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THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

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Presort**

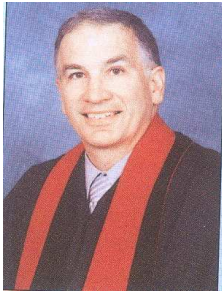
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March



2007

Thots From Tom



Happy March! After five weeks of very cold weather, perhaps we are starting to see the first hints of spring, with the longer days. We are now in the season of Lent. The word "Lent" is an Anglo-Saxon word which means "spring" or "lengthening of days"

which is very timely right now.

Lent begins with Ash Wednesday, and continues for forty days, not counting Sundays, ending on Easter day. Lent is the season of preparation for holy week and for the resurrection of Christ. The forty days matches the forty days that Jesus wandered and fasted in the wilderness as he prepared to begin his ministry. In many traditions Lent is a time of fasting. For all Christians, Lent is a time marked by penance and preparation for the resurrection of Christ. In our church we do not fast, but the season of Lent is often marked with people making sacrifices, or "giving up" something for the season, or "taking on" something additional in the way of an extra responsibility or challenge during this penitential season. Perhaps you have already decided how you will observe this season in preparation for Easter. If not, it is still not too late to decide how you will observe this special time of year.

Be sure to "spring ahead" with your clocks on Sunday, March 11, as the time to begin Daylight Savings Time has changed, to the second Sunday in March. If you forget to set your clocks ahead on March 11 and you normally arrive for worship just before 10:00, on that day you will arrive just in time for coffee hour! We will return to Eastern Standard Time on Sunday, November 4, the first

Sunday in November, when we "fall back." So remember to set your clocks ahead before you go to bed on Saturday, March 10!

There are many activities this month, which I think are mentioned in greater detail elsewhere in this *Chatter*. We have family worship and communion on March 4, Volunteer Recognition Sunday, featuring lunch after worship on March 11, a church clean-up day when we hope to get some painting done on March 17, a Lenten Fair after worship on March 18, an adult church prom on March 24, a second hour program on Islam on March 25, and Bible Sunday on March 31.

This month will also be a very busy one for our Confirmation students. In addition to two meetings with their mentors on the evenings of March 7 and 21, they will take a trip to St. Patrick Church on the evening of March 3, and attend the annual Confirmation Retreat at Camp Hazen on March 9-10.

These are just highlights! Enjoy the month, and watch your church calendar, and come, become involved in the fun and spiritually uplifting activities that will make up our month!

Peace,

Tom



March Ushers

March 4th Paul Ellis
Edger Prince

March 11th Sue Binge
Kris Warzecha

March 18th Bill and Karen Evertson

March 25th Mel and Lorraine Barlow

Thank you for this special Ministry.

Look for the Gift of the Heart board; take a tag or two and purchase and return the items to Fellowship hall by March 11th. 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; or to pay for shipping the goods to children in need.

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!

COSA News

Blood Drive

Thank you to everyone who made our first Blood Drive a HUGE success! We scheduled all the available donation times and then some. Also, thank you all for your patience as the Red Cross implemented a new system and wait times became much longer than expected.

Gifts of the Heart

We are still collecting small items to put together School kits for Church World service to distribute. School kits give children in impoverished schools, refugee camps, or other difficult settings the basic tools for learning. Some of the items we will be looking for are as follows:

- Scissors
- Spiral Notebooks
- Rulers
- Pencil Sharpeners
- Pencils
- Erasers
- Construction Paper
- Crayons

Salsa Anyone??!

Christine Fielding Tkaczyk will be offering a pre-Prom learn to do the Salsa and Merengue dance lesson on Friday, March 16 at 7:00 pm. Come on down for some how to's from Christine who learned these dances while in Bogota Colombia. No previous experience required and those with 2 left feet are specially invited to attend! Sign up in Fellowship Hall by Sunday, March 11. And - don't forget to buy your Prom tickets soon!

Helping Hands

Please call the office or Jill Walker (267-7180) if you or someone you know of from our church family could use some Helping Hands. Don't be shy- we all find ourselves in need of someone to provide meals, rides, or just some company out one time or another. Let us help out until you're up and about and able to help someone else when it's their turn!



Celebration Sunday

On Sunday, March 11 we will celebrate all those that have been members of our church family for fifty or more years! We will also recognize and celebrate the spirit of volunteerism that makes our church buzz and our “faith missions possible”. Everyone is invited to a sandwich lunch catered by Rossini’s after worship. God is working here with us and through us-plan to be part of this special morning.

Women’s Potluck Supper

Monday, March 5th
6:30 pm
at the home of
Nancy Dolde
10 Bevin Blvd

Bring a dish to share and join us to view and discuss some of the Women of Faith Tour Speakers Hear their faith stories and see how their stories relate to us

College Student Care Packages

The Christian Education Committee will be sending Care Packages to our church family students that are away at college. Snack foods, microwaveable foods and personal items will be collected in boxes on Sundays beginning March 11.

Simply buy a box or 2 of something non-perishable and divide it up amongst the care package boxes that will be on the stage thru March 25th. There will also be markers available so we can sign and graffiti the boxes.

Third Grade Bible Sunday

Third grade students will receive a Bible during worship on Sunday, March 25. Students and parents are invited to Fellowship Hall during class that day to play some get to know the Bible Trivia games with Jill Walker. Any 4th grade student that did not receive a Bible last year should contact Jill so they can also receive one that day.

Please call the church office by March 8th with the student’s address if you have a student away at school that would like to receive a care package.

It’s Almost Prom Time!

Host Homes are needed for the Pre-Prom Appetizer Parties- and we’d love to come to your house! Everyone attending the party will bring an appetizer, and hosts will provide beverages of choice. Each home will host approximately 12 guests from 6:00-7:00 pm. See Jill with any questions. Sign up to host in Fellowship Hall by Sunday, March 11.

Y2K March Calendar

Wednesday, March 7th
5:30-6:45 pm
March Madness Olympics
Bring \$3 for pizza

Wednesday, March 21st
5:30-6:45 pm

Incredible Edible Spud Night!
Bring \$3 for colossal baked potatoes with all the fixins



(Continued from page 3)

Remember When Prom
Saturday, March 24
6:00- 10:00 pm
Formal Attire encouraged
but not required!
\$18 per person

Dinner and dancing to swing, big band, oldies but goodies, and more (maybe even some dance lessons!?), souvenir photos, Prom King and Queen, and the chance to enjoy our star lit Fellowship Hall like you've never seen it before! Spring has sprung according to the calendar anyway- so come on out for an evening of fun, food and friends!

Tickets will be on sale Sunday mornings in March and should be purchased in advance so Chatham Caterers can plan accordingly. And speaking of Prom photos...

Everyone attending the Prom is invited to bring pictures from a Prom you attended in High School or College for our Remember When Photo collage! All pictures will be returned so they can go back to the archives of your life journey- but please share one or two with us for the evening. Pictures can be left in Jill's mailbox or brought to Fellowship Hall on Prom night. Please put your name on the back of the photo.

Lenten Fair

The Deacons and Christian Education Committee invite everyone to participate in our Lenten Fair to be held in Fellowship Hall after worship on March 18th. The season of Lent is full of symbolism and theology as Holy Week approaches. Fellowship Hall will have a variety of activities and informative booths set up for everyone to visit and experience a bit of our faith history. Sample some

Passover Sedar foods, see how Jesus' Last Supper come to be, learn about some Easter symbols, and what Christ's Resurrection promised for each of us.

Seeds of Hope Things To Re-Member

*****Butter Braid Breads** will be on sale Sunday mornings March 4- 18th. Samples will be available to taste March 4th. Orders can be picked up on Sunday March 25th.

*****Raffle** tickets will go on sale Sunday, March 11th until the drawing on April 28th during our Taste of Pizza Festival. Prizes will be on display in Fellowship Hall and include hand beaded Lakota baby moccasins, hand made quilt, home entertainment system, digital camera and 15" flat screen TV. Tickets are \$2.

*****Shaws Super Market will donate 1% of register receipt totals to Seeds of Hope.** Bring your receipts to the collection box in the hall outside of the office (above the mailboxes) and once a month we will submit them to Shaws.

*****Scrip** pre-paid cards are still available and benefit Seeds of Hope from 1-17% of face value of the card.

Next participants meeting is Sunday, March 4th after worship

Kudos Korner

Thank you to all the fine musicians within our church family that entertained us for the Night of Dinner and Music: Sherry Baine, Karen and Regan Gallmon, Joyce Chamois, Maggie Jackson, Mark Busch, Lance Crouch, Whitney Fielding, Scott Jackson, John and Carol Westcote, Lisa Clair and Allison Cowan, Alex Balletto, Justine Lavoie, Nancy Crouch, Nancy Dolde, Lynn Szkoda, Megan Morariu, Jillian Foulda, Elyse Dolde, Jillian Crouch and Calvin Goodrich.

Thanks to Rae Strickland for providing lunch for our Church Family Celebration and to Nancy Zimmer for providing pizza for all the worker bees



COUNCIL

During Councils January meeting we discussed the possibilities of introducing a bylaw change to reflect the new Parish Life and Development position now held by Jill Walker. It was decided that this could wait for an additional year as the mission of this sub-committee is still evolving. Deb Robinson reported on receiving thank you's on behalf of our Family to Family efforts over the Christmas season. In other business it was reported that the Old Home Day committee was considering charging the Church for it's strawberry shortcake booth. The amount is unclear but probably in the neighborhood of \$150. Finally, the Council declined to participate in the Mail a Map advertisements that are being prepared for the community. Since advertising has not been budgeted we felt that the cost could not be justified.

Our recent annual meeting was well attended and there were sufficient members to more than make a quorum. Many have commented favorably on the inclusion of our annual meeting as an element of our worship service. Our main business consisted of receiving the reports of our chairs and committees. These reports were accepted and are available in our annual report. Lisa Aarrestad reported on the efforts of the nominating committee in filling vacancies on our committees. While most positions have been filled, there are vacancies on the Board of Stewards as well as the need for an assistant financial secretary.

The remainder of the meeting consisted of budget consideration. Karen Evertson described last year's efforts that resulted in closing our deficit budget. A record \$19,000 shortfall was overcome with a generous combination of volunteer effort and generous giving by our members. Karen went on to describe the considerations that shaped this year's budget. While we are again facing a \$12,000 shortfall, the congregation voted unanimously to accept the budget as presented by the Board of Stewards. Karen introduced the Shares of Faith effort the Stewards are promoting to close the

shortfall. There is more about this initiative elsewhere in this issue of the Chatter.

March 17th Painting Day

The Stewards are looking for some volunteers who are willing to help paint and fix up the restrooms and perhaps some of the classrooms on March 17th starting at 9 am. There will be a sign up sheet in Fellowship Hall for any who are willing to help. We plan to replace some of the restrooms fixtures and baseboard and paint.

If you skills aren't up to painting, the Deacons are planning to do some sprucing up of the sanctuary and could use you help to clean and polish. Lunch will be provided and we plan to end in time for any Saint Patrick's Day celebrating you may be planning.

I think we have all the necessary tools, but if you have a special paintbrush or roller, bring it along. Hope to see you there for some work and fellowship.

If you have any questions, please call Karen Evertson 267-6840

ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING OFFERING

Love. Faith. Compassion. Jesus showed us how to live out of these qualities for a purpose larger than ourselves. On **March 18**, we will bring our One Great Hour of Sharing offerings for ministries of the United Church of Christ that reach out with love, faith and compassion to people in 90 countries. An OGHs offering envelope is included with your Chatter. Please bring it with you or mail it to the church at P.O. Box 237, East Hampton, CT 06424.

PARISH NEWS



Deaths

We extend our sympathy

To Sheila Wheeler and family on the death of her mother, Ella Misovich, on February 14.

Music Committee

Thank you to all who attended the wonderful NE Chamber Choir Concert on February 18. Thanks also to those who donated food and helped with the reception. It was a lovely event.

SHARES OF FAITH

Last year was a watershed for our congregation. For the first time in many years we closed our budget shortfall and actually ended with a moderate surplus. We had a perfect confluence of volunteer effort, generous loose plate offerings and our pledging members stayed current on their intentional giving. As wonderful as this news is we are in a new year where our budget again faces the strain of a \$12,000 shortfall. Of course, at our annual meeting we unanimously agreed that we would work together to overcome this obstacle to the missions of our church.

Putting together a budget for the Church brings certain challenges that we do not face in home or business budgets. While our expenses can be estimated with a fair amount of confidence, the income portion can be difficult.

This year we are counting on our members again continuing their efforts on the existing fundraisers, continue to stay current to their intentional giving commitments and those who do not pledge to continue in their generosity.

The effort to close the remaining \$12,000 is our **Shares of Faith** initiative. The Stewards intend to sell these shares in \$50 increments. The sale of 240 shares will close that \$12,000 shortfall without the necessity of adding any additional fundraisers to our already full schedule.

If our membership of 276 embraces this idea, the burden is shared and represents a commitment of less than one dollar per week.

Thank you to the following families who have helped launch **Shares of Faith** – 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.

So, at the launch of **Shares of Faith**, we have sold 34 shares and raised \$1750. Please consider joining us this Lenten season in furthering the missions of our Church. Karen Evertson – Chairman, Board of Stewards





**INVITATION TO
EAGLE SCOUT COURT OF
HONOR**

The Scouts, Leaders, and Members of the Committee, Boy Scout Troop 57, take great pleasure in announcing that:

Having completed the requirements for, and having been examined by an Eagle Scout Board of Review

Mark Phillip Simmons

Was found worthy of the rank of Eagle Scout.

In honor of this achievement, we have scheduled an Eagle Scout Court of Honor for Sunday, March 11, 2007, beginning at 3:00 p.m. to be held at First Church of Christ, Congregational in East Haddam, Connecticut. The church is located at 499 Town Street (Route 151) near the Moodus section of East Haddam.

Troop 57 is sponsored by this church. Mark is the son of Linda and Phillip Simmons. They and the entire troop would be honored by the presence of any church members who are able to attend. A formal invitation is posted in Fellowship Hall. If possible, please RSVP to Phil and Linda (267-6262 or t57ehct@snet.net).



Save the Date!
The Parish Life
and
Development Committee
cordially invites
all adults to our
Remember When Prom
Saturday March 24
6:00-7:00 p.m.
Pre-Prom Appetizer Party
at pre-assigned host homes
7:00-10:00 p.m.
Dinner and Dancing in
Fellowship Hall
\$18 per person
Look for more information
in the February Chatter



EASTER LILY ORDER

for the sanctuary on Easter.

\$10.00 each.

Given by _____

In memory of (or in gratitude for)

I wish to ___leave ___take the lily.

Place this form in the offering plate or mail it to the church (PO Box 237) by Sunday, April 1. Orders after that date are subject to availability. *Please include payment* with your order.