

The GOOD News

February

The Newsletter of the First Congregational Church of Haddam

2010

WHAT'S UP?

February 7

5th Sunday after Epiphany

Worship 10:00 am

Communion

Isaiah 6:1-8;

Psalm 138;

1 Corinthians 15:1-11;

Luke 5:1-11

February 14

Last Sunday after Epiphany

The Transfiguration

Worship 10:00 am

Mardi Gras Brunch

Exodus 34:29-35;

Psalm 99;

2 Corinthians 3:12-4:2;

Luke 9:28-36

February 21

1st Sunday in Lent

Worship 10:00 am

Deuteronomy 26:1-11;

Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16;

Romans 10:8b-13;

Luke 4:1-13

February 28

2nd Sunday in Lent

Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18;

Psalm 27;

Philippians 3:17-4:1

Luke 13:31-35

March 7

3rd Sunday in Lent

Laity Sunday

Communion

Isaiah 55:1-9;

Psalm 63:1-8;

1 Corinthians 10:1-13;

Luke 13:1-9

Sunday, February 7th



Our youth will be collecting donations in soup pots following the morning service.

Sunday, February 14th

Mardi Gras

Pancake Brunch

11:15 a.m.

Come join the fun!

(A Middle School Fundraiser)

Ash Wednesday Worship

February 17th

6:00 p.m.



(Please read the article on page 3 for more information.)

Saturday,

March 6th

Scrapbook Event

Crop 'til You Drop

A community wide Scrapbooking Event will be held in Fellowship Hall on March 6th from 9:00 – 8:00 p.m. Organize your photos into a memory album and make all your holiday cards!

(More details on Page 5)

Laity Sunday

Laity Sunday is the first Sunday in March, the 7th. See Diaconate report on page 5 for additional information.

WHAT'S NEW?

WINTER-SPRING BOOK STUDY

Beginning February 14, Pastor Michael will be leading an eight week book discussion in the Trinity House at 7:00 PM. The book, *Unbinding the Gospel: Real Life Evangelism*, was written by Martha Grace Reese. While most church people would rather go for a root canal than talk about evangelism, this class promises to deepen your own faith and help you learn to talk about it in nonthreatening ways. The book is based on Reese's research project funded by the Lily Endowment. The author studied hundreds of mainline congregations that are growing and discovered that evangelism emerges from a trinity of relationships: with God, within the congregation, with people outside the church whose lives are not centered in Christ.

John Thomas, former General Minister and President of the United Church of Christ, said "Martha Grace Reese gently but persistently lures the Mainline back to the ministry of evangelism that is the heart of the church.... the *Unbinding the Gospel Series* can convert even the most 'evangelism-cautious' Christians into eager disciples who love others enough to tell them why Jesus is the Answer."

If you would like to participate in the book study, please let Pastor Michael know by February 7 so that he can order a copy of the book for you. Even if you have a copy of the book already and would like to join the class, let Pastor Michael know you will be attending. Please make a commitment to attend each session.

A NOTE FROM THE PASTOR

The season of Lent is an opportunity to take a look at our lives and make an honest appraisal of our weaknesses in the light of God's grace. During this time of intimate and compassionate self reflection, we are invited to make a deeper commitment to live and to be more like Jesus. It is a time to repent from the things that we have done or left undone, to forgive others for the perceived harm they have done to us, and to let go of grudges that keep us separated from others.

Ash Wednesday is the first day of the Season of Lent. The symbol of ashes has long been used as an expression of grief and sorrow for sin — all those things in ourselves and our society that cause hurt and sadness in our world. Sin is what happens when we separate ourselves from God and each other. Ashes remind us of our humanity: that we are born, we live our lives, and then we die. Ashes remind us that we are made of the same stuff as all the creatures of this earth. Finally, ashes are also a sign of new life emerging from the past — of forgiveness, blessing and transformation. It is a well-known fact among gardeners that ashes have a wonderful fertilizing effect upon the ground.

We don't seem to mind TV ads that tell us we are too frumpy or not pretty enough, and that we could be thinner or prettier if we just bought the product they are selling. But try telling someone they are a sinner and need to repent and we are likely to get a door slammed in our face.

All of us, unfortunately, are sinners in need of forgiveness. We harm and betray others, especially those whom we are close to, nearly every day. With our words or actions, we step on toes, harm relationships, and leave deep scars that can take years to heal. The season of Lent is a time to look at our own brokenness, repent, and to correct the harm we have done to others and to God. Because of our own pride, many of us will not even begin the journey.

If we have the courage to take the Lenten journey to the cross, there are two things we should consider doing on our wilderness trek. The first is to give something up, biblically referred to as fasting. To fast is to give up something we enjoy and to spend that time in prayer. Maybe we watch less television, abstain from fast food, or give up a meal and devote the time to being of service to others and to God.

A second task that we could do on our journey is to take on a spiritual discipline, such as reading one of the gospels so as to enrich our walk with Jesus. Mending broken fences and building stronger relationships is also a spiritual discipline. How many grudges could we let go of as we follow Christ to Jerusalem?

May each of us find a way to keep the season of Lent holy. Let's all set aside some time to make our life an offering to God, who is willing to accept us as we are, and willing to help us to become all that He created us to be.

Pastor Michael

FUNDRAISING FOR HAITI & LOCAL HOMELESS

Thanks to your generosity, we have received **\$1735** for Haiti relief at worship on Jan. 17 and 24. One Great Hour of Sharing and Haiti Earthquake Relief funds are being used to help with basic humanitarian relief in providing temporary shelter, food and health assistance. Funds are also being used to provide water and sanitation engineers, and equipment to construct water purification systems. Resources for building latrines are also being provided, as the sanitation situation is critical.

The UCC will be supporting communities in the long struggle to rebuild from this disaster — the worst earthquake to strike Haiti in 200 years. All--100%--of gifts received for UCC Haiti Earthquake relief will be used for relief and rehabilitation

initiatives. The administrative costs related to receiving and processing gifts is covered by UCC members' generous contributions to Our Churches' Wider Mission.

January 31, we will hear from local organizations who are working to end homelessness in our state. Guest speakers include Ann Faust, Patti Vassia, and Lydia Brewster, as well as one or two individuals who have overcome homelessness. The service will be led by our youth, who braved the cold for one night to experience a small glimpse of being homeless.

You can participate by bringing blankets, warm clothes, coats, toiletries, nonperishable foods, and money which will be given to the organizations that work with the area's homeless. And invite a friend so that they can see that we are a church filled with love and compassion.

Pastor Michael



When you are hospitalized, you or your family members should notify the church as soon as possible. Upon admission to the hospital, you will be asked if you desire to have your religious affiliation as part of your medical record, and for permission to make your name available to clergy. Please state both your denomination and church name.

CHURCH FAMILY NEWS

We ask that you remember in your prayers **Justin Ruty** and those on the school bus crash Jan. 9, **Martha Halligan, John McCormick, Janice McCormick, Carroll Kann**, former conference minister and his wife **Joyce, Joan Rigoulot, Ed Rigoulot, Peg Corcoran, Scott, Carrie, Carol, Michael Zimmerman, Ella Christianson, Matt Looney, the Berry family, Rhonda Gardner, Andrew Purdy, Rev. Davida Crabtree, Rev. M. J. Hinchliff, Rena, Robyn Sparks, Peg Widegren** and **Jackie Anderson**.

Please let us know if someone in your family or within our congregation has something special to celebrate so we may include it in our "Family News" section.

Visitation



If you would like to receive a visit from the pastor or know of someone who is in need, please contact the church office or sign up in the church vestibule. If you are signing up a friend, please make sure they are aware they will be receiving a visit before you sign them up.

Offering Envelopes: If you are in need of offering envelopes, please let Patty Blodgett know (860-663-1033).

Church/Activity Cancellations With the threat of bad weather, there may be need to cancel church activities or worship. Please tune in to WFSB TV (CBS, channel 3) in Hartford or WTIC (1080 AM) on your radio for announcements.



February 17th
6:00 p.m.

On February 17th, at 6:00 we will have a service to begin the Lenten season. The service will feature singing, prayer, and the imposition of ashes (for those desiring to participate in that ritual). The service will be child friendly and parents are encouraged to have their children participate. As you begin your Lenten discipline this year, let it begin with this special worship.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

The following children and youth will be celebrating a birthday this month:

Jennifer Vaccaro	February 1
Andrew Purdy	February 7
Katherine Dole	February 10
Ben Steinhelper	February 17
Emily Hotkowski	February 26

THANK YOU'S

FROM THE CONNECTION

Thank you for your \$200 donation to The Connection Fund, Inc., a non-profit human service and community development agency serving individuals and families throughout Middlesex County and Connecticut since 1972... We encourage you to see your investment in action by visiting a local program. Contact Michael Woolworth at 860-343-5500, ext. 2115 to arrange a personal visit at your convenience...The Connection is transforming the lives of our neighbors in need through supportive housing, behavioral health, community justice, and women and children's programs.

FROM YOUTH AND FAMILY SERVICES OF HADDAM-KILLINGWORTH

Thank you so much for all of your donations for our Holiday Giving Program. As you may know the Holiday Giving program helps families in the Haddam and Killingworth communities that are going through difficult times. Your donations are greatly appreciated by all.

FROM THE MERCY HOUSING AND SHELTER CORP.

On behalf of our Board of Trustees, our staff, and the clients we serve, thank you and your congregation for your generous contribution of \$200. During this holiday season, our clients have so much to be thankful for...the clients we wrote about in our recent holiday appeal letter have improved their lives because of the service that Mercy House and Shelter Corp is able to offer. And we are able to offer those services because of you.

FROM THE CHILDREN'S HOME IN CROMWELL

Thank you so much for your gift of \$150 to the Children's Home. This time of year is very special for our young people as they experience the holiday traditions that many of us hold dear. The difference is that many will be experiencing the holidays in a whole new way for them: in peace and love, laughter and plenty. These young people will have better holidays because you have opened your hearts to them.

FROM NEW HORIZONS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SERVICES

We would like to express our sincere thanks for your generous donation of \$200 to New Horizons...As the only domestic violence program in Middlesex County, along with our Shoreline office, we serve hundreds of survivors and their children every year and provide essential resources for these individuals during a time of dire need in their lives.

FROM READ TO GROW, INC On behalf of Read to Grow, I would like to extend our appreciation to the First Congregational Church of Haddam for collecting and donating 25 books to Read to Grow. The books are wonderful and will delight the many children who receive them...Thank you for making a difference in the lives of children in Connecticut.

FROM THE SALVATION ARMY

I write to express my gratitude for your gift of \$200 to The Salvation Army. Thank you for doing even more than before through your gift to us. Your extremely generous and kind heart is such a blessing for so many in our community.

The 3rd ANNUAL SCRAPBOOK EVENT
At FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF HADDAM...

is being held on **Saturday March 6th** in the FCCH Fellowship Hall to benefit our Christian Ed. program. Work on a photo memory album or create some lovely greeting cards! Consultants from Stampin' Up and Creative Memories will be on hand to assist you and lead paper craft workshops.

Two sessions are offered; the first from **8:00am - 2:00**, and second from **2:00pm - 8:00**. Meals included. **Reserve your seat now!** Payment is due by March 1st; \$25.00 for either session or \$40.00 for the entire event. Please include contact information with your check noting "scrapbook event" made payable to FCCH, 905 Saybrook Rd., PO Box 215, Haddam, CT 06438. Call 345-8954 with questions.

Diaconate

Flowers A new sign up calendar for 2010 is now set up in the vestibule. If you would like to celebrate a special occasion please sign up. Thank you to Laurie Malone for all the work in organizing Sunday flowers.

Ash Wednesday Preparations are being made for our Ash Wednesday Service at 6:00 PM on February 17th. Please join us.

Caring Connection If you are interested in helping prepare a meal, or delivering a meal please let Kristin Battistoni (Kristin.battistoni@att.net) know. This program is available to all members of the congregation, if you would like a meal delivered, please talk to Pastor Michael or Kristin. Also, please let us know if someone you know would like a meal delivered.

Visitation If you would like to receive a visit from the pastor or know of someone who is in need, please contact the church office or sign up in the church vestibule. If you are signing up a friend, please make sure they are aware they will be receiving a visit before you sign them up.

New Directory Our new directory is up and running! The link is available on our church website. If you do not have a password please log on and sign up. You cannot access the directory without a password. We can change your picture if you do not like the one provided. Also, please check all your contact information to make sure it is up to date. In case you need it, our website is www.haddamconqchurch.org.

Large Print Bulletins Did you forget your glasses? Large print bulletins as well as large print bibles are available. If you would like large copies of hymns, please let us know. Ask a deacon for a copy if you are interested.

Lights If you are the last one in church please make sure all the lights are off completely. Some lights are on a dimmer and need to be "clicked" off.

Laity Sunday Please watch the bulletin for opportunities to participate in the service on March 7th. If you are interested in helping in any manner, please contact Kristin Battistoni 860-345-3783.

Christian Education



All-You-Can-Eat Mardi Gras Pancake Brunch

Sunday, February 14th
11:15 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Tickets will be sold in advance and at the door.
\$5.00 adults, \$3.00 children
A Middle School Youth Group fundraiser



Rotation Model Sunday School

On February 21st, the children will start the Sunday School rotation, ***Journey to the Cross***. During this rotation series, the children will participate in the following workshops: Art, Cooking, Video, Science, and Bible Skills & Games. **Teachers are still needed for this rotation, so please see the sign-up sheet located in Fellowship Hall if you are able to volunteer.**

Our children support *Heifer International*

2009 Sunday school Offering total: **\$418.85**

Each Sunday, an offering is collected at the beginning of Sunday school classes. Last year, the students donated \$418.85 which went toward helping support Heifer International.

The money will be used to purchase

- 2 goats
- 1 trio of rabbits
- 1 trio of geese
- 1 bundle of trees



The church would like to thank all our children and youth for bringing in an offering each Sunday. Your donation, no matter how small, can make a difference.

(If you are in need of more **offering envelopes**, there are extras in the church vestibule.)

Christian Education



Souper Bowl of Caring *Sunday, February 7, 2010*

Our youth will be joining young people throughout the country in collecting money in soup pots on Super Bowl Sunday. The Souper Bowl of Caring is a simple effort to “love the Lord our God...and love our neighbors”. The money collected will be donated to the St. Vincent DePaul Soup Kitchen in Middletown.

The Middle School Youth Group will also be doing a service blitz at St. Vincent DePaul Soup Kitchen on February 6th as part of this nation-wide program.



Silver Lake Conference Center Summer Camp Registration now open!

Silver Lake, located in Sharon, CT, is a camp ministry run by the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ. It has been offering top quality camping experiences with a faith component for children entering grades 4 through 12 for many years. Registration information is posted on the CE bulletin board in Fellowship Hall and on the Connecticut Conference website, www.ctucc.org.

New England Regional Youth Event: “Inside Out, Outside In” Conference Boston University June 24 – 27, 2010

Are you a high school aged UCC youth? Then save the date for the 2010 New England Regional United Church of Christ Youth Event. Join us to explore "Inside Out, Outside In: Finding Our Way in God's World."

This event is for those who will be entering 9th grade in the fall of 2010 through those who graduate in June 2010.

The CE committee will be having a Pasta Dinner fundraiser on March 27th to help send youth to the Conference. Additional scholarship money is also available.

If any youth are interested in attending, please see Pastor Michael or Nancy Soneson.

Christian Education

Confirmation Class

The Confirmation class will meet at the Higganum Church Feb 7. Please read "The Story of the United Church of Christ" before class.

On February 28 we will meet at the Haddam Church. Please read the chapter "The United Church Statement of Faith" before class.

Middle School Youth Group February Activities

- February 6 Service Blitz at St. Vincent DePaul Soup Kitchen, 11:30 – 1 pm
- February 7 Souper Bowl of Caring collection
- February 14 Mardi Gras Pancake Brunch Fundraiser, 11:15 a.m. -1:00 p.m.
- February 28 Meeting, Killingworth, 4 – 5:30 pm

CE Upcoming Events

- March 6 Scrapbooking Event, Contact Cherylann Hunt for information
- March 27 Pasta Dinner Youth Fundraiser

**Reminder: Next CE Meeting is scheduled for February 7th
at 9:00 a.m. in the Lewis House**

**DEADLINE FOR THE MARCH
NEWSLETTER IS FEB. 17**