

Pastor's Letter of the Week



March 28, 2017

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Our Vision

Praising God and
meeting
the needs of people
through
worship, study,
outreach

PASTOR'S NOTE

THE SHACK

I don't normally recommend movies, especially religious movies. I find that they often treat complex human dilemmas very simplistically. In fact, I took my confirmation class to see "The Shack" this past Sunday with some hesitancy, even though a few people I respect had recommended it. I absolutely loved it. It isn't a movie for children to see because it deals with a horrible and tragic subject, but it handles it well. You may not agree with everything in the movie or you may not like it. That's why I don't like to recommend things. But I couldn't help but recommend this.

Why? There are many factors. But one of the most important is that it presents a view of God that has been my experience all my life. And it answers questions we often ask about God in, I believe, some very grow up ways.

If you go, make sure you bring some tissues. There were few dry eyes in the theater on Sunday.

WHAT'S COMING UP

LENTEN FISH DINNER THIS FRIDAY

During Lent, First Congregational Church has a fish dinner every Friday night from 4:30 PM to 7:30 PM. This has to be the most fun fundraiser the church does all year. It's a great place for new

and fellowship,
in the name of
Jesus Christ.

members to get to know older ones and vice-versa.

First and foremost, we need your support in coming out and eating. Don't worry if your kids don't like fish; they also serve hot dogs for the kids, as well as other dishes like shrimp or crab cakes. Also, there are special prices for children so a larger family doesn't break the bank. There is something for everyone.

Second of all, we need your help. We need help with waiters, servers, cooks, and counters. The more the merrier. Usually, you serve one shift or the other, from 4:30 PM-6:00 PM or 6:00 PM-7:30 PM. If you can volunteer, just respond to this email and we will get you in touch with the right person.

WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU ALL!

BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION MAGIC SHOW

[Magic Show March 31](#)

WEEKLY LENTEN PRAYER SERVICE

Every Tuesday during the season of Lent, we are going to have a brief time of prayer, scripture reading, and communion at 7:00 PM.

The service is for those who need a little boost during the week.

This service will run no longer than a half an hour and we will meet in the Pastor's Parlor to start. If you could use a little push in your spiritual life during the season of Lent, then please join us at 7:00 PM.

DAILY LENTEN DISCIPLINES

I hope all of you have received your yellow Lenten Envelopes. If you notice, there is a prayer written on the back of each envelope.

All these prayers were either compiled or written by Mr. Walt Dunbar. They are short, succinct, to the point, and are a wonderful way to point each day in a spiritual direction. My hope is that you will use these envelopes by daily saying the prayer found for each day of the week, and then placing an offering in the envelope. We hope to take up these envelopes on Easter.

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT CONCERNING OUR ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY, MRS. SANDY O'NEILL

Sandy O'Neill, our church administrator, had surgery on March 1

for diverticulitis. She will be out of commission for the month of March. During that time, the office hours will be reduced and changed to 10:00 AM to 1:30 PM, Monday through Thursday. The office will continue to be closed on Fridays until the end of March. Miss Allison Fay has agreed to work in the office during that time.

We are so grateful to have her joining us during those hours. Our main concern is that Sandy has a successful surgery and can recuperate without any complications. Keep this wonderful person in your prayers.

VISITING SHIRLEY PORTER

As many of you know, Shirley Porter fell and broke her hip a couple of weeks ago. She had surgery and is now in rehabilitation at Lord Chamberlain. At first, she was in a lot of pain and wasn't up for visits. Shirley is now feeling much better and would welcome a visit or a call. If you do plan on visiting, please call first. Shirley's number is 203-375-5894, ext 291.

75TH ANNUAL PALM SUNDAY CONCERT

The 75th Annual Palm Sunday concert will be held on Sunday, April 9 at 4:00 PM in the sanctuary. Please join us for this wonderful afternoon of music.

[*Palm Sunday poster*](#)

COME TO FRANCE WITH US

If you would like to go with our group to France next September, this is the time to let Meg know!

We have a nice group going, but we do still have a few spots left.

This is a trip of a lifetime!

If you are interested, talk to Meg and give her the reservation form and deposit as soon as possible.

Paper copies of the brochure are available at church or

Meg can email you an electronic copy.

Invite your relatives, friends or neighbors!



WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW

BIBLE STUDY

Every Wednesday at 10:00 AM, there is a Bible study led by Mrs. Bessie Burton. Right now, they are studying different spiritual practices to help you grow in your relationship with God. The study takes place in the Board Room in Upper Packard Hall. People taking part in the group are at all levels of Bible knowledge. You don't need to know the Bible in order to come. In fact, that's why you should come. We can always learn a lot more.

If you are interested in an evening Bible Study, please see Bessie Burton after church. Thank you.

LORD'S KITCHEN

As part of our participation with the Lord's Kitchen, we are accepting donations for toiletries to be distributed during our turn at serving meals. We are looking for things like shampoo, soap, toothpaste, toothbrushes, deodorant, tissues, and toilet paper. There will be a donation box in the Narthex. If you have any questions, you can call Jean Martire at 203-876-9390.

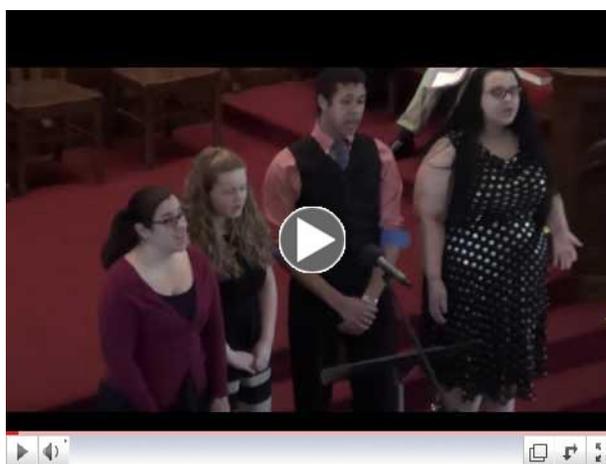
WHAT JUST HAPPENED

CHILDREN'S SUNDAY









Sunday School Alumni sing
"All Good Gifts"

PONDERINGS

After this past Sunday and the wonderful job our teachers, directors, and Sunday School leaders did in leading our worship service, I couldn't help but think of some of the words from Psalm 78.

1. Give ear. O my people, to my teaching. Incline your ears to the words of my mouth.
2. I will open my mouth in a parable. I will utter sayings from of old.
3. things that we have heard and known, that our ancestors have told us.
4. We will not hide them from our children; we will tell the coming generation of the glorious deeds of the Lord, and his might, and the wonders that he has done.
5. He established a decree in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our ancestors to teach to their children.
6. that the next generation might know them, the children yet unborn, and rise up and tell their children

7. so that we should set our hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments.

SERMONS ON OUR WEBSITE

If you're interested in hearing sermons from last week's service, or sermons from the last month, you can find them at our website, firstchurchstratford.org.

IN NEED OF PRAYER



[April 2 Prayer List](#)

QUICK LINKS

Our website: www.firstchurchstratford.org

UCC website: www.ucc.org

Connecticut Conference website: www.ctucc.org

For the March Courier: Go to the church website

JOKE OF THE WEEK

A kindergarten teacher gave her class a "show and tell" assignment of bringing something to represent their religion.

The first boy got in front of the class and said, "My name is Benjamin and I am Jewish and this is the Star of David."

The second boy got in front of the class and said, "My name is Mary and I am Catholic and this is the Crucifix."

The third boy got in front of the class and said, "My name is Tommy and I am Baptist and this is a casserole."

Calendar

March 31, 2017 **Lenten Fish Fry 4:30 PM-7:00 PM**
Magic Show 7:00 PM-7:40 PM

April 2, 2017 **Morning Worship and Sunday School 10:00 AM**
Fellowship Coffee Hour 11:15 AM
Senior Pilgrim Fellowship 5:00 PM-7:00 PM

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