

The Journey Towards Confirmation. . .

Since November, eleven young people have been engaged in a time of preparation for the Rite of Confirmation and Reception into Membership. Rev. Louise and Kerry Meier have been the leaders, assisted by a group of sponsors who are serving as mentors to the Confirmands. Using The UCC Statement of Faith as our guide, we have explored these topics so far:

Confirmation is a process in which young adults (13-15) can come to affirm their faith and their place in the Body of Christ and in this local church. It is the beginning of a life-long journey of maturing faith and practice.

God called the worlds into being. There are many ways to talk about the creation of the universe, earth, and humanity. The important faith statement is that “GOD, who has no beginning and no end, created everything else that is, out of overflowing love.

As members of this church, in covenant with the United Church of Christ we explored the statement “Read the Bible seriously, but not literally.” It is the Word of God (revelation and guide) for us, written in human language and story.

Since God seeks to save all people from aimlessness and sin. . .we have explored what it means to say that “in Jesus, the man of Nazareth, our Crucified and Risen Savior,” God has come to dwell with humanity and “to share our common lot.”

We also visited a synagogue (Congregation Mishkan Israel in Hamden) to understand better the roots of our tradition.

Now we are entering the “home stretch.” On the weekend of March 7-9, our journey will take us to Silver Lake Conference Center for a retreat with about 60 other confirmands from UCC churches around the state. The focus will be on the Holy Spirit and the Body of Christ. After this experience and Holy Week worship, we will turn our attention to how “we are church together” here in Bethany. How do we serve our congregation, our neighbors, and those who are in special need? What does it mean to “join the church” and “to own the covenant?” Then, with the added guidance of Beth Reilly-Roman, we will ask questions about death and eternal life and visit a funeral home.

Our final retreat is planned for May 4, noon to 7 pm, at Killam’s Point in Branford. Confirmation will take place on May 11 during the Sunday Morning Service. Since this is also Pentecost, the “birthday” of the church, we hope to have a real celebration!

Thanks to all the parents and sponsors who have made this effort possible.

REPORT OF THE CHURCH COMMITTEE—FEBRUARY 12, 2008

Attending: Eileen Ede, Rudy Beckert, Karen Donnelly, Sue Cowan, Geri Finley, Rich Ives,
Moderator

Rich opened with a prayer
Minutes of the last meeting were approved

Treasurer's Report (in writing, prepared by Scott Shurtleff) As of January 31, 2008, income of \$17,801.33 less expenses of (\$15,756.23) equals a balance of \$2,045.10 plus \$555.42 accrual from the 2007 Bazaar for a total balance of \$2,600.52.

Scott is working to transition the bill paying responsibility to Jean Rushworth, the new Assistant Treasurer. Scott will retain responsibility for monthly reporting, account balancing, payroll and tax reporting. Scott will discuss the new state regulations in the "Uniform Prudent Management of Institutional Funds Act" with the Trustees.

The Committee welcomed Rudy Beckert, the new chair of the Trustees.

Geri Finley led a discussion regarding providing access to the Courier on our website rather than mailing copies to households. The Courier is already available on the website. It has a link that provides a PDF format for easy downloading. Providing the internet access rather than mailing saves approximately \$1,700 per year in postage, paper, and copier expenses. Copies will be available at the church for anyone who needs a paper copy. Also members will be able to request that a copy be mailed to them if necessary. The next Courier in March will be the last one we mail.

The Committee also discussed the frequency of the Courier and decided to reduce the number of issues to 5 per year: January, covering winter events; March, covering spring events and Easter; May, covering summer events and Pentecost; September, covering fall events and "start up"; December, covering Christmas.

Rudy discussed the copier contract and expenses. The original lease contract has run out so we are now paying for every copy we make. The Trustees will explore the options of re-negotiating the lease or changing copiers.

Eileen asked if we can provide a memory chip for Elsa's camera dedicated to church photography. The Committee agreed that this is a good idea.

Eileen reported that Costco has a better price for copy/printer paper than Geri can get from the catalog. Eileen will ask whether we can get a Costco card for the church that will honor our tax-exempt status. The committee discussed the possibility of getting a church credit card for use at Costco. Rudy expressed a concern that the card would be used for purchases other than those at

Costco, but acknowledged that it would provide a good record of expenditures.

Geri will make a list of supplies she usually buys, like garbage bags, in addition to paper, and

we will check purchasing options.

Special Fundraising—Geri would like to form a Fundraising Committee that will include herself, Eleanor Beckert, Eileen Ede, Ann Cote and Elsa Peat. The committee will filter requests and suggestions from the congregation and will be responsible for Quinnipiac Valley Health Service compliance. The Fundraising Committee will be responsible to the Church Committee.

This idea was approved.

Feedback from the Annual Meeting: Discussion about the OCWM was helpful.

Eileen and Karen will be the Church Committee representatives on the nominating committee.

Reports

Deacons (by Eileen) These Easter season services are planned:

Feb 5 Shrove Tuesday-organized by Christian Ed.

Feb 6 7:30 Ash Wednesday

March 20 7:30 Maundy Thursday/ Tenebrae

Good Friday Prayer Vigil will begin at 7pm and continue through 7am on Saturday.

A sign up sheet will be in the parlor. There must be at least 2 people in the church at all times.

Easter Sunday 7am “Sunrise Service” in the Peace garden.

Worship at 10am with no coffee hour.

Donna Zielinski and Barbara Welker will work on the Welcoming Committee after Lent.

Cross Town Players—Don Finley and Don Peat were contacted and agreed to lead the players.

Rev. Louise will contact Gina and see if her schedule will allow her to lead in the future.

Contemporary Worship on Saturdays has been suspended.

Trustees (by Rudy) The Trustees have not met. Rudy Beckert is the new chair.

Mission and Stewardship (by Sue) There are only five members on this board but it is a very dynamic group. Sue and Kerry Meier will co-chair. Members will alternate in attending Church Committee. Members of the congregation may be approached to help with or handle specific projects, like a special offering. Maureen Adamczyk and Shari Austin will collaborate on the bulletin board. The Board discussed ways to bridge the budget gap. Time and Talent Campaign: each board will be asked through e-mail to enumerate what needs their board has that a talent Library could fill.

Christian Education (in writing by Becky Ererra) New positions (Sandy Newland, CE Director and Donna Zielinski Jr. Youth Director) and members (Carol Stamper) were introduced. Planning for Shrove Tuesday was finalized. Pretzel Sunday will be held March 2. The Adult Study Group is meeting on Monday nights at the Calhoun’s house. The Jr. Youth Groups will be combined and will meet weekly. 30-hr famine will be held February 22-23. Donna Zielinski and some of the youth will be attending a Maple Sugaring weekend March 28-30. Sr. Youth Group—will meet from 5:30-7:30. An Easter basket fundraiser is underway to help support the NYE trip to Tennessee.

Women's Club (by Eileen) the Women's Club is inviting Rev. Louise and Geri Finley to lunch at the February meeting.

Men's Club (by Rich) Les Rushworth is in charge of the meeting—dinner and wine tasting.

The next meeting will be held March 11.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Donnelly, Clerk

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 signup for coffee hour. Don't be afraid to ask questions of any of the Deacons!

Deacons Meeting

Our next monthly meeting dates are as follows;

Monday, March 31st @ 7:30 pm.

Monday, April 28th @ 7:30 pm.

MISSION & STEWARDSHIP

Our Church's Wider Mission- It's Who We Are!

Our Church's Wider Mission is the name we use to describe the work we do as the United Church of Christ beyond the local church—through our Conferences, national ministries, and UCC-related institutions.

Our Church's Wider Mission is also the name we give to the financial support given by UCC members and congregations that makes this broader mission possible.

Our Church's Wider Mission Special Support comprises gifts to the **four Special Mission Offerings, per capita dues, and gifts that are specially designated for the Conference, national setting or UCC-related institutions.**

One Great Hour of Sharing: Giving Help, Hope and Life, March 2

Pentecost Sunday. In our congregation, we often support a local ministry.

Neighbors in Need: Justice and Compassion Like a Might Stream, the first Sunday of October

The Christmas Fund: Remembering those who Serve the Church, received on the Sunday before Christmas.

Given all the concerns we have within our own church, and maybe also in our own lives, tithing support of wider missions seems to overextend our resources. Or, it may be an opportunity to respond in faith and gratefulness to something that connects us to the larger world and puts some of the everyday concerns in perspective.

The Board of Mission and Stewardship has been directed to review our financial stewardship and update the Congregation mid-year. Our “Response of Faith” will guide us.

“I love the recklessness of faith. First you leap and then you grow wings.”

- Rev. William Sloane Coffin

Board of Mission and Stewardship;

Maureen Adamczyk, Shari Austin, Susan Cowan, Kerry Meier and Jim Roman

One Great Hour of Sharing

At my first meeting of the M&S Board, the more seasoned members explained the different focuses of the mission work our church is involved in; beginning with the support of our own church family and then expanding to the local, regional and global needs that exist in our world.

With our annual One Great Hour of Sharing, scheduled for March 2nd, our offerings will join the other UCC members to reach out globally to help make a difference in a way our individual contributions never could.

It offers each of us the chance to be part of something bigger.

The combined offerings of the nearly 6,000 churches we are a part of accomplish humanitarian work in two ways: responding to immediate needs and eventually helping communities become self-sufficient. The job never ends, through the OGHS we help respond to a disaster once every 2.5 days on average. Our longer term actions are helping to build sustainable communities in more than 80 nations.

Given all the concerns we have within our own church, and maybe also in our own personal budgets, supporting a global mission may seem a stretch to many of us. To others, it may be part of the opportunity to respond in faith and gratefulness to something that connects us to the larger world and puts some of the everyday concerns in perspective.

When I thought about it, I remembered one of the first lessons my teachers taught me. They told me to try and play nice and share everything. One Great Hour of Sharing is just another opportunity to do that.

Maureen Adamczyk for Mission and Stewardship

Habitat for Humanity: Amity Cares 3

Fund-raising for the third Amity Cares Build has begun! The good news: \$6800 has already been raised. The bad news: groups must now raise \$65,000 to sponsor a house.

What you can do

Make a direct contribution to Habitat for Humanity of Greater New Haven and put “Amity Cares” on the memo line.

Donate an “in-kind” skill or materials.

Attend the second annual concert at the high school Sunday, May 4 at 3pm. Amanda is looking for kids (or adults) to sing in a community chorus.

Buy an ad in the program book for the concert.

Attend a Cabaret Night with Marie Robert on Sunday, April 27. Dr. Robert is a local physician who has donated her time and talent. Reports are that she gives a wonderful performance.

Volunteer on site when the build actually begins, probably next fall.

Visit the website amitycares.org

Talk to Sue Cowan about these and other opportunities to share our time, talent and resources!

YOUTH GROUPS

The Junior Youth Group will meet on the following dates in March:

March 2nd-To plan coffee house fundraiser (Tentatively 4/5)

March 9th-Possibly attending an alternative worship service

March 14th-Movie Night

There will be no meeting on 3/23 because of Easter. The weekend of March 28-March 30 several of the children and I will be attending the Maple Sugaring Weekend at Silver Lake.

Peace,
Donna

Senior Youth Group

A Super Bowl Sunday party was celebrated at Sandy's on February 3rd. The game was watched on a projector screen courtesy of The Webster's; this made the game that much more intense! The Giants took the win, defeating the Patriots and breaking their winning streak! Couldn't you hear the screams of the Giant's fans!

Sunday, the 17 of February the group settled down to talk more seriously about the effects of reckless driving and teenagers. The discussion was centered on how poor decisions and lack of judging consequences can lead to life changing events when behind the wheel of a car.

On a lighter note, the group along with some other children of the church will be participating in the 30-hour famine Friday, February 22 through the 23rd. A valuable lesson will be learned by all.

Peace and joy in the coming months,

Jen Peat

BIRTHDAYS

March

Judith Monarca
Lee Keck
Geri Finley
Janice Longe
Barbara Welker
Linda Francois
David Cote
Timothy Errera
Grace Swain
Sandra Newlan
Brittany Holt
Shane Gordon
Christopher François
Samantha Newlan
Jeanne Hein
Dorothy Gardner
Deb Slater
Anjolina Faith Welker
Isabel Anderson
Erin Voorheis
Edyth Carrington
Kay Downs
Claire Jennings

April

Ryan Nieves
Maggie Monthei
Nancy Jo Poland
Sarah Bachenheimer
Frank Mozealous
Robert Love
Lauren Webster
Jacob Primus
Scott Bishop
Arlene Durley
Eileen Ede
Jessica Holeva
Kerry Meier
Ashley Snyder
Andy Zielinski
Ryan Holt
William Slater
Mallory Leite
Jerry Cafasso
Steve Primus
Yvonne Shia
Ben Errera
Eileen Menker

WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

Les & Jean Rushworth – 4/9
Richard & Donna Ives – 4/10
Jerry & Martha Downs – 4/3

MEETING NEWS

Prayer Group

The Prayer Group meets at 11:30 am on the second Sunday of each month. The next meetings will be on March 9th & April 13th @ 11:30 am.

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Meeting Dates

Christian Education	3/2 & 4/6 @ 8:45 am
Mission & Stewardship	3/3 & 4/7 @ 7:00 pm
Church Committee	3/11 & 4/8 @ 7:30 pm
Trustees	3/13 & 4/17 @ 7:30 pm
Deacons	3/31 & 4/28 @ 7:30 pm
Sanctuary Choir-Every Wednesday	@ 7:30 pm.
Cross Town Players Sunday mornings	@ 11:30 am

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Men's Club

For March the Men's Club will be meeting on March 3rd at 7:00 for a meal prepared by Les Rushworth.

The Men's Club will be having its annual auction on April 13th at 7:00pm. We will be having a Potluck dinner at 6:00 before the auction. That is our April meeting.

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Women's Club

The March meeting will be held on Thursday, March 27th @ 12 noon. It will be a pot luck lunch followed by planning for the Rummage Sale.

The April meeting will be on Thursday, April 24th @ 10am. We will be setting up for the Rummage Sale, followed by lunch & meeting.

Saturday, April 26th will be the date of the Rummage Sale and it will be from 9am until 2pm. Please bring a sandwich for your lunch.

Fundraising Committee

The Church Committee has approved a committee to oversee all fundraisers for the Church. If you have any ideas you would like considered please contact a member of that committee; Ann Cote, Eleanor Beckert, Eileen Ede, Geri Finley or Elsa Peat. Or you can email them at the church; info@bethanyfirstchurch.org.

Modernizing the Courier

Beginning this year, in an effort to modernize delivery and significantly cut production and mailing costs, the Courier will begin publication five times each year. It will be posted on the church website and mailing will continue only to those without computer access. If you must receive a paper copy, please fill in the attached form with name, address and check mark in the "Yes" block, and mail to the church to the attention of Geri Finley. If you wish to be added to our email list, please add your email address.

As you all know, our budget this year is in deficit status, and efforts are underway to increase income and cut costs. The Courier is currently mailed to about 200 members and friends at an annual cost of about \$1,200 per year. We anticipate this approach will reduce costs to about \$200 per year, a savings of \$1,000.

First Church of Christ Congregation email:

info@bethanyfirstchurch.org

To access Website go to:

<http://bethanyfirstchurch.org/>

Telephone: (203) 393-3116

Name:		
Street Address:		
City, State and Zip Code:		
Email Address:		
I wish to continue to receive Courier By U.S. Mail	Yes	

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the ladies who have ever helped me every month to fold, seal, sort, package and deliver the Courier. Without all of your help this would have been an enormous job for me alone.

Geri

A great deal of work is required around the church. The accompanying table is a Trustees Task List that identifies work to be done. Your review and possible volunteer action is requested and appreciated. Please forward comments or volunteer commitments to Rudy Beckert, Chairman.

TRUSTEES	Priority	Owner
Task List – Church Property		
Septic tank overflow:	High	
- Repair septic system?	High	
- Toilets: repair, possible replacement required	High	
- Leaking faucets, basement/kitchen: repair/replace seals	High	
Church sign repair, front lawn	High	Welker
Snow removal, parking lot	High	
Snow removal assignment; walks, entries, steps, handicap lot		Beckert
Time capsule – Seal capsule, install in cornerstone	High	
Pulpit railing installation	High	
Basement floor – complete installation. Fix trim strip at BNG	High	
Lighting/electrical work inside and outside the church	High	
- CL&P streetlight – (notification to CL&P 2/18 Service Request Conf # 1087566, Completed 2/19/08)	Done	Beckert
- Kitchen ground fault circuit correction	High	
- Fluorescent bulbs – sanctuary (Rich Ives purchasing)	Medium	Beckert
- Repair/replace motion sensor lights outside the church	Done	Beckert
- Front lawn ground floodlights – replacement needed	Medium	
- BNG lighting, ballasts required?	High	
Entry doors – tune up locks and tightness of closure	Medium	
Stage doors (underside access) need repair, paint	Medium	
Chair bottoms – rubber foot replacement	Medium	
Radiators – Hall: repair, clean, paint; BNG repair, clean, paint	Medium	
Communion cup holders, balcony (installation completed)	Done	Beckert
Sanctuary, remove plastic baseboards, install wood baseboards, clean up, scrape and paint knee walls	Medium	
Couch room – exit sign above door? Crash bar installation?	Medium	
General cleanup: upper room, classrooms, pump room, shed	Medium	M&S?
Brush cleanup around property, Playground cleanup, tree removal	Medium	M&S?
Sanctuary cushion repairs, stitching, button replacement	Medium	Women’s Club?
Paint, general cleanup, entry hall stairwell, paint blue table	Low	M&S
Additional gravel in handicap lot?	Low	
Narthex spruce-up	Low	Women’s Club?
Parsonage issues – any problems?	Low	

Rudy Beckert, Chair, Board of Trustees