

THE PASTOR'S PAGE

Lent 2008 Begins. . .

For something like fourteen hundred years, those who follow Jesus have observed a period of “forty days and forty nights” (a tithe of a year), during which the wisdom of our tradition invites each one of us “to enter the zone” of God’s presence in an intentional way. To climb a mountain or perhaps to traverse a wilderness, if you will, and there to wait for the hinges of ordinary time to move and the door to be opened and the next phase of our journey to begin

We call this time **Lent** from an old English word “to lengthen.” As the hours of sunlight lengthen, Christians are urged to mark these days as holy time. If you have had the opportunity for friendship with observant Jews, then you know that “keeping the Sabbath” is not a burden for them, but rather an enhancement of their family lives, a joy, a source of meaning, security, and comfort for those who keep it well. The greeting is ***Good Shabbos!*** I wonder if we might look upon Lent, not as a burden, but as a gift of time? Maybe even a welcome change from some of society’s ordinary demands on our time? “Sorry, during Lent we are trying to eat one meal a day as a family, sitting around the table, beginning with prayer?” How’s that for a schedule-breaker!

You may decide to attend each of the worship events to be held here at church during this time. Or decide that a long meditative walk each day will be good for the soul as well as the body. Maybe you can carve out some “sacred space” early in the morning just to be alone with your thoughts? These suggestions can become open doors to something new and good. Each day can begin to feel like a step in the walk of faith. As we match our steps to Jesus’ walk to Jerusalem, his journey becomes our way, and soon, we can greet one another with the words ***Good Lent!***

In the friendship of Christ,

Louise

Report of the Church Committee - January 8, 2008

Attending: Scott Shurtleff, Dave Hinojosa-Johnson, Jane Rudolph, Rich Ives, Becky Errera, Mary Shurtleff, Karen Donnelly, Rev. Louise

The meeting was opened with a prayer.

The minutes of the December meeting were not available.

Treasurer's Report (by Scott) As of December 31, 2007 Income \$151,708.80 less expenses (\$161,165.04) equals a negative balance of (\$9,456.44) offset by additional fundraising income of \$4,724.00 (2006 bazaar) and \$1,348.00 (basket blitz) for a final negative balance of (\$3,384.44). To balance the 2007 account, the (\$3,384.44) is offset by \$620 in back dated pledges, leaving a 2007 negative balance of (\$2,764.44). A motion was made by Scott and seconded by Jane to draw \$2,764.44 from the Capital and Contingency fund to balance the 2007 account. After further discussion, the motion was amended to take \$780 out of the cemetery fund and the balance \$1,984.44 out of the Capital and Contingency fund. The amended motion was approved.

2008 Budget

The 2008 Draft Budget shows a deficit of (\$13,000). Income (pledges, plate, investments, rental and miscellaneous) based on current pledges and estimates equals \$143,000. Budgeted expenses equal (\$164,100) for a deficit of (\$21,000). Additional fundraising income \$6,665 (actual 2007 bazaar income) and \$1,435 (estimate including planned basket blitz) bring the budget deficit to (\$13,000).

There is no "fat" in the budget. Without additional income programs would have to be cut, which is not really a viable option. There is the potential for 10-20 more pledges (people who pledged in 2007 but have not pledged for 2008). But even if all these pledges were received, the deficit would not be covered.

The Committee agreed that more creative fundraising ideas will need to be discussed during 2008. A motion to send the budget to annual meeting, with any revisions for additional pledges received, was approved.

The call to the annual meeting was approved. For the following purposes:

1. To receive and accept the Annual Reports.
2. To act on the proposed budget for 2008
3. To act on the Nominating Committee Report
4. To act on the Safe Church Policy
5. To act on proposed By-Law amendments
6. To act upon any other business proper to come before a Church Meeting.

The meeting will be held January 27, 2008 beginning at 12:30. Prior to the meeting, a pot luck lunch will be held.

Reports

Deacons (by Jane) Ushers and coffee hour are covered for the remainder of the year. Longest night service was held on Dec. 21. Christmas Eve service was held at 5:00. Czepiga family will usher. Candleholders and candle supplies were checked and are sufficient.

Deacon's roles for next year: Eileen Ede will remain as Senior Deacon with Judy Monarca as assistant. Judy will be Senior Deacon the next year. Anne Czepiga will remain as Secretary. The Board thanked David Cote, who will be leaving the Board, for his six years of service.

Mission and Stewardship (by Mary) The Mission tithe allocation (\$1005 from 2006 mission donations, with the likely addition of \$740 from the 2007 Bazaar and Roast Beef Supper)) was discussed. The Christmas Eve offering will be allocated to the operating budget. Mission projects include the three UCC offerings plus the Pentecost offering. Maureen Adamczyk proposed a project to sponsor a meal for Columbus House in conjunction with the Boy Scouts. The most recent information from the Financial Secretary was the pledges total \$113,762.00. There appears to have been a misunderstanding with respect to the role of the Talent Librarian. This will be a position analogous to the Financial Secretary, and will be filled by a volunteer from the congregation at large. That volunteer will not necessarily come from this board, although the Talent Librarian will be an ex officio member of the board. The Time and Talent campaign will be run as a pilot project this year and will take place during Lent, with the emphasis on encouraging people to participate.

Christian Education (by Becky) The Board discussed two employment issues. Sandy Newlan will be the new director of Christian Ed. Donna Zielinski will be the new Junior Youth Group Director. Transfers of positions and start dates will be discussed later, as Gina was out of town.

Nominating Committee (by Karen) Deacons are full. Board of Trustees, and Christian Ed have one opening each. But since we will be discussing the possibility of reducing the number of positions on each board/committee, these boards are not an issue. The biggest problems are Mission and Stewardship, with only five members so far, and the Assistant Treasurer. We do have members considering the possibility of joining M & S, decisions pending. Any suggestions or volunteers to fill these positions will be greatly appreciated. Other open positions at this time include New Haven Association delegates and Connecticut Conference Delegates.

Men's Club (by Rich) The next meeting will be February 4 with a wine tasting at the home of Ed Czepiga's neighbor.

New Business

Cost reduction regarding The Courier was discussed. Can we reduce the number of issues (months that we send it) or switch to electronic delivery, or a combination of both? Several options were discussed, using various combinations of electronic delivery, mail, and availability at the church. In 2008, we will begin experimenting with electronic delivery while maintaining mailed copies, possibly combining issues when appropriate.

The Annual Meeting will be held January 27 at 12:30 with a pot luck luncheon.

The meeting was closed with a prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Donnelly, Clerk

Mission

The Deer Fund concluded successfully by providing day care through the end of January. Many thanks to all those who made this mission successful. This congregation is truly blessed!

The board is considering a number of Mission projects for 2008. We would like to get the Youth involved in some way. One proposed project is to sponsor a meal for Columbus House in conjunction with the Boy Scouts. If there are others that you would like to see considered, please speak up.

Stewardship

The board is working on the Time and Talent campaign; this will be run as a pilot project this year and will take place during Lent. If you are interested in participating, please mention it to a board member.

The most recent information from the Financial Secretary was that pledges total \$113,762 as of the beginning of January. This is \$8,800 short of the budget and still leaves a \$13,000 deficit even if the budgeted number is achieved.

Treasurer's Report – January 2008

The Church ended a challenging 2007 in reasonably good shape financially with a final deficit of (\$3,384). This result points to the continued generosity of this Congregation and the fiscal responsibility we apply to running this Church. Thanks go to you, the members, for fulfilling (or perhaps exceeding) your pledge. And more thanks to you, the Committee members and Church staff, for fulfilling your mission in an economical way.

Our pledge collection rate for 2007 ended at about 93%, which is reasonable in light of all we went through during the year. But plate collections fell well short of target at only 60% of the budget amount: a clear indication of lowered attendance from the community at large. That will take time and effort to reverse.

The 2008 budget proposed at the Annual Meeting depicts an even greater challenge than 2007. Nonetheless, we are committed to fulfilling the mission of a vibrant church. All of the Boards and Committees have prayerfully considered their programs and proposed reasonable expenses. We've changed our investments to yield more interest for the operating budget. We've increased facility use fees with the Weight Watchers program.

We need programs to be a Church and it takes money to run them. Here's what it takes at a high-level.

<u>Category</u>	<u>Budget</u>
Pastoral Ministry	\$ 55,000
Worship and Service	\$ 34,820
Christian Education & Youth	\$ 18,850
Wider Mission	\$ 15,500
Properties & Maintenance	\$ 39,930

Realistically the outlook for pledge and plate will be like the second half of 2007. That means lower income and a larger deficit. Thankfully, we have some savings to draw upon while we go through this difficult period. This Church will endure.

As always, please give as generously as you are able. If you have a creative idea for increasing income, let me know and I'll get it considered in the appropriate forum.

Yours in Christ,
Scott Shurtleff, Treasurer

P.S. Please note that the position of Assistant Treasurer is open. I thank Marc Gordon for his service to the Church in this role. Anyone interested in being Assistant Treasurer should contact me or a member of the Nominating Committee. The only qualifications are that you've been a member for a year or more, you can write checks and perform some light bookkeeping. I can surely use the help.

JUNIOR YOUTH GROUP

Junior Youth Group, grades 5th through 8th, met on Sunday, January 20th to plan for the remainder of the year. Our goal is to combine fun and fellowship with missions and service. The following has been scheduled for February:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Sunday, February 3
Shrove | Meet with Christ Church youth group to plan
Tuesday and socialize. |
| Tuesday, February 5 | Shrove Tuesday! Arrive at 4:30 to help with set up. |
| Sunday, February 10 | Bake cookies and wrap for delivery to shut ins. |
| Friday, February 15 | Game night! |
| Friday - Saturday,
February 22-23 | 30 Hour Famine |
| Sunday, February 24 | No Meeting |

Donna Zielinski
Junior Youth Group Coordinator

SENIOR YOUTH GROUP

PFC Kevin Dawid visited the Senior Youth Group this past December with stories of mind-boggling experiences. Kevin has been to Iraq twice, the first he sailed over with the Navy during the winter, and the second time he took a plane during the summer. When he arrived the temperature was a steamy 130 degrees Fahrenheit.

The Marine attended Boot Camp in South Carolina at Paris Island for thirteen weeks. Kevin then went to infantry school in North Carolina for eight weeks. One of the standards to be met in training is 100 sit-ups in 2 minutes, 20 pull-ups, and a 3 mile run to be completed in 18 minutes. When in preparation to arrive in Iraq, he is stationed at Camp Lejeune. Once overseas, Kevin was once located in a three by three mile town where for six hours he was on a foot patrol with anywhere from 40-100 pounds of gear. There is sometimes a translator that accompanies the group that he is in, often times the translator is with another patrolling group. Although, Kevin stated that it was not difficult to pick up commands in the Arabic language. The food is a completely different story though, MRE's are on the menu every day. The meals ready to eat are vacuum sealed and the cuisine ranges anywhere from "pork rib to a hamburger patty."

It was an eye-opening experience!

Peace as always,

Jen Peat

DEACON'S CORNER

We need Ushers Greeters and Coffee Hour Signups! !

Please remember to sign up on the usher and greeter volunteer lists now located in the Church Hall. There are several slots remaining open for the year. It is an easy and fun job to do. Also don't forget to sign up for coffee hour. Don't be afraid to ask questions of any of the Deacons!

Deacons Meeting

Our next monthly meeting date is Monday, February 25th @ 7:30 pm.

February Lenten Events

February 5

Shrove Tuesday

February 6

Ash Wednesday Service—7:30 pm

February 17—24 Sign up For Pretzel Sunday Sale

February 22—23 30 Hour Famine

PASTOR RELATIONS

The Pastoral Relations Committee is a standing committee in a local church that seeks to support and maintain an open and healthy relationship between the pastor and members of the congregation. The committee serves in two primary ways: as an advisory group to the pastor and as support for the pastor's leadership. As an advisory group the committee shares ideas, dreams, hopes, expectations, and concerns of the congregation with the pastor. As support for the pastor, the committee interprets roles, functions, and needs of the pastor to the congregation.

Constructive and caring communication in an atmosphere of confidentiality and trust is essential to the work of the committee. This committee is the congregation's fundamental support group for the pastor. It builds the framework in which conflict can be dealt with creatively. Its goals are the professional growth and well-being of the pastor and the promotion of mutual ministry between the pastor and the congregation.

The basis reason for sustaining open and healthy pastor-people relationships through the work of this committee is to enhance the effectiveness of the church's mission. The nurture of the pastor by this committee not only brings about a wholesome and healthy congregation but also creates a climate in which the spiritual life and mission of the people are strengthened. Serious attention to the dynamics of the relationship between pastor and congregation can result in a local church able to carry out its ministry effectively. The Pastoral Relations Committee is concerned with each staff member's well-being, the entire staff's relationship with the congregation, and the fostering of healthy relationships among staff member.

The Pastoral Relations Committee meets on a quarterly basis. The next meeting will be on Sunday, March 9th @ 11:30 am in the Pastor's office. Anyone with any questions or concerns please contact any member of the committee; Doreen Fox-393-1561, Beth Reilly Roman-393-2752, David Johnson-393-3672, Les Rushworth-393-1133, Nancy Grannis-393-3433

A History Corner: Origins of Our Parish

In examining records transcribed from the archives of the New Haven Colony in the State of Connecticut, an additional record of interest partially reflects our disappointments of 2007. On 9 May 1734, as part of the process in which the parish of Bethany was founded, certain issues regarding ministry to the church caused great disappointment and anguish, resulting in an appeal for assistance from the New Haven Assembly. The Congregational Church was established during the period beginning in about 1733. Some of its first problems emerged immediately in 1734. This information was originally compiled by Benjamin C. Nangle, Church Historian, during the period around 1970. Language and spelling have been kept true to the original record.

That your poor Petitioners did some years ago under the countenance & favor of the Honorable Gen^l Assembly settle a minister of the Gospel among them, approved of by the Elders of the neighboring churches; who in a few years so far deserted the principles of the churches of New England as to account his ordination a nullity & so resigned his pastoral care of us. In our then destitute and broken state we proceeded to ye settling of another minister, Hoping that he who is ye Lord of the Harvest, would provide us one that should approve himself faithful & steady to ye principles of our New English churches. But in this we have found ourselves disappointed, our second minister relinquishing his charge upon the same pretenses the former had done. And we presume it is not unknown at least to many of this honourable Assembly that some of our Society have been influenced to desert our communion by those who deserted their ministry with us; whereby we are rendered less able to settle another minister among us, and pains are not spared to weaken us farther by drawing away more with arguments suited to our low circumstances. Sc^t. that if we will but accept of an Episcopal Missionary for minister he will serve us for little or no maintenance from us; which arguments (tho temptations to those of low & straitened circumstances especially) We hope may never prevail upon any of us to forsake the purity of the Gospel Worship & administration, and submit to a yোক of ceremonies our Fathers were not able to bear. In this our distitute, broken and distressed state we have our recourse under God to this Honourable Assembly for the exercise of its Compassion towards us. As it has Cherished the Churches of ye Colony, or as a nursing Father so we firmly persuade ourselves of its tender care of us, and that it will not be wanting in doing what lies wth them to prevent (if it may be) our being torn in pieces, & so the suffering of the whole Body by the suffering of one of its members. As we are earnestly desirous that we & ours after us, may enjoy a pure Gospel Ministry & ordinances & are ready to lay out ourselves to the utmost under all the Discouragements we are attended with, so we are sensible we greatly need Assistance y^r in. We asked not any of this Honourable Assembly when we settled our first minister, nor when we settled our second – But – But being so deserted by the one & the other in so short a space, and wth all other ways weakened, as we feel very sensibly we want some assistance, so we cant but hope this Honourable Assembly is very apprehensive of it, & will in their goodness extend it to us. Either by giving us a sum of money out of the Treasury of the Town of Newhaven or the County Rate

for two or three years or until this Assembly shall see cause to call for them & so order it that when they shall be collected & paid into the treasury, they may be thence received by ye Society to be improved for & towards the settlement & support of such a Gospel Minister with us, as shall be approved of by the Associated Elders in the County of New Haven and also recommend our case to ye charity of sum of ye neighboring tenens or in some other way, as this Honourable Assembly in their wisdom and goodness shall think best. And your poor petitioners as in Duty bound shall ever pray.

Sam ^{ll} Smith	<input type="checkbox"/>	Com: ^{te} In behalf
Thomas Trowbridge	<input type="checkbox"/>	of S ^d Society
Peter Roberts	<input type="checkbox"/>	

The issue was resolved by the “Honourable Assembly” with the following action:

In the Upp^r House the prayer of this Memoriall granted viz that if said Society procure a minister as therein expressed that then the sum of two hundred pounds be drawn out of the Colony treasury and improved towards the said Minister’s settlement &c that a bill be drawn in form.

Test Hez: Wyllys Secret^{ry}

Concurred with in ye Lower House

Test Ja^s, Russell, Clerk

The Lower House action was subsequently approved by the Upper House later in May, 1734.

For this Courier article, this is a fairly long dissertation; however, it is worth the effort to study it. It evokes the classical weaknesses in mankind and a typical shortage of funds, but great resilience by the congregation to achieve resolution, something I believe is still a major strength of our congregation. Of interest, the reference that requests funds from the “County Rate” reflects the tax imposed at large on all citizens to support the church. I hope to follow the archive trail for future History Corner articles, should this prove to be of sufficiently broad interest.

Rudolph W. Beckert, Church Historian

January 19, 2008

BIRTHDAYS

Trevor Etkin 2/01/97
Jacqueline Tamm 2/05
Anne Czepiga 2/06
Charlie Deer 2/07
Meagan Nadeau 2/12
George Welker 2/13
Rachel Fox 2/16
Lois Steigert 2/16
Grant Johnson 2/19
Katharine Holt 2/22
Becky Errera 2/24
Lauren Fox 2/24
TJ Bertino 2/24/92
Daniel Cote 2/28
Brenton Roman 2/28
Ann Cote 2/29

WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

Don & Geri Finley – 2/7/70
Joe & Judy Monarca - 2/8/64
Charlie & Dee Dee Deer – 2/12/03

PRAYER GROUP

The Prayer Group meets at 11:30 am on the second Sunday of each month. The next meeting will be on February 10th @ 11:30 am. Members of the group are Sarah Briggs, Edyth Carrington, Woody Fassett and Martha Downs. Anyone wishing to join our group would be most welcome.

* * * * *
* * * * *

MEETING DATES

Christian Education 2/3 @ 8:45 am
Mission & Stewardship 2/4 @ 7:00 pm
Church Committee 2/12 @ 7:30 pm
Trustees 2/21 @ 7:30 pm
Deacons 2/25 @ 7:30 pm
Sanctuary Choir-Every Wed. @ 7:30 pm.
Cross Town Players Sunday mornings @ 11:30 am

MEN'S CLUB

The Men's club will be sponsoring their pancake breakfast on the second Sunday of every month, the next breakfast will be February 10th from 8:30-9:30 am. Please come join us for pancakes, eggs, fresh fruit, sausage, bacon, fun and fellowship.

The monthly meeting will be Monday, February 4th 7:00 pm. All men of the church are welcome.

* * * * *

WOMEN'S CLUB

The next meeting of the Women's Club will be Thursday, February 28th @ 2:00 pm. All women are invited to join us.