

Sara



## WORSHIP IN APRIL

**April 1: Maundy Thursday;** Holy Communion with a service of “Tenebrae.” Potluck Supper at 6:30 p.m. followed by worship at 7:15 in the Parish Hall.

**April 2: Good Friday;** Meditative Worship in Our Chapel at Noon.



**April 4: Easter Sunday;** Intergenerational Worship.

**6:15 a.m.** Easter Sunrise Worship on the Green.  
Note earlier time to catch the rising of the sun.

**10:00 a.m.** Holy Communion; Music from our Junior and Senior Choirs and the Handbell Choir. **BRING A BELL!**

**April 11: Second Sunday of Easter--Holy Humor Sunday:** Psalm 150 (“Let everything that breathes praise the Lord!”); Acts 5:27-32 (Peter comes before the high priest); John 20:1-19 (Jesus appears to the disciples after his death and resurrection.) Join us for some Holy Hilarity led by our high school youth.

**April 18: Third Sunday of Easter:** Acts 9:1-20 (Paul “meets” Jesus on the road to Damascus.) John 21:1-19 (Jesus’ post resurrection to Peter who is fishing and not catching a thing.)

**April 25: Fourth Sunday of Easter;** Hymn sing at 9:50: Acts 9:36-43 (When Tabitha, a disciple, who ministers with widows, dies, Peter revives her); John 10:22-30 (Jesus says, “My sheep hear my voice.”)

## WORSHIP CORNER

Question: Why is worship more interactive than it used to be in our church?

Answer: We have learned much about how learning takes place and about faith formation in the past thirty years.

First of all, we have discovered that individuals have many different learning styles and different ways of taking in senses and perceptions. Consequently we try to plan worship that has a variety of differing elements, including interaction, in order to help more worshipers encounter God in worship.

Second, we know that children in particular do better in worship when it is more interactive. In the church profile we put together when we were searching for a minister, and in our more recent process of discerning God’s vision for the future of our church, we said that we wanted our children to be more fully integrated into church life. Attuning worship to their needs moves our church life toward that vision.

Third, making worship more interactive helps us all remember that we have to take an active part in our life of faith, not just sit passively. Worship is not the work of the ministers and lay leaders and choir only. Rather worship is the work of all the people. In the same way, interactive worship engages us actively in our spiritual journeys.





## Open and Affirming (O&A)

### Questions and Answers regarding Open and Affirming – Installment 1

Your O&A group thought it would be helpful to provide some questions and answers that have been raised so far around Open and Affirming. Since this will be a series of installments, please feel free to approach anyone in the group with questions/comments or send any one of us an e-mail with your questions and we'll be happy to research and address in future parishioners.

What is Open and Affirming (O&A)?

O&A began as a way of welcoming gay and lesbians, who have historically been excluded from organized Christian communities, to attend a church. Many churches have expanded their statement of welcome to include all marginalized people. Basically, the statement formulated by the congregation expresses the church's ideals on the subject.

I'm confused. Is it O&A, ONA, Open & Affirming?

All 3 are used interchangeably by your task group.

Why are we doing this now?

This process of discussion and exploration began over a year ago when the trustees asked the deacons to host discussions on homosexuality in the church. As new groups of people have explored becoming members of our church, they have inquired about our congregation's O&A status. Also, members of our congregation have been asking for this exploration to occur. Thus, the timing has been driven from within our membership.

ONA is a United Church of Christ (UCC) movement. Being a UCC church and not having a statement can be interpreted to be as much of a *statement* as having a statement. People who are considering joining our church wonder why we have chosen not to be Open and Affirming. (We know this because at our last New Member's Class, every potential new member asked why we were not Open and Affirming and most did not want to join the church unless the church was welcoming of gays and lesbians.) While some might feel that not having a written statement is a neutral position, for someone looking at our church for the first time, *not* having such a statement may be understood as a position against welcoming gays and lesbians. Potential newcomers cannot read our minds.

Who makes the decision whether to be an O&A church?

Our congregation will ultimately vote on this. This is not a requirement of the UCC nor do we need their approval.

Respectfully submitted,

Rich Altman; John Anderson, Erica I. González, Phyllis Hedberg, Christine Lovejoy, Tom Morrissey, Sara Penn-Strah, and Joyce Simpson



## **Position Seekers Networking Group – Wednesday, April 7** **Networking Meetings and Two Minute Drills**

Join us on Wednesday, April 7, from noon to 1:30 PM in the Parish House Board Room. This meeting's focus will be a follow-up to our great networking session held on March 10<sup>th</sup>. We will review the tips presented and assist position seekers in creating their list of A level contacts, the approach to take in contacting these contacts, and the script to follow during the networking meetings. The key for position seekers is to schedule as many networking meetings as possible with colleagues, friends, and other candidates, as many as six meetings per week, to ask for referrals for additional meetings.



We will also ask candidates to come prepared to present their two-minute drill. This is how one introduces oneself in a networking meeting, a concise statement of perhaps approximately 500 words which summarizes one's background and experience and provides a message of the type of opportunity sought. It is also considered an "elevator speech," what you would say to a key executive about yourself if you were alone with that person in an elevator.

Our group, sponsored by First Church, is intended to provide guidance for those out of work or underemployed in these difficult economic times. We welcome anyone who is out of work or underemployed to join us. Also, anyone with advice, guidance or support is welcome!

There are many in our own community out of work or underemployed. This has a significant extended effect upon our families and town. We are exploring common interests in job searching, assessing local business conditions, and providing support and recommendations for job seekers. Bring your own sandwiches; coffee will be provided. Please join us!

Rich Forselius

## **Youth/Mission Work Trip - Summer 2010**

Following on our tremendously successful trip last summer to Pine Ridge, SD this year we will be traveling to do our summer youth mission work to Puerto Cabezas, Nicaragua from August 21-28. While there, we will be constructing and repairing homes and serving the 100 children living in the children's home (next door to where we will be staying) through recreation, reading and song. Erica Gonzalez will come along as our third adult chaperone, joining Evan Warren and Julie Altman. We are getting so very excited about this opportunity!



If you are interested in joining us, we are asking that you print out and complete the application form (to be found at: [http://www.forwardedge.org/opportunities/pdfs/FEI\\_Team\\_Application\\_2010.pdf](http://www.forwardedge.org/opportunities/pdfs/FEI_Team_Application_2010.pdf)) and bring it, along with a \$150 deposit, to the church office by April 1.

For further information or questions, please contact:

Julie (203-393-0796; [altman@adelphi.edu](mailto:altman@adelphi.edu)),

Evan (203-410-6619; [N38858@gmail.com](mailto:N38858@gmail.com))

Barbara (203-389-2119; [BarbaraM@uccw.org](mailto:BarbaraM@uccw.org))

## **KIDSONG**

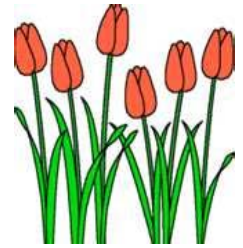
Kidsong planning is in the works. Kidsong instills the joy of music and a love for singing God's praises in children. It's a summer program for children entering grades one through eight with a focus on vocal music. The music instruction is at the highest level of excellence.

Mary Bloom will continue as Music Director. We are working together to update the format of the program and will be providing information about that shortly. In addition to music education and singing, the day will include time for planned and supervised recreation. Above all, Kidsong will continue to be filled with the delight that children have found there for over thirty years here at First Church.

Set aside the week of August 9-13 this summer for your child and be sure to invite her or his friends to take part so they can make a joyful noise unto the Lord!

## From the Board of Christian Education

**Easter Plant Sale** will take place during the Palm Sunday Breakfast. The plants will be \$10 each and there will be a variety of spring mixed flowers. Please support the Youth Mission Trip going to Nicaragua!



**Pancake Breakfast**-This year the CE Board and Youth will be planning the annual pancake breakfast followed by a very meaningful church school Easter Egg hunt. The cost of the breakfast is \$5 for adults and \$3 for children under 10. Pancakes, sausage, and bacon will be served with your choice of drinks. The proceeds will go to the youth mission trip. **All those planning on attending the mission trip this summer will be expected to be here.** Each person will be assigned a duty. We need the cooperation of all who are in Junior and Senior High.

**Journey through Holy Week**-On Palm Sunday your children will bring home a box of Resurrection Eggs. These eggs tell the story of Christ's Journey to the Cross. Please let your child tell YOU the story as you sit down together during Holy Week. This is something your children can share with grandparents and family alike during the Easter season, and something they can save to re-tell year after year.

**Maundy Thursday Lock-In**-Following the potluck and worship service, all youth group age kids are invited for a lock-in overnight event. Please have your child bring a sleeping bag, pillow, and any other necessary overnight items. The lock-in will conclude Good Friday morning at 9AM. See Barbara or Evan for information.

**Easter Sunday Nursery** child care will be available starting at 9:30 with Kara Pope and Mary Hubbard. You may bring your child directly to the nursery before the worship service or during the service at anytime.



**St. Barbara's Greek Orthodox Church** will be holding an **Active Parent Lecture Series** on Wednesdays, April 7-May 19, based on the book *The Active Parenting Of Teens* by Michael Popkin, PhD. It will be held in The Lightle Community Center (next to the church). A donation of \$15 is asked to cover the cost of the textbook. See the YOUTH bulletin board in the Parish Hall for weekly details.

**Parents**-The church school teachers will make a great effort over the next couple of months to have ALL the children learn The Lord's Prayer. While it may seem that this is just a "given," it is not. Please help your children at home to learn the prayer that the Lord has given us. We will enhance it with lessons and crafts, but if you say it with them everyday and/or night, they will take it to memory quickly. ASK them, no matter what age, if they know it and tell them how YOU learned it!



### Youth Group Date Changes

**April 1** - Lock-in sleepover. Begin with 6:30 p.m. potluck with 7:15 worship.

Pick up April 2<sup>nd</sup> -9:00 a.m.

**April 18** - Cooking for Columbus House Following Worship (Sr. Highs & Mission Youth)

**April 18** - 4:15-6:00 p.m.

**April 19** - Columbus House 5 p.m. meet at church

**May 2** - 4:15-6:00 p.m.





## **ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING**

The annual offering to One Great Hour of Sharing provides \$3,000,000 or over 60% of the funds used in the Wider Church Ministries. This ministry works with international partners to provide clean water, food, education, health care, small business micro-credit, emergency relief, and advocacy/resettlement for refugees and displaced persons. It also supports domestic and international disaster preparedness and response. This offering is the largest of the four special offerings in the UCC and is vital to cover all of these worthy causes. As we look around the world and all of the people that are in desperate need of the assistance this offering provides, please be as generous as you can with your contribution. Envelopes have been provided for this offering with the March Parishioner.

## **Our Church's By-Laws**

As many of you know, the need to think about how useful our church's by-laws are to the smooth and effective running of our church was identified by Church Council back in 2006. A small sub-group of "thinkers," led by Dave Schneider, subsequently began a process of re-visioning what a new set of by-laws might look like. Discussion of the "concept" behind their thinking about new by-laws was held at the most recent Church Council meeting. Some of the ideas, in concept, might be to rethink our current board structures and procedures, or to consider the use and usefulness of the church council, the number of congregational meetings we hold per year, and what defines a quorum.

We want the congregation to know that the process of re-thinking our current by-laws, and discussing the possibility of new ones, will be a slow and careful one. We will proceed at a deliberate pace, with lots of opportunity for input. Our goal is to develop a set of by-laws that will continue supporting the church and its ministries most effectively. Stay tuned. –Julie Altman



## **Seekers' Class Being Formed**

Are you interested in learning about what it means to become part of this community of faith? A class is forming now and will meet after church on April 11 in the Memorial Room. A light lunch will be provided.

Call the church office or e-mail the pastor at [pastorsara@uccw.org](mailto:pastorsara@uccw.org) to ask questions or indicate your interest.

## **GROW YOUR CHURCH: FACTS ABOUT CHURCH GROWTH**

**Question:** Do we think of newcomers to our worship service as visitors or guests?

**Answer:** Provide your own answer.

**Question:** What is the difference between visitors and guests?

**Answer:** Visitors are people who show up unannounced, unexpected, just drops in, so we are not prepared to receive them. Guests are people we have invited to come, we are expecting them, and are prepared in a variety of ways to meet their needs!



## **CHURCH GROUNDS WORK DAY SCHEDULED:**

It's time for spring cleaning! Please join us for a workday on our grounds on April 21 at 10:00 a.m. This is an opportunity for you to share fellowship and make a difference! Bring your garden tools. Drinks will be provided. We need you.

## Women's Fellowship News

### Spring 2010 Rummage Sale – April 17<sup>th</sup> 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

We will be co-hosting the Spring Rummage Sale this year. The rummage sale will actually be at the First & Summerfield United Methodist Church, located on the Green in downtown New Haven.

We will be accepting the following items (think cloth & soft):

- Men's, women's, and children's clothes & coats
- Mittens, hats, scarves & gloves
- Linens, towels, comforters & blankets
- Children's shoes/boots

Please make sure the items are clean & in good condition.



#### **Drop Off: Wed., April 14, – Friday, April 16, in the morning**

You may drop off items beginning Wednesday, April 14, in the Green Room (off the Memorial Room). Please **pre-sort** your items at home (children, women's slacks, men's shirts, linens, etc.) so that when you drop them off, you can place your items in the appropriate section of the room. We will have signs set up in the room to guide you.

#### **Friday, April 16, - Noon**

Calling strong men/women & those with large vans. We will need assistance packing up and taking our items to New Haven. We have a list of volunteers and the more the merrier – many hands make light work (and less trips to New Haven!)

#### **Saturday, April 17, - 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.**

- We will need volunteers to help at the rummage sale
- Arrive at 9 a.m. to help make sure all is set up
- Keep items orderly during the day
- Be a cashier
- Help bag purchases
- Help clean up & pack up unsold items

Please let Mary Alvarado (203-298-0640 or maryalv@optonline.net) or Erica I. Gonzalez (203-393-1155 or gonzalezei@yahoo.com) know how you prefer to be of assistance for our Rummage Sale.

Please don't bring donations to the Parish House until Wednesday, April 14. Thanks so much.

*...TO QUOTE THE BARD...  
...AND YOU CAN QUOTE ME ON THAT!  
A QUOTE IS A QUOTE IS A QUOTE...  
...COMPARED TO WHAT...?*



**...And there you have it, the theme of our April program. We're going to compare biblical quotes in as many different "versions" of the Bible as you bring. No matter who or what age group they're written for, bring your Bibles (the more the merrier) to our meeting. The program czar will have a list of quotes, and we'll compare them one by one in each of the Bibles. We'll check the interpretation, and, as always, add our own thoughts. Member of our Circle or not, join us Monday, April 19, at 12 Noon in the Parish House. All you have to bring is your Bible(s) and your lunch. The rest is by the book.**

*...CIRCLE 4 – STUDY/DISCUSSION/OUTREACH SUPPORT*

### Columbus House Outreach Cooking Schedule 2010

Everyone who has had the opportunity to cook and/or serve has truly felt it to be a worthwhile experience – we hope you will help if and when called upon. Any questions about this mission opportunity, or to volunteer, please call Julie at 393-0796. Thank you!

Thanks to the many volunteers who have worked to bring a hot meal to the residents of Columbus House this year. You will be sent a reminder and instructions with a list of people who can assist you with any questions. The following committees/groups are scheduled:

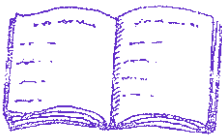
<b>Monday, April 19</b>	<b>Youth Group</b>
<b>Monday, May 17</b>	<b>Boy Scout Troop 907</b>
<b>Monday, June 21</b>	<b>Board of Deacons</b>
<b>Monday, July 19</b>	<b>Altman Family &amp; Friends</b>
<b>Monday, August 16</b>	<b>Ballou Family</b>



For \$130 you can sponsor a meal at Columbus House! Call Carole at the church office, 389-2119.

### WANTED: Used inkjet cartridges

The empty inkjet cartridges that we usually throw away can be recycled and re-manufactured. Bring those empty cartridges to the church in the original box you would have thrown away, or in a Ziploc bag to prevent spills, and place it into our collection box. The inkjet cartridge must have a print head; some examples are HP, Cannon, Lexmark, Apple, and Dell. **The youth will then recycle them for cash.** We will keep you informed as to how much is collected and what we will use the proceeds for. **No toner cartridges, please.**



### Marking Life's Passages

Baptism	March 14, 2010	Nathan Troy Morrissey
Death	March 6, 2010	Florence Glann
Birth	March 22, 2010	Ashley Solomon, daughter of Delisha Suganthi & Pravin Samuelpaulraj

Leave behind more than an empty pew. Remember the church in your will.

### **The Parishioner**

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pvghubbard@sbcglobal.net

***NEXT PARISHIONER DEADLINE IS WEDNESDAY, APRIL 21, 2010 (a firm date)***