



**The Congregational
Church**

59 Main Street
P.O. Box 237
East Hampton, CT 06424

(860) 267-4959
Fax (860) 267-7424
E-mail: cceh@juno.com
Website: www.cc-eh.org

Thomas L. Kennedy: Pastor
(860) 267-6540

Jill Walker: Dir. Of Parish Life,
Development and Education
(860) 267-7180

Keumok Heo: Director of Music
(860) 430-5904

Ann Buracchi: Church Secretary
(860) 267-4959 Tues.-Fri. 9-1

Jerry Gerkey: Chatter Editor
(860) 267-9513

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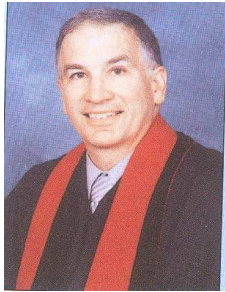
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May



2009



THOTS FROM TOM

I hope you are enjoying the season of Spring, which seems to finally have begun! We can see in nature the resurrection of life, as trees bud and lawns begin to grow, and flowers burst forth.

This time of year is an annual reminder of how God is at work in our world, creating and renewing the landscape about us; a real-time resurrection to associate at this time of year with Christ's resurrection from the tomb.

We have had a renewal of our own here at the Congregational Church of East Hampton. Our Easter offering, which was based on a Lenten theme of the Challenge of Discipleship, has born much fruit!

During the season of Lent we examined in our worship services the call to be disciples, and the challenges put forth upon us as we embrace the role of being followers of Christ. We matched this challenge to the work of the Congregational Church of East Hampton, which saw its calling as a church, to honor certain missions the church has historically fulfilled, hampered by a shortfall in contributions, pledges and tithes brought on by the condition of our failing national economy.

In fact, at our annual meeting held January 25, 2009, the members of the church passed a "survival budget" which included forty percent cuts in all committee mission work expenses. Even with these cuts, we still had a shortfall of almost five thousand dollars. While our church was experiencing great vitality and life in its worship, fellowship, and service-work, we all hampered by this funding shortfall, which I challenged the member-

ship to end as soon as it possibly could.

Effective with our Easter offering, we have at least erased the almost five thousand dollar deficit, by bringing in a total of \$6,593.00. What that means as we look at the rest of our year is that all of our fundraising can now go towards restoring the forty percent cuts we made in our budget, cuts which greatly hamper the missions of this church which have long been a part of our life together.

Why talk about this? Because in the midst of the doom and gloom of an uncertain economy, we succeed in bringing forth the resources necessary for this church to continue its work of transforming lives for the better at home and around the world. This work is more than just a discussion about money; it is a discussion about feeling the call of God to continue doing the mission needs and challenges we have historically felt led to fulfill, and then courageously and boldly, in faith, meeting and accomplishing them.

In times such as these people are forced to make many painful decisions about how to allocate increasingly scarce resources. My stomach tightens every time I hear about another round of layoffs at any of Connecticut's corporations, factories or businesses. Times are uncertain. Yet we felt the call of God to make the sacrifices necessary to put increasingly scarce resources to work right here in the church. The Holy Spirit is moving through our church, and it is awe-inspiring, humbling, and spiritually fulfilling.

This month we will confirm eight young people into their faith journey as they covenant and partner with us as we become an even stronger and

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bolder church. I cannot think of a better or more blessed place for these young people to begin their adult lives of faith than right here, in this spirit-filled assembly of humble, bold, courageous disciples of Christ. Let us boldly go forth into our future, proclaiming that with Christ as our head, we can fearlessly accomplish great things for God!

Peace,

Tom

MUSIC COMMITTEE

Please note that the Children's Choir (pre-k to 2nd graders) will be singing on Mother's Day (May 10th). Practice will be on April 26th & May 3rd from 11:30 to noon in the Church Sanctuary on these two Sundays. The Youth Choir (3rd graders-8th) will be singing on Youth Sunday (May 21) and practice will be from 11:30 to noon on Sundays May 31st & June 7th in the Church Sanctuary. Please encourage your young singers to participate. The Men's Choir will be singing on Father's Day (June 21st). Practice dates and times will be announced.

Thanks to all who have been praising God by singing and ringing with the choirs. Bell Choir rehearsal is from 6:15 to 7:15 and Senior Choir is from 7:30 to 9:00 on Thursday nights for those interested. Call Keumok at the church office for more information.

Building and Grounds Clean Up

Saturday May 9 8:30-11:30

In addition to our monthly building clean up we will have outdoor projects, too
Sign up in Fellowship Hall to help with garden spruce up, mulching, planting shrubs (good community service hours for HS students!!)

In the event of rain outside work day will be 5/30
Bring work gloves, clippers, and rakes.



COSA NEWS

Blankets of Love/Tools of Hope

COSA will have Mother's Day cards available April 26, May 3 and May 10. A \$5.00 donation per card will be sent to Church World Service's Blankets + Project. This project provides blankets and services to people and families in need across the globe.

In the United States, this past year, Church World Service provided 15,950 lightweight and 5,245 heavyweight blankets for needs of people affected by emergencies or economic hard times. In Keen, Texas, for example, 8,075 blankets were provided in the aftermath of September's Hurricane Gustav.

In Washington, 200 blankets went to the Cold and Hungry Coalition in Olympia to provide warmth for homeless people in Mason County. The No Freeze Project in Willimantic, CT, distributed 50 blankets to economically disadvantaged families.

At the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota, grandmothers caring for children and grandchildren received 100 blankets as well as 150 baby blankets.

A small donation in honor or memory of the wonderful women in our lives can have a large impact on families in need of warmth and comfort.

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Family to Family Grocery and Gas Cards

It's Christmas in May! We are collecting gift cards for food and gas for Middlesex Hospital's Family to Family program for needy families in the area. With the current economic climate, the needs are more severe than ever. You will find tags on the Christmas tree for the cards. You can order them from the Seeds of Hope scrip program – that way, everyone wins.

Food Bank Needs

The food bank is in great need of the following items to support the families in East Hampton. If you can help, please leave your donations in the food bank basket outside the church office and we will deliver to the food bank.

- Peanut Butter
- Laundry detergent
- Jelly
- Shampoo
- Mayonnaise
- Conditioner
- Canned meats
- Deodorant
- Canned meals (i.e. stew, ravioli)
- Toothpaste
- Spaghetti sauce
- Canned fruit
- Fruit juices

THANK YOU!!

As a result of our Challenge of Discipleship Easter Offering we have closed the 2009 passed budget gap by raising \$6,593! Thank you to everyone that contributed. It is important to remember that while we have successfully closed the gap we have still reduced our operating budget by 40% for 2009.

This will become increasingly obvious as the year proceeds and adjustments to programs, expenses and missions may be necessary.

GOT STUFF?

If you've got stuff that you want to get rid of, please consider donating your stuff to the tag sale. The Music Committee will host the annual tag sale on **Saturday, May 2 from 8 am to 1 pm.** No books, clothes, or linens (we sold those in February). Tag sale is furniture, gadgets, toys, bikes or whatever. Please leave your items on the church stage the last two weeks of April.





4th Annual Spring Market
 Saturday, May 24 from 9-2
 Flowers, annuals and perennial plants
 Farm stand produce
 Craft and home based vendors
 Breakfast and Lunch Concessions

Volunteers are needed for set up on Friday afternoon. On Saturday- cashiers and customer service for the flower tents and concession stand servers. Sign up in Fellowship Hall by Sunday, May 17th. Also-to reserve a booth or for more vendor information call Rick Walker 860-267-7180. Nonprofit groups are invited to set up as well.

Silent Auction is just Around the Corner

Our 10th Annual Silent Auction will be held during Old Home Days this year July 9-11. The success of this event depends on 3 important things: the exciting and fun items everyone donates for bidding on, the volunteers that set up, host and take down the auction and of course the bidders!

Our goal is to have 200+ items including things with a minimum value of \$15 and things of higher value that will create higher bids. Items should be new unless they are of antique value. Here's how you can provide items:

Re-gifting anything new that you know you will not use or meant to give as a gift but never did and now it's too late! If it's got a tag on it, has never been used- we'd love it!

Donate your professional skills, your time share, your cottage for a weekend, a day on your boat, a

gourmet meal for 6, a dessert every month, sporting event tickets, air mile tickets, theater tickets that you won't be using, memorabilia, etc.

Ask businesses you frequent to donate an item- they will have free publicity on all of our printed material. Ask friends that have a business or something interesting to donate.

Consider purchasing something to donate. All of these donations suggested are tax deductible. Items can be brought to church beginning June 8, but arrangements can be made if you have something that needs to be dropped off sooner. We can arrange pick up for large items, too.

Mark your calendar now with the day and time you can reserve to assist with is event, and then when the signup sheets are posted in June you'll be all set. Be creative and thanks! Talk with Cindy Abraham, Anita Guerin, Donna and Art Marsden, Rae Strickland, Teri Schlosser, Jerry Gerkey or Jill Walker for more information.

Helping Hands

Be sure to let the church office or Jill Walker (267-7180) know if you or someone from our church family is in need of some Helping Hands. We can provide meals, rides, help with simple household tasks or just visit if life is keeping you home bound.

Announcements! Announcements!

We recently started a new way of announcing all the upcoming events and items of interest for our church family- we have an "Open Mike" available during Coffee Hour. Any committee person or individual that has an announcement is welcome to use the wireless hand microphone that will be available.



All committee announcements can also be sent to Ann in the office by 9:30 AM on Friday and they will be included in that week's bulletin. Be sure to indicate if you want the announcement to run more than one week. Please be concise so all our information will fit on the announcements page. The church email address is: cceh@Juno.com

Seeds of Hope Update

Thanks to everyone that purchased Butter Braid Breads. If you have not picked yours up yet, they are in labeled bags in the hallway freezer.

We recently sent \$175,000 worth of Shaw's receipts in to be redeemed for \$1,500, which is terrific. But- if everyone had purchased Shaw's SCRIP cards on Sunday mornings and used them when shopping we would have earned \$7,000 since with the cards we earn 4% of every dollar. If we can earn that much, we'd be able to subsidize our mission trip plus provide funds for our church wide missions. Let's challenge ourselves to buy the SCRIP cards- we're buying groceries anyway (other local grocery stores also participate) and earn funds!

Kudos Korner

Thanks to all the church mice that have been busy taking care of this and that including: Dave and Alex Balletto, the Dainiak Family, along with Kyle and Denise Wojick for painting 2 of our downstairs classrooms. There are 2 more classrooms waiting for adoptive people to paint them. See Jill if interested. Thanks to Karen Gallmon and Lorraine Barlow for the April building clean up.

Thanks to Jim and Collin Parker for polishing our brass balcony railing, Cub Pack #57 for doing an excellent Spring clean up of our lawns, and all the Deacons that provided Maundy Thursday Supper and Easter Breakfast. Thanks to the High School class for stuffing all the Easter Eggs for our hunt on Easter morning.

Thank you to all the Church School children that contributed to our "egg-cellent" disciples offering collection during Lent. A total of \$90 was contributed to our church wide missions

Y2K Calendar for May

Wednesday May 6 and May 20

5:30-6:45 PM

Bring \$4 for pizza

Friends welcome!

Women's Potluck

Monday May 4th at 6:30

the home of Jean Loveland

35 Skyline Drive (off of Clark Hill)

267-6522

Bring a dish to share

(we always eat really well!)

and join us for conversation and fellowship

Second Hour Program

Sunday May 31st

As a way to say thanks for sponsoring her, Jillian Crouch will talk about and share photos from her music ministry trip last summer with the Continental Singers. As part of our Seeds of Hope Missions, Jillian traveled out west and thru Alaska performing with this group of contemporary Christian vocalists. The presentation will take place in Fellowship Hall immediately following Coffee Hour.