

March/April 2008

# First Church News

First Congregational Church/203-263-2846/214 Main Street South  
Woodbury, CT 06798/www.firstchurchwoodbury.org

## A Message from our Pastor

Dear Church family:

There is a Honda commercial that is soon to hit the airwaves. Honda executives didn't hesitate to spend the extra money on its promotion for the new Accord. Through plane physics, engineers manufactured a series of physical actions that you have to see to believe. Anyone can go on YouTube and type in allphysics and reference Honda and watch this amazing display of interactivity.

The commercial demonstrates skill, hard work, and tenacity in getting the experiment right. After weeks of setting up the apparatus and hours of trial and error, the demonstration finally succeeded. Again, it's a masterpiece and was done without any computer design or animation.

What I glean from this commercial is more than an automotive product of precision. The commercial of the church and its many parts working together in various ways to glorify God. We are all unique and play special roles in the eternal realm and never quite know how. However, it is clear to me that God is working out a purpose that we can only see dimly. What I trust is the fact that we are all in motion and being weaved into some purpose that only the grand weaver can see.

As we knit through this Lenten path, I want you all to know the gratitude I feel as your pastor. The conferral on February 17<sup>th</sup> was not just my celebration, but

yours. It's a rare experience to participate in a service of extreme joy and soulful humility. In that service, many of us experienced what one called a "spiritual experience." Indeed, we were also able to witness and testify to bridges of compassion, hope, and God's amazing grace through Rev. Peter Allen, Dr. Cynthia Woolever, Northstar, and our collective congregational tears.

This Lenten journey has affected me in ways never before experienced. But, as Henry Nouwen wrote, our wounds allow us to deepen our compassion and enhance our capacity to heal.

In that light I offer you a list of ways to deepen the Lenten journey that might lead to a more abundant Easter.

Fast from gossip; Feast on the gospels  
Fast from junk foods;  
Feast on the Bread of Life.  
Fast from bad news;  
Feast on "The Good News."  
Fast from darkness; Feast on the Light.  
Fast from the secular; Feast on the sacred.  
Fast from despair; Feast on hope.  
Fast from revenge; Feast on forgiveness.  
Fast from tears of sorrow;  
Feast on tears of joy.  
Fast from getting; Feast on giving.  
Fast from complexities;  
Feast on simplicities;  
Fast from horror; Feast on humor.  
Fast from listlessness; Feast on laughter.

## HOLY WEEK SERVICES

The greatest part of our happiness depends on our dispositions, not our circumstances.

Martha Washington



March 16, 10:00 a.m.  
March 20, 6:00 p.m.

Palm Sunday  
Seder Supper and Maundy Service

Once again, the Deacons will be hosting a Seder Supper in the Fellowship Hall at 6:00. We ask that all interested people RSVP to the office. Lee Fisher will once again be making the Seder meal this year. After dinner, we will move to the sanctuary to conduct our annual worship of Maundy at 7:00.

This is a service of eventide hymns, candlelight, scripture (presented by the Deacons and Rev. Mark) and the Lord's Supper. Come and be our guests as we eat, pray and worship the ritual of Jesus' last evening with his disciples as he is betrayed to die and rise again.

March 21, 7:30 pm

Ecumenical Good Friday Service

We are the host church for this annual service. As usual we gather with the United Methodist Church, St. Paul's Episcopal Church, and the North Congregational Church to celebrate this ecumenical tradition of our town. Come, join us for a thoughtful Holy Friday.

March 23, 7:00 a.m.

Sunrise Service at the Hollow Park

This is a service conducted in conjunction with First Church, North Church and the United Methodist Church. Rev. Kristina Hanson of the UMC will be leading the service this year.

**March 23, 10:00 a.m.**

**Easter Sunday**

Our traditional Easter Sunday service with choir, and the service of the Lord's Supper.

March 30, 10:00 a.m.

Holy Humor Sunday

This Sunday after Easter is widely known as Holy Humor Sunday or Bright Sunday. The Board of Christian Education is working with Rev. Mark to make this an extra special Sunday tradition. This year we are planning a different approach. Be prepared to wear your colors.

**C.E. NOTES**

From time to time Rev. Mark asks the church school teachers to keep the congregation aware of what is happening in our church school. As one of this year's 6-8<sup>th</sup> grade teachers I certainly have good news to share!

On January 6<sup>th</sup>, I worked with this group of young people to make "Goodie bags" for the Congregation's shut-ins. The children were surprisingly astute in their understanding of what life circumstances might cause a church member to be home-bound. Many could reference a sweet aunt or grandpa who couldn't make it out as often as they'd like.

We set about putting together our offerings. Cindy Shannon was kind enough to put together literature appropriate for this undertaking such as the newsletter, that week's church bulletin, some daily devotions and a copy of "The Upper Room".

The children baked cookies, surely one of their favorite tasks! We added the cookies, a tea bag or two to each gift and a letter from the group discussing their other church activities for the year and passing on greetings from the entire First Church membership. The letter was penned by Greg Fisher and Kelley Walters.

We were also lucky enough to have some beautiful artwork to add to some of the packages. Recently, the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade class had made Prayer Pillowcases; beautifully hand-decorated each with its very own bedtime prayer. We felt this would add a nice touch.

I would like to extend a special thanks to Avery Hale and Sophia Bourgeois who joined us that day from our 5<sup>th</sup> grade class.

I find that our church members truly love service projects and they most enjoy helping others. We should all be proud of them!

Thanks to all who helped!

Joanne Cole

**First Ladies News**

Twenty-one-derful First Ladies braved the biggest snowstorm of the year to enjoy the wonderful tradition our annual Retreat has become. We tie-dyed, made bracelets, sledded, skied, talked, laughed, worshipped and ate until we were fit to burst!



The next First Ladies meeting will be at Lisa Sulliman's at 7:00 p.m. on March 8<sup>th</sup> – Please join us!

**Pennies for Peanut Butter**

For three weeks, beginning on March 2<sup>nd</sup>, the Sunday School classes will be collecting "pennies for peanut butter" to fund our annual mission project of providing bag lunches for GWIM's soup kitchen.

Please donate whatever coinage – or paper – that may be clogging your wallet/pocket/pocketbook and help us provide a nutritious, much-needed meal for those in need!



Some Thankful Hearts

As Joanne Cole mentioned on the previous page, the goodie bags were a tremendous hit! I thought I'd share some letters with you:

Dear Sunday School Children – it was so thoughtful and kind of you to send us the church news! We especially want to thank Margaret Heilshorn for her nice art work on the prayer pillowcases! You are doing God's work for the shut-ins and we pray He will bless you all the days of your lives. Continue your best efforts in His name. Sincerely, Mr. & Mrs. Fred St. Pierre

A message for the 3<sup>rd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade church school class c/o Mary MacLeod: We thank you for the beautiful pillowcases you have given us. It is a daily reminder to give thanks to God, who has given us life and sustains us from day to day and night to night. We're ashamed that it is so late, but sometimes mail piles up until we find a day for catching up! This is such a day. So we say heartily, thank you, thank you, thank you. Katherine & Roger Shinn

From GWIM:  
Dearest All – Thank you so much for the delicious sandwiches! We truly appreciate all your love and support – the check\* was awesome! Thank you again and again! Barbara Dube, Director, GWIM

\*Check for \$129 from our Souperbowl of Caring collection

Dear First Church Members – On behalf of the Community Services Council, thank you for the generous donation of \$177.25 from the ThanksgivingDay Free Will offering. This is truly a generous gift since you certainly deserve the proceeds from all your hard work serving Thanksgiving dinner to the community! Your generosity will help people in financial despair receive food, fuel and financial assistance. This is a very special event you put on; I hope to see this continue over the years to come. People that I have spoken to that attend are grateful that there is a place to go and I compliment you on your outreach. Thank you for all you do. Sandy Ingellis, President, Community Services Woodbury



**New Membership Gathering**

On Sunday, **April 13<sup>th</sup>, 2008**, the Board of Deacons will host those joining our church during worship. There will be a time of **orientation on April 6<sup>th</sup>** at the parsonage at 5:00 p.m.

If you would like to speak with someone about joining our community of faith, please speak to any of our Deacons or Rev. Mark.

**MISSION TRIP 2008**  
**CAR WASH APRIL 26**

We are returning to the HOME cooperative in Orland, Maine from June 29 – July 5. Those of you who joined us in 2002 remember an experience where most of us participated in the building of section 8 housing.

We are returning to Orland partly because the experience was outstanding, but also because HOME proved to be a spiritual experience that joined our talents and service to others and filled our need for meaning in powerful ways.

So far we have 9 youth(Jared Steinberg, Margaret Gerowe, Geordie Hale, Shawn O'Neil, Cooper Holbrook, Josh Minor, Lindsey Yenter, Erik Fisher, Kaeley McEvoy) and 6 Adults (Deborah Steinberg, Doug England, Tom & Roberta O'Neil, Steve MacLeod, Rev. Mark) are going.

We are fundraising as we speak and are planning on our annual car wash/vacuuuming on **APRIL 26**. **By the way, we can use any towels people are ready to replace... Our supply has dwindled over the years.**

**We also would love to have more people join us. However, please speak with Rev. Mark since space is limited.**

# March and April Birthdays and Anniversaries

|          |  |          |   |
|----------|--|----------|---|
| March 1  | Audrey Jannetty<br>Jen Fazio<br>Parker Antilla     | April 2  | Steve Acri<br>Shivaun Mathews                 |
| March 3  | Cyndi Jaret  | April 5  | Louis Gurry                                   |
| March 4  | Carol Ericson                                      | April 6  | Rich Fazio                                    |
| March 6  | Janet Antilla<br>Debbie Masi                       | April 7  | Thomas Hart                                   |
| March 7  | Matthew Fleming                                    | April 8  | Steve Wells<br>Justin Stokes                  |
| March 9  | Rachel Gerowe                                      | April 9  | Hannah Munson                                 |
| March 11 | Sophia Bourgeois                                   | April 12 | Kate O'Neil                                   |
| March 12 | Joan Cole  | April 14 | Sean O'Neil<br>Gracee Piazza                  |
| March 15 | Kevin Robinson<br>Michaela Hartman<br>Mason Golino | April 15 | Rhonda Stokes                                 |
| March 16 | Donald Terrell                                     | April 16 | Helga Weed-Burns<br>Amy Soderberg             |
| March 17 | Beverly Albert                                     | April 17 | Kerri Graham                                  |
| March 19 | Dianne Slater                                      | April 18 | Michelle Golino                               |
| March 20 | Connie O'Brien                                     | April 19 | Emma Giroux                                   |
| March 21 | Kaeley McEvoy                                      | April 20 | Thomas Varga                                  |
| March 23 | Joan Smith-Walleck<br>Victoria Sherwood            | April 24 | Jamie Desrochers                              |
| March 27 | Billy Drakeley III                                 | April 26 | Shelley Terrell<br>John Thomas                |
| March 28 | John Deschino                                      | April 27 | Bette Gurry                                   |
| March 30 | Ellie Foster                                       | April 28 | Scott Huber                                   |
| March 31 | Marsi Beck<br>Todd Ray                             | April 30 | Louise Green<br>Dave Jaffin<br>Sarah Griswold |
| March 4  | Ryan Garms   |          |   |
| March 26 | Kimi Zaima   |          |   |
| April 23 | Mallory Beck                                       |          |   |

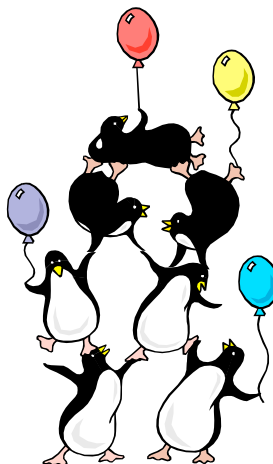
You know  
your children  
are growing  
up when they  
stop asking  
you where  
they came  
from and  
refuse to tell  
you where  
they're going.

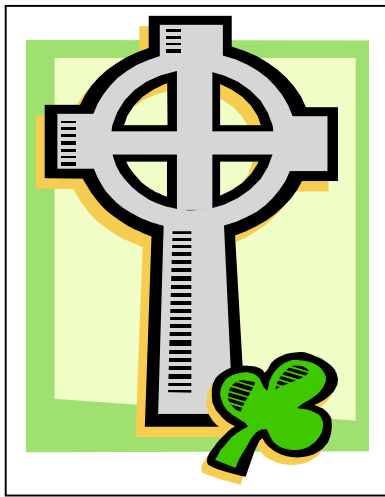
PJ O'Rourke



## Anniversaries

|          |                                 |
|----------|---------------------------------|
| March 4  | Christine and Bill Drakely, Jr. |
| March 26 | Donald and Joan Cole            |
| April 23 | Donald and Dorothy Walker       |





## St. Patrick's Day Dinner!

DATE: SATURDAY, MARCH 15TH AT 6:00 P.M.

RSVP TO JANICE CREIGHTON (203)264-9259  
[GRANNERS@CHARTER.NET](mailto:GRANNERS@CHARTER.NET)

OR ELLEN SMITH (203)263-8277

THIS IS A FAMILY EVENT; POST-DINNER CHILDCARE WILL BE OFFERED AS A FUNDRAISER FOR THE MISSION TRIP!

**Important Dates!** March 8<sup>th</sup> – Tag Sale at Parsonage\*\*\*March 11<sup>th</sup> – Council Meeting\*\*\*March 26<sup>th</sup> – Restructuring Information Meeting\*\*\*March 30<sup>th</sup> – Faith & Justice, Spiritual Healer Carol Ann Hontz\*\*\*April 13<sup>th</sup> – Faith & Justice Author Randall Balmer\*\*\*April 20<sup>th</sup> – Restructuring Information Meeting\*\*\*April 26<sup>th</sup> – Mission Trip Car Wash

### First Congregational Church

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We're on the Web!

See us at:

[www.firstchurch](http://www.firstchurch)

[woodbury.org](http://www.woodbury.org)