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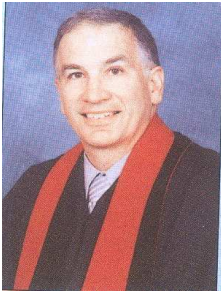
THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

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THOTS FROM TOM



I am writing this on the first day of spring. Hooray! Spring has sprung! The ground is full of snow, and ice is everywhere, but the sun is warm, particularly in the afternoon, warming the south side of my house. It feels wonderful.

As I have said so many times before, we now get to see the miracle of life returning as the sun warms the earth, the birds return, the maple sap runs, lawns turn green, the ice in swimming pools and lakes melts, trees and flowers bloom, and allergies sprout! I see the hand of God in this miraculous rebirth (well, except maybe for the allergies – I suspect that perhaps even God sneezes just a bit at this time of year!). Coming in the midst of all of this rebirth is the celebration of our Savior's resurrection, an annual reaffirmation of our faith, and a foretaste of what awaits for all of us at our life's end. I love this time of year, allergies included! Life returns to the outdoors! Praise God!

Please be sure to look at the activities highlighted elsewhere in this *Chatter*, particularly the events of Holy Week, which end with the celebration of our Christ's resurrection from the dead. With the arrival of spring, activities in the life of our church increase. Please don't miss them!

Have a blessed month!

Tom

Holy Week Schedule

Our Holy Week schedule begins with our Palm Sunday worship service, which will feature

the celebration of the Palms, music by our bell choir, and Holy Communion. Because of the playing of the bell choir on this special day, we will be holding communion with the altar up on the raised dais, instead of being pulled down into the chancel.

On Thursday we will observe our traditional Maundy Thursday service. Members of the Second Congregational Church of Middle Haddam, and their pastor, The Rev. Lois Kennedy will be joining with us in our observance of this service. The service will begin with a remembrance of Jesus' last supper, and will include scripture, prayer, a meal of soup, cheese, bread and fruit, and the sacrament of Holy Communion in the fellowship hall. The worship service will continue upstairs in the sanctuary with the observance of Tenebrae, which recalls the passion of Christ, beginning with his betrayal, continuing with his time on the cross, and ending with the promise of his resurrection.

On Good Friday the sanctuary will be open from noon until 3 p.m. for those wishing to come in to pray. Those hours traditionally mark Christ's time on the cross.

On Saturday the sanctuary will be open from 10 a.m. until noon for prayer and contemplation.

On Easter morning some of the clergy from the churches in East Hampton will hold an early morning ecumenical service at Sears Park which will begin at 7:00 a.m. After the service, the Board of Deacons of our church is holding a pancake and sausage breakfast from 8:00 a.m. until 9:30 a.m. in fellowship hall. To defray the costs of the breakfast, the deacons are suggesting a donation of \$5.00 a person, and \$10.00 per family.

Our traditional Easter morning service will be held at 10:00 a.m. Plan to come early to get a seat!



Earth Day Project

We will be observing Earth Day during our worship service on Sunday, April 22nd, the actual Earth Day date! To put into practice the kinds of things we believe about earth day, which include conservation, getting back to nature, and beautifying the outdoors, we have an opportunity to join with others in helping construct a garden at Cobalt Lodge. A member of Haddam Neck Covenant Church has developed plans for the courtyard of the facility, and needs community folks like ourselves to help make the plans a reality. On Saturday, April 28, people will be gathering at Cobalt Lodge to assist in more site work, in preparation for the planting of flowers and shrubs in the courtyard. The time to gather for this project is unknown as of press time for our *Chatter*, but will be announced in morning worship, and in the *Rivereast* as we get closer to the date. Money collected from the Easter morning ecumenical worship service at Sears Park will be used to purchase flowers and shrubs for this wonderful, earth day community event. Put the date on your calendar, and join with others in a terrific and worthwhile community service project!

PARISH NEWS

NEW MEMBER FORUM MEETINGS

If you are looking for a church home or have been attending our church for awhile but haven't made that "official" step, we invite you to join our church. **New members will be received on Sunday, June 3** during the morning service. There are two meetings we ask you to attend. On Tuesday, April 17, 7-8 p.m., prospective new members will meet informally with the pastor in the church lounge to briefly discuss our church history and the process of joining. The second meeting, Tuesday, May 29, also 7-8 p.m., will be with representatives of the various boards & committees to greet you and talk about the work of our church.

Do you need to join the church to share in its worship and activities? Absolutely not! However, as a church member you will be able to vote and serve on boards and committees of the church.

If you are planning to join, or if you have any questions, please call or leave a message at the church office at 267-4959. We welcome you.

Deaths

Last month we noted the death of Sheila Wheeler's mother on February 14. Our love and sympathy continue to be with the Wheeler family as they also mourn the passing of Sheila's father, Michael Misovich, on March 5. May God's blessing be with them

MUSIC

Hallelujah!

Once again on Easter Sunday, members of the congregation will be invited to sing the "Hallelujah Chorus" with the choir at the end of the service. A copy of the music will be handed to you when you come up to the chancel during the singing of the last hymn.

FAIR COOKBOOK

Please share some of your favorite recipes to be published in the cookbook as part of our "Everything Apple !!!!! Fest" fair to be held in October.

You may email them to Jeanette Knotek at scuffyjkh@aol.com. or drop them off in the church office.

The fair committee is looking for help with this publication. Please contact JoAnn Ewing at 267-4821 or Debbie McLellan 267-7123 or Jeanette at 267-9159



MOTHERS CIRCLE MOMS REUNION!

Saturday April 14
 9:00-11:30 at the home of
 Nancy Dolde
 10 Bevin Blvd 267-6195
 Bring a snack dish to share
 and stop by during the
 traditional Mothers Circle hours!
 Be sure to invite other Mom's that
 were part of this great program but
 may not see this invitation!

HELPING HANDS

Thanks go out to Joanne Kneeland and Lynn Szkoda for being available to provide a meal to a church family in need. Be sure to let the office or Jill Walker know (267-7180) if you or someone you know of from our church family is in need of some Helping Hands.

WOMEN'S POTLUCK

Monday April 2
 6:30 pm
 at the home of
 Nancy Dolde
 10 Bevin Blvd
 Bring a dish to share and join us for
 food and conversation as we share
 stories and reminiscences of Easter

EASTER EGG HUNT

on the
 Church lawn following the 10:00
 Easter Service April 8
 Bring a basket to collect eggs
 (bags provided)

SEEDS OF HOPE THINGS TO RE-MEMBER

******Thanks** to everyone that ordered Butter Braid Breads. If you have not picked yours up yet, they are in the hall freezer in labeled bags.
 ******Scrip pre-paid cards** include numerous hotel chains, bed and breakfasts, Disney, entertainment, gas, food and clothing stores, Stop by the table on Sunday in Fellowship Hall, and get a list of all the places you can shop or go and support Seeds of Hope at the same time
 **** **Bring in your empty bottles and cans** to be recycled (leave them in the furnace room next to the hall freezer)
 ******Tag Sale items** are being collected for the **May 5th Tag Sale**. Gently used and in working order items (no clothing) can be left on the stage behind the sliding curtain. Please do not bring broken or unusable things!
 ******The Flamingoes Are Coming!** For \$15 you can have a flock of bright pink flamingoes roost in your yard or the yard of someone you want to celebrate! More info will be in Fellowship Hall starting April 15th. Flockings will begin in May and are on a reservation required schedule!
 ******Next Seeds of Hope meeting** is Sunday April 15th after church.

KUDOS KORNER

Thanks to the Deacons and CE Committee members that provided the learning centers for the Lenten Fair: Rich and Carolyn Wellman, Lynn Hastings, Teri Schlosser, Sue Carr, Rae Strickland,



(Continued from page 3)

Denise Wojick, Jen Shumbo and Mitzi Tuttle.

Thanks to Ed Loveland for restoring our Fellowship Hall wall and delivering the new tables so many people contributed towards.

TASTE OF PIZZA FESTIVAL

Saturday April 28 th
6:00-7:30 pm
Raffle drawing at 7:15 pm
\$8 per person, \$5 under age 6

Come enjoy your choice of pizza slices from our local pizza restaurants, salad and dessert

Native American games of skill and chance, face painting, door prizes and at 7:15 the drawing of Raffle Prize tickets that include: 15 inch flat screen TV, digital camera, handmade quilt, home entertainment sound system, and hand beaded Lakota infant moccasins.

Proceeds from this event will reduce the out of pocket expenses for the Seeds of Hope Mission Trip to Pine Ridge.

SECOND HOUR PROGRAM

Sunday April 22 after worship

If you are going to attend only one Second Hour presentation this year, this is the one not to miss. On April 22nd Mark Edwards EA CFP (our church's investment advisor) and Attorney David Clemens are going to discuss the need for planning end of life issues, how wills and trusts matter to your surviving spouse or other heirs, why current medical and durable Powers of Attorney are critical in making sure your desires are met if you are not able to make those decisions, why establishing legal guardians for your children is essential, where bequests fit into your estate planning, and how to limit your estates exposure to the IRS.

We all have read the stories in the news about estate planning issues. Who can forget the agony of Terry Schiavo's husband and family as they battled in the Florida legal system; each thinking they knew her wishes. Many of us have personally experienced an unexpected death in our family where the deceased was "going to get around" to drawing up a will. Every one of us is going to pass on someday and it's our choice to leave a well thought out plan that explains our wishes or to leave the surviving members of our family a legal or financial mess.

This Second Hour presentation will cover the basics, dispel some myths, and provide you some topics to discuss with your family and loved ones. A program will be available for children during this presentation..

Y2K

April Calendar
Wednesday April 4th
5:30-6:45 pm
Bring \$3 for pizza

LASER QUEST!!
Tuesday April 17th
Meet at church at 12:45
Return app. 4:15 pm
\$15 for 2 games
Bring \$ for video games
Snacks provided
Sign up in Fellowship Hall by
Sunday April 15th
Drivers needed (see Jill



EARTH DAY SUNDAY, APRIL 22

Don't Throw Away Your Old Sneakers, Recycle Them!

As part of the Earth Day observance at our Church, David Quackenbush (2006 Confirmation Class), will be collecting your old sneakers for recycling. David and his friend Nick Vasquenza have set up Connecticut's newest sneaker recycling program here in East Hampton. The program is in partnership with Nike Reuse-A Shoe and the Connecticut Recyclers Coalition. Old athletic shoes are collected at sites around the state and transported to waste centers who have agreed to send the shoes to Nike. Nike slices the shoes into rubber, foam and fabric layers and grinds up each layer to be made into athletic surfaces like the new track at our high school, tennis courts, playground surfaces etc. Please place your old, unwanted sneakers in the collection bag in the Church furnace room. Any brand athletic shoe is acceptable; laces are OK to include, **NO** metal parts ie. eyelets, cleats, wheels or blades. Sneaker recycling will continue through June 30, 2007. For more information call David at 267-2616.

COSA NEWS

Gifts of the Heart

Thank you to everyone who donated to the "Gift of the Heart" school kit program. We assembled 40 kits that will be sent to Church World Service. School kits give children in impoverished school, refugee camps, or other difficult settings the basic tools for learning. We appreciate your never-ending support!

New Britain Street Ministry Health/Food Kits

We will be collecting small items to fill health/food kits for the New Britain Street ministry which supports the homeless in New Britain.

There will be a basket/box in fellowship hall to donate items. If you would like to help but can't find the time to shop, you can make a donation and the money will be used to purchase any additional items that we need, (see Kristen Warzecha or Eileen Atkinson).

Items needed are as follows:

- Washcloths
- Combs
- Toothbrushes
- Toothpaste
- Deodorant
- Travel size Personal Care Items
- Individually wrapped Snack Bags
- Juice Boxes

Habitat for Humanity

The Middletown chapter of Habitat for Humanity will be starting a new home soon. We anticipate putting together a small group to give them a helping hand. Look for details in the near future!

Crop Walk

Church world service announced the "2006 Cream of the Crop" certificates and we were honored in both the "Significant increases in funds" and the "Significant increases in Walkers"! We had a 51% increase in funds this year, and we more than doubled the number of walkers from last year! Congratulations everyone!



Council Chatter

I am reporting on the February 27th meeting of Council. In old business, Deb Robinson confirmed that there would be a \$100 charge for our Old Home Day strawberry shortcake booth. Council has opted to pay the fee in order to maintain a presence on the fairgrounds.

Ways of maintaining interest in the Shares of Faith initiative was discussed. Bill Evertson will provide a moment for mission during March. We also discussed additional Chatter articles, a running total in the weekly bulletin and a reminder of its' importance in the quarterly statements sent out by the financial secretary.

Sue Binge presented a future fundraising idea. She provided information on the successful Chocolate festival sponsored by the Portland First Congregational Church. Their effort nets around \$6000. Sue is collecting more information from her contact in Portland and will share this with Jill and the Parish Life and Development Committee.

We also had discussions concerning a spring dinner/ Jazz BBQ. At present the band has increased their rates as to make profit from this event negligible. A date for this event minus the Dixieland group has not been set.

All committees were present to make reports and their highlights may be read elsewhere in the Chatter

New Tables in Fellowship Hall

You may have noticed that we have our new tables in Fellowship Hall. Thanks to the generosity of many members of our Church Family, we have new lightweight tables, which are much easier to move around. The Stewards want to thank all of those who supported this effort. We have decided to save some of the wooden tables to continue to lend out. The left over tables will be offered to good homes during the Spring Tag Sale.

Budget Update

As many of you will remember from the Annual Meeting, we took a leap of faith and voted a budget, which counted on income from all of our fundraisers, intentional giving pledges as well as a new Share of Faith initiative. We are printing in our weekly bulletin the results of the Shares of Faith as well as our pledge income. The Stewards are posting on the Fellowship Hall bulletin board the Monthly Budget report as well as a graph that shows how we are doing financially. At the end of February, we are off by nearly \$4,000 in pledge income and by the middle of March close to \$5,000.

Can we turn this around? I think so. We did it last year and can do it again, but it means that all of us must do our part. Just recently, we mailed out the last of the pledge envelopes. If you are away on vacation or unable to attend Sunday Service, perhaps you can mail in your pledge in the envelopes provided.

Karen Evertson, Chair Board of Stewards

Work Party Rescheduled

Due to the winter storm, the work party has been rescheduled for Saturday April 14th from 9 am to 3 pm. A sign up sheet will be down in Fellowship Hall. A Pizza lunch will be provided. We will tackle the three restrooms and spring-cleaning projects.

If you have any questions call Karen Evertson 267-6840



Shares of Faith

Our initiative to close this years projected deficit is off to a good start, with \$3000 “invested” so far. The Shares of Faith was proposed at our annual meeting as a proactive attempt to eliminate a projected deficit and most importantly to eliminate additional fundraisers from our already crowded schedules.

The success of Shares of Faith simply asks all our members to consider that only \$1 per week per member would close our gap. We continue to ask that the congregation to share *their* faith in the commitment to our collective missions and ministries by purchasing shares in \$50 increments if their circumstance allows. Our goal is to sell 240 shares. To date we have sold 57. Please help move our thermometer and build on last years success.

Thanks to the following families and individuals who have already joined this program. Aarrestad, Quackenbush, Shirshac, Edwards, Evertson, Rafus, Barlow, Berkenstock, Curylo, DeCoursey, Guerin, Lincoln, McLellan, Pettengill, Strickland, Tinney, Walker, Baletto, Evans, Gephard, Hazen, Mandigo, Prince and Russo, Dainiak, Newhall, Mearman, Hage, Kneeland, Shumbo, Byrne, Christopher, Jackson, Gerkey, Bartel, Raad Westcote, Begin, DeFrancesco, Tkaczyk, Provost and Loveland.

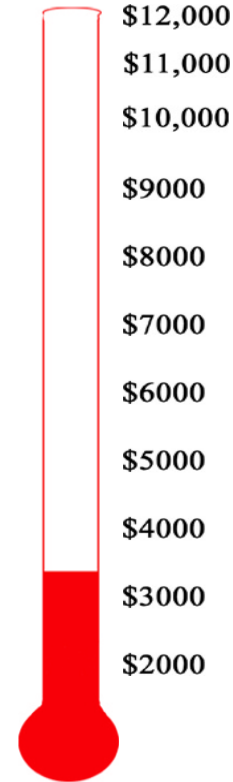
A little laughter to lighten the load.

After a church service on Sunday morning, a young boy suddenly announced to his mother, “Mom, I’ve decided to become a minister when I grow up.”

“That’s ok with us, but what made you decide that?”

“Well,” said the little boy, “I have to go to church on Sunday anyway, and I figure it will be more fun to stand up and yell, than to sit and listen.”

Shares of Faith



Deacons

Thanks to all who attended our first annual Fat Tuesday, Pancake Supper. We heard great things about the puffy pancakes, topped off with Rich and Jill Walker's authentic Connecticut pure maple syrup (and real butter!). Thanks Rich and Jill!

Also thanks to all those who helped, particularly pancake flipper, Ron Hastings, who came in a moments notice to help Pete Aarrestad at the grill. Thanks to Moms Evelyn Pasternak who helped set tables, and Jeanette Knotek who helped with set-up and tickets. See you next year!



April Ushers

April 1st	John & Jackie Hage
April 8th	Ruth Rafus
	Cyndi Shirshac
	Iva Turner
	Jeanette Knotek
April 15th	Joanne Kneeland
	Anita Guerin
April 22nd	Marianne & Dave Kelsey
April 29th	Jennifer Shumbo
	Pamela Luchka

Thank you for this special Ministry.

Pampered Chef Party on April 13

Everyone is invited to a cooking show hosted by Melissa Fussell (Rittman) and Alicia Kennedy, sponsored by **PAMPERED CHEF!** Whether you hate to cook, love to cook, or just plain *have* to cook, there is something for everyone. **PAMPERED CHEF** has a lot to offer, and they have introduced tons of new items, so come join in the fun! There is no cost, and you can bring as many people as you like. There will be a raffle with a chance to win cool **PAMPERED CHEF** items, and some of the proceeds will benefit the church. This event will be on Friday, April 13th at 6 pm in the fellowship hall of the church. COME GET INSPIRED and let **PAMPERED CHEF** do all the work! If you have any questions, feel free to contact Melissa at 267-8663 or Alicia 883-9863. Hope to see you there!



JOY DAWNED AGAIN

An Easter Worship Special on ABC-TV produced by the UCC.

Check your local listings for time & channel.

To celebrate our 50th anniversary, the United Church of Christ has produced “Joy Dawned Again,” an Easter special scheduled for broadcast on many ABC affiliates on Easter Sunday. The 60-minute program depicts a joyous worship service with a surprising liturgical twist—a dramatic turn of events that poses thought-provoking questions on how and why we celebrate Easter.

ABC’s affiliate stations will decide when the special will be broadcast in their market. Viewers can visit the “Joy Dawned Again” website at www.UCC.org/joydawnedagain for the schedule posted during Holy Week. The website will also publish a free study guide to help viewers explore the meaning of Easter—using the TV program as the starting point for reflection. And beginning Easter Sunday, the UCC’s virtual community at i.UCC.org will host a discussion forum where viewers can discuss the special and their own feelings about Easter.