

Exciting Church Year Begins! RALLY SUNDAY IS SEPTEMBER 12

Traditional services: 8:00, 9:15 and 11:00 a.m.

Wind contemporary service: 11:00 a.m.

The new Church School year starts—9:15 and 11:00 a.m. (SEE PAGE 2)

Rally Sunday Picnic on our lawn—1:00 to 4:00 p.m. (SEE PAGE 2)



FROM THE SENIOR MINISTER

How Great Is Our God Sermon Series Begins

DURING MY SOPHOMORE YEAR of college I was privileged to go to Kenya. There, in the Great Rift Valley, I saw the most amazing display of stars. I still remember

staring and thanking God for His beauty on display.

The words that still resonate with me are the words of David in Psalm 8:1, “**O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is Your Name in all the earth! You have set Your glory above the heavens.**” I still don’t know how people can look at creation and not think there is a Creator. And not just a Creator, a great and loving God!

When David looked at the stars and all of creation, a question came to his mind. In some ways, his question is similar to the question that God asked the Israelites through Isaiah in 40:25-26 when He said, “**To whom then will you compare Me, that I should be like him? says the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high and see: who created these? He who brings out their host by number, calling them all by name, by the greatness of His might, and because He is strong in power not one is missing.**” God is saying through creation—*I am great; no one can compare to Me.*

The question that David had was similar and went something like, “God is so amazing and so great, why would He even care about me? I am so small in comparison to all of the greatness

of God that is on display.” David’s words are more beautiful, poetic, and to the point in Psalm 8:3-4: “**When I look at Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars,**

which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?”

It’s true. When I was in Kenya and I looked at all the stars in the heavens and realized the greatness of God, I was truly humbled. I felt very small.

You know, as I think about that last sentence I wrote, I think to myself, what’s wrong with being overwhelmed by God’s greatness? Nothing. We should feel humbled. We should feel small. God is greater than we can ever imagine.

Yet, how often do we put God in a box that we can carry around and not allow Him to engage every aspect of our life? How often do we limit His abilities by not trusting in Him? How often do we look for sources of motivation and encouragement other than God?

I don’t know about you, but I want to be truly overwhelmed. I want to feel small. I want the greatness of God to enlarge my

vision. I want God’s greatness to push me to follow Him.

I don’t want a small God, I want the great God that He is.

How about you?

May God bless you with His wonderful Presence,

Pastor Deryk

Deryk Richenburg

FIVE-WEEK SERMON SERIES

How Great Is Our God

All Four Services Each Sunday

Who Do You See?

SEPTEMBER 12 — 1 Samuel 17

Message by Deryk Richenburg

The Little Things

SEPTEMBER 19 — Psalm 146

Message by Deryk Richenburg

A Great Vision

SEPTEMBER 26 — Ezekiel 37:1-14

Message by Deryk Richenburg

Family Sunday

An Ever-Present Help

OCTOBER 3 — Psalm 46

Message by Tessa Afshar

A Great God to Follow

OCTOBER 10 — Matthew 8:18-27

Message by Deryk Richenburg

Our Regular Schedule Resumes

Staff and other church leaders have been preparing for another exciting year at First Church! On **Sunday, September 12**, we return to our regular schedule, offering three traditional services in the Meetinghouse, at 8:00, 9:15, and 11:00 a.m., and the Wind contemporary service in Keith Jones Hall, at 11:00 a.m.

Rally Sunday Picnic — All Are Invited!

The entire church family is invited to the Rally Sunday Picnic! Join us on **Sunday, September 12**, from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m., right here at First Church. Hamburgers, hot dogs, and beverages will be provided. Please bring a salad, side dish, or dessert to share (we will eat at 1:30) and a picnic blanket or chairs. Games will be provided for all ages! If you're reading this in time, you may call Children's and Family Ministries to let us know you're coming, at 860-529-1575, ext. 208. (There is no rain date.)

A Meaningful Ministry

Searching for a new ministry opportunity in our church? There will be a cost, you know, but there will also be great rewards. **Stephen Ministry** is our congregation's one-on-one caring ministry. We are looking for members who are willing to pay the

Commitment
Of
Self and
Time

and become Stephen Ministers, remembering that the blessings will far outweigh the cost! To find out more about this vital ministry and when our next class will start, please contact **Wayne Luman** at 860-529-1575, ext. 203, or waynel@firstchurch.org.

The Church Library Awaits You

Our **Mildred Edwards Jones Library and Resource Center** offers a wide variety of books, magazines, and recordings, along with an inviting children's room. Located in the Marsh Building (the last room on the right as you head toward the Church Parlor), the library is open and staffed on **Sundays** after each worship service and on **Wednesdays** during evening activities.



Beauty for Ashes

By Betty and Bruce Woodward

IN A TIME OF PAIN and confusion, we were blessed over and over again by our First Church family. Prayer, phone calls, visits, food and clothing all carried us when we lost our home to a disastrous fire on the morning of December 31, 2008.

The love of God that was poured out on us during the days following the fire will live with us forever. Even before the fire trucks arrived that snowy morning, our next-door neighbor was at our side. At the firemen's request, she whisked us away to her home. She and her husband took us wherever we needed to go, and, with another couple, helped us find temporary housing. They truly made us part of their home life. They welcomed whoever appeared at their doorstep during our twelve-day stay with them. They were truly in awe of the love and caring showed by our church family. In fact, this led to her joining the next *Alpha* class and attending First Church services.

It is difficult to find words to express our gratitude to our beautiful church family for all that has been done for us. Their delicious

food nourished us, calls and visits encouraged and counseled us, clothing kept us warm. But, most of all, the many prayers sustained us. Many even cried with us.

How can we ever thank our precious church family except to thank God for them? This has truly been a living demonstration of Christian stewardship and love in its finest form.

INTERVIEW

In a subsequent discussion with a member of the Stewardship Team, Bruce and Betty specifically mentioned a First Church couple who came with bundles of clothes they had gathered, put their arms around them, and cried and prayed with them. They spoke of those who spent hours with the firemen, helping to retrieve valuables and papers that were not destroyed, and those who gave the Woodwards transportation (they are severely vision-impaired). And they described how the plea from Caring Ministries resulted in an unforgettable outpouring of love, concern, and true Christian stewardship from countless others.

Betty and Bruce say that through this experience "we learned in a new way that God is always present, and through His people He truly 'gives beauty for ashes.'"

Church School Kickoff



Parents! The new Church School year starts on **Sunday, September 12**, at 9:15 and 11:00 a.m. Classes are offered for children from age 3 through Grade 6. The **Crib Room** is staffed during both services with loving caregivers for infants up to 18 months. The **Toddler Room** is where two-year-olds enjoy playing, praying, and learning simple Bible truths.

If you have not registered your child in a previous year, stop by the Children's Ministries info table in the Wells Area on that day to complete a form. A listing of classroom locations will be available. For those with changes from last year, teachers will provide forms in the classrooms.

This Ministry Needs Called Workers!

There are several areas still available to serve children directly or in supportive roles. **Beginning September 12** and continuing through the school year, time commitments range from weekly to monthly, or "as needed" for special events or projects. **Come! Serve with a team that enjoys growing together as we serve our children and families.** Here are just some of the many opportunities for service in this life-changing ministry:

- **Church School** — Work with a specific age group, from age 3 through Grade 6.
- **Wednesday evenings** — Work two hours with boys and girls in Grades 1 through 5.
- **Crib Room or Toddler Room** — Work one Sunday a month.
- **Substitute helper** — Work once a month in a classroom or childcare area.
- **Childcare** — Once weekly or monthly.

Programs for Children

THE CRIB AND TODDLER ROOMS are staffed with loving caregivers during the 9:15 and 11:00 a.m. worship services.

CHURCH SCHOOL classes are offered at 9:15 and 11:00 on Sunday mornings for children age 3 through Grade 6.

■ **On Family Sundays**, children (grades 1–6) attending the 9:15 and 11:00 classes will go directly to the worship service with their parents and be dismissed to a large-group program following the Children's Time. The first Family Sunday is **September 26**.

FAST (Fifth And Sixth Together)

Children in grades 5 and 6 (and sometimes their families), along with their Church School teachers, come together at least once a month outside of the classroom to serve, play or study together as a group. Activities include bike rides, slot car racing, retreats, picnics, etc. **FAST** gives our young people an opportunity to fellowship and grow as Christians in many different settings throughout the year. The first event will be in **October**. Watch for details! For more information, call 529-1575, ext. 206.

Programs for Youth

Associate Minister Todd Willard — 860-529-1575, ext. 205

Marcia McCann, Special Events Coordinator — ext. 208

Debbie Hertle, Administrative Assistant — ext. 303

THE GATHERING is a weekly time for all students in Grades 7 through 12 to come together for worship, fellowship, story sharing, and teaching. We will meet **Sunday mornings**, from 10:45 to 11:15, in the Youth Room, starting **September 19**. Following **The Gathering**, students will be released to their classes: Grades 7 & 8 go to their **Middle School class**, except those registered for **Collision**; and Grades 9-12 go to **11-Spot**.

11-SPOT — On **Sunday mornings** from 11:15 to 12:15, all high school students are invited to join us in the Youth Room for a time of quality conversation as we share the journey of following Jesus with one another. This group is led by **Erik and Sarah Anderson**. We will begin on **September 12**.

“COLLISION” CONFIRMATION CLASS begins **Sunday, September 12**, during the 11:00 service, in the Worship Room, and is open to all students in Grade 8 and above who are interested in becoming members of our church or who simply have questions they would like some help wrestling with. To register for this group contact Youth Ministries. *Parents are encouraged to attend this first session for information on the year ahead.*

MIDDLE SCHOOL P.F. — All students in Grades 6-8 are invited to join us in the Youth Room **Wednesday nights**, 6:30 to 8:00 p.m., for fun, fellowship, worship, and a time of teaching and conversation. Our first gathering will be on **September 15**.

REIGN is a group of **high school girls** and adult leaders who gather on the **second Tuesday** of each month, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., **beginning September 14**. Join us for dinner and discussions on discipleship at **Lisa Peery's** house—298 Hartford Avenue, Wethersfield—or call her at 860-757-3853.

THE WAY — On **Friday, September 17**, from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m., we will hold our first gathering of **The Way**. This is a time when high school students and adult leaders come together to celebrate what Jesus is doing in our lives and to listen as He draws us deeper in discipleship. We will be meeting at the church. If you have any questions regarding this gathering, or would like to become involved in a leadership role, please contact Youth Ministries.

Kids' Clubs Begin Sept. 22

Wednesdays, 6:30 to 8:00 p.m.

CHRISTIAN SERVICE BRIGADE — Boys in Grades 1 through 5, together with their dads or other adult mentors, get to have fun, learn about God's creation and grow closer to Him and each other. They do this through games, crafts, Scripture memorization, and stories. For more info or to volunteer your time, contact **Jim Ritter** at 860-571-0503 or (cell) 860-841-8399, or **Bruce Harrison** at 860-436-2076. You may also visit www.csbministries.org.

PIONEER GIRLS — This Christian ministry helps **girls in Grades 1 through 5** have fun, learn new skills, build relationships, study the Bible, earn badges, and, ultimately, learn to live for Christ! Pioneer Clubs serve over 3,000 churches. We meet in the lower level of the Marsh Building. For more information about this group, call **Phoebe Ostergren** at 860-571-8748.

Other Opportunities

NURSERY SCHOOL — We offer classes for children who are two years nine months through five years old. Included in our curriculum are chapel and music & movement sessions. In addition, children can attend themed extended sessions after morning classroom activities. Our lunch bunch sessions are offered five days a week. We also offer early-morning drop-off. All are invited to an **OPEN HOUSE** in Keith Jones Hall on **Thursday, September 9**, at 7:00 p.m. To request a school tour, registration materials or any other info, please call Director **Joan Hines** at 860-529-1575, ext. 235, or visit the church website at www.firstchurch.org.

MOPs (Mothers Of Preschoolers) will begin meeting on **Thursday, October 7**, 9:15 to 11:15 a.m., in the Fireside Room. All moms of children up to age 5 are welcome for food, fun, and fellowship! Childcare is available with advance reservations; call **Debbie** at 860-529-1575, ext. 303. For more info about MOPs, or to register, contact **Maria Zematis** at mszematis@yahoo.com, or check wethersfieldmops.wordpress.com.

THE NOAH AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM of Hartford City Mission is looking for volunteers—seniors, students (college and high school) and others—to love, tutor, and play games with inner-city children (Grades 1 through 5) who need homework help and Jesus' love. *Only 18% of Hartford's third-graders read at grade level!* Come **once a week**—your choice, **Monday through Thursday**, 3:15 to 5:30 p.m.—or come just once and share a special skill or talent. It happens at **The Vine** (HCM's Ministry House), 280 Vine Street, Hartford. Please call **Amy Jarvis** at 860-246-0132 or visit www.hartfordcitymission.com.

Parenting Class

With Chip and Marla Darius

Back by popular demand, an interactive and instructional **parenting class** will be offered **Wednesday evenings**, 6:30 to 8:00 p.m., **beginning September 22**.

Whether you are a parent, grandparent, or one who loves and cares for children, this class is certain to inspire and encourage as you raise the next godly generation.

Class title and details will be announced. **Join us on the 22nd!** Chip and Marla Darius will again facilitate this valuable program. If you plan to attend, please call **Marcia** at 860-529-1575, ext. 208. Walk-ins are also welcome!

Adult Learning and Discipleship

SUNDAY MORNING CLASSES

Beginning September 12 unless otherwise noted.

GENESIS — This in-depth study of the Book of Genesis will be led by **Dr. Glenn Sunshine**. Although the class will go verse by verse through some of the most important and controversial passages in the Book, for many of the stories the focus will be on historical context, theological themes, and the role Genesis plays in laying the foundation for the rest of Scripture. This class meets in the Fireside Room from 9:15 to 10:30 a.m.

GREAT SERMONS OF THE WORLD — Many of the names of God, as found through Scripture, reveal different aspects of who God is and how He has revealed Himself in the world through time. Join **Greg and Ellen Gilson Voth** for a study based on the names and character of God. We meet weekly in the Morgan House Chestnut Room at 9:15 a.m., **September 19 through December 19**. All interested in group discussion in a spirit of community are welcome. For more information, call 860-563-7340 or email egvoth@snet.net.

COUPLES CLASS — *The Peacemaker*, by Ken Sande, gives practical biblical guidance for conflict resolution that takes you beyond resolving conflicts to true, life-changing reconciliation with family, coworkers, and fellow believers. This **eight-week DVD** series will allow you to experience the healing power of biblical peacemaking as you learn to apply scriptural principles to conflict in the world around you—and receive hope for relationships you thought were unsalvageable. Join us at 9:15 a.m. in the Morgan House Drawing Room. Call **Steve and Lisa Peery** at 860-757-3853 for details.

FAITHFUL FAMILIES is an open group that welcomes married or single parents of any age to join us in exploring God's Word together. Our study this fall is *Parenting with God's Word*. Spending time in prayer, study, and discussion, we share the challenges and joys of parenthood. Starting **September 19**, we meet every Sunday (except Family and Family Communion Sundays) at 9:15 a.m. in the Morgan House Birch Room. Join us whenever available. For more information, contact **Behn Sikora** at americanbehn@yahoo.com.

TUESDAY EVENING: ALPHA

THE ALPHA COURSE — Explore the Christian faith—and the meaning of life—in a relaxed setting, including dinner! Millions around the world have come to Christ through *Alpha* because it is intellectually rigorous, emotionally honest, and spiritually powerful. Guests really experience how great is the love the Father has lavished on us. *Please see page 5*.

WEDNESDAY CLASSES

SEEK GOD FIRST is the *new First Place 4 Health* Bible study for men and women seeking balanced living in four health areas: spiritual, mental, physical and emotional. Led by **Cindy McDowell** and **Greg and Bonnie Ryan**, the class meets from **September 8 through December 1**, 6:30 to 8:00 p.m., in Keith Jones Hall. *Even though the class has already begun, registrations will be accepted until September 16*. If interested, contact Cindy at cindy@encouragingwords.net or 860-257-WORD. Registration forms are available at the First Church Office; contact **Arlene** at 860-529-1575, ext. 211.

HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE — **Women**, please join us in the Fireside Room **Wednesday morning, September 15**, from 9:30 to 11:00, for this very special class (*one day; not a series*). We will learn (or refresh our learning of) the types, tools, and techniques of personal Bible study. Led by **Lisa Peery**, the class

will provide practical advice and encouragement for a lifetime with the living, active Word of God. Please bring a Bible and notepad. Register through **Arlene** at 860-529-1575, ext. 211; walk-ins also welcome! Questions? Call Lisa at 860-757-3853.

THE PATRIARCHS — **Women**, please join us Wednesday mornings, **beginning September 22**, from 9:15 to 11:00, for Beth Moore's biblical study *The Patriarchs: Encountering the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*. Full of twists and turns, ruin and redemption, revelation and mystery, this in-depth study of Genesis 12-50 will keep you captivated by the God who stars in it! This group will slow down the pace to allow for discussion, prayer, fellowship, and extra time for homework. For details, call facilitator **Laura Mayo** at 860-529-4447.

ANCHORING IN — **Women**, join us starting **Wednesday, September 22**, for a four-week series on the **greatness of God**, focusing on the same passage as that of the previous Sunday's sermon. Everything flows out of the greatness of God. We love Him and one another as a response to who He is. Each class will be led by a member of the Women's Ministries' Leadership Team and will meet in the Church Parlor from 9:30 to 11:15 a.m.

MEN'S PRAYER, LEVEL 1 — **Men**, this powerful course focuses on the healing ministry of Jesus and His Disciples, led by **Dave Lathrop** (860-436-2650) and assistant **Brian Clark** (860-298-8496), both graduates of Christian Healing Ministries' School of Healing Prayer and longtime members of our First Church Prayer Team; call them with any questions. This 13-week video series will give you the tools and practical experience to pray effectively for others. Class size is limited to 12; workbooks are \$16. We meet in the Morgan House Oak Room, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., from **September 8 through December 8**. To register, call **Suzanne Edgardo** at 860-529-1575, ext. 212.

OTHER DAYS

MEN'S MORNING BIBLE STUDY — Our current study, *Proverbs*, meets on **Tuesdays** in the Fireside Room and on **Thursdays** in Conference Room 1, from 6:45 to 8:00 a.m. Please join either gathering for an inspirational time of study, discussion and fellowship. Cost of the workbook is \$6. For more information, please call 860-529-1575, ext. 211.

SATURDAY MORNING MEN'S PRAYER BREAKFAST: All men are invited to gather in the Fireside Room **every Saturday**, from 7:30 to 9:00 a.m., for prayer, discussion of Scripture, fellowship, and a hearty breakfast. For more info, please call **Bud Reading** at 860-794-2733.

CONFERENCES

Our exciting **MEN'S ADVANCE—October 1-3**—will feature speaker **Rod Handley**, founder and president of the dynamic ministry *Character That Counts*, and cofounder of the worldwide *Teaching Guys Infinite Wisdom*. There is still time to register, but starting September 13, rates increase by \$25. Register on Sundays at the Men's Ministry table in the Wells Area, or mail or deliver your paid registration during the week. For details, contact **Bob Papertsian** at bobpapertsian@cox.net or **Arlene** in the church office at 860-529-1575, ext. 211.

FAMILYLIFE MARRIAGE CONFERENCE — **Couples**, this is your chance to get away for a **Weekend to Remember, October 15-17**, at the Hartford/Windsor Marriott Airport. This nationally acclaimed conference helps couples build oneness, rekindle romance, and inspire commitment. For details or to register online at our discounted group rate (\$159 per couple), go to www.familylife.com/groups/fccwethersfield, or contact **Steve and Lisa Peery** at 860-757-3853.

13th ANNUAL
ALBERT
SCHWEITZER
ORGAN FESTIVAL

Concert

FRIDAY, SEPT. 10, 7:30 PM
CHOIR AND CONCERT ORGANISTS



CHARLES
CALLAHAN



FREDERICK
HOHMAN



JOYCE
JONES

RECEPTION FOLLOWS • OFFERING RECEIVED • CHILDCARE

COMPETITION
SATURDAY, SEPT. 11 • With judges Callahan, Hohman and Jones
High School Division: 9 AM • Young Professional Division: 2 PM

SERVICES & MASTERCLASS
SUNDAY, SEPT. 12 • Finalists play at worship services
Services: 8, 9:15 & 11 AM • Masterclass & Awards: 1:30 PM

The exhilarating Friday night concert is a highlight of this nationally recognized festival, right here in our Meetinghouse—exquisite choral works, and individual performances by three legendary organists, who (on Saturday and Sunday) will also judge and teach our high school and young adult finalists from around the nation. For details, please visit www.firstchurch.org/asof.

Help for the Hurting

DIVORCE RECOVERY — First Church's **Divorce Recovery** seminar will be held on **Friday evening, September 10**, from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m., and **Saturday the 11th** from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The seminar fee of \$110 includes the program, workbook, continental breakfast, lunch, snacks, and an eight-week follow-up series held on **Wednesday nights** from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. Registration forms are available on the church website or in the Wells Area. For details, call 860-529-1575, ext. 213.

CELEBRATE RECOVERY — THE PURPOSES of our **Celebrate Recovery** ministry are to fellowship and celebrate God's healing power in our lives through the "eight recovery principles." This experience allows us to be changed! By working and applying these biblical principles, we begin to grow spiritually. We can become free from our addictive, compulsive, and dysfunctional behaviors. This freedom creates peace, serenity, joy, and—most importantly—a stronger personal relationship with God and others. As we progress through the program we discover our personal, loving and forgiving Higher Power—Jesus Christ, the one and only true Higher Power.

If you are longing for freedom and a new start in life, **Celebrate Recovery** offers simple steps to **freedom from life's hurts, habits, or hang-ups**. Why not take a chance for real change? Contact **Wayne Luman** (ext. 203) or **Eileen Murray** (ext. 210) in Caring Ministries, at 860-529-1575, or care@firstchurch.org.

GRIEF SHARE seminar/support group will begin meeting in the Morgan House on **October 4**, from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m., for **thirteen Mondays**. This biblical and Christ-centered program focuses on grief topics associated with the death of a loved one. The DVD seminar features nationally respected grief experts and real-life stories, followed by discussion. Past participants have told us how helpful the information and follow-up are.

Here you will find encouragement, comfort and help, and it is an opportunity to be around people who understand what you are feeling. The facilitator will be **Betty Metcalf**. Cost for the workbook is \$13. To register, or for details, please call Caring Ministries at 529-1575, ext. 210.

Life-Changing *Alpha* Course to Begin September 14!

Over 13 million people worldwide have attended an **Alpha** course, an opportunity to explore the meaning of life. The **Alpha** experience allows guests to explore the Christian faith in a relaxed, loving setting. We will provide a delicious sit-down meal for free to all our guests before watching a DVD exploring questions such as, "Does my life matter?" "What happens after I die?" "What relevance does Jesus have today?" "Why would a loving God allow the existence of hell?"

Then, during small-group time, guests have an opportunity to respond freely to what they heard. Many friendships are forged during **Alpha**, where everyone can be themselves and just be very honest. Research from the Barna Group in 2004 indicated that half of all attendees at an average Alpha course make a commitment or recommitment to Christ.

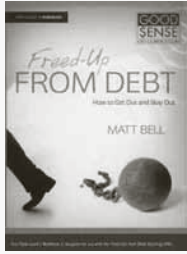
We still have limited space available for guests. We hope you will invite friends and neighbors who have questions about the validity of the Christian faith. We find an effective means of inviting is to ask your friends to come to the banquet on **Tuesday, September 14** (6:15 to 9:00 p.m.), and then they can decide whether they wish to continue with the course. If you have attended **Alpha** before, you can still attend—as long as you bring a guest with you! There are many

ways you can help us, from financial donations to helping us set up and clean up for the dinner. **Alpha** meets on **Tuesdays**, 6:15 to 9:00 p.m., starting **September 14** and concluding on **December 7**. Please call **Tessa** at 860-529-1575, ext. 202, for further info.



Members of our dedicated **Alpha Leadership Team** are (*standing*) Herb Symmes, Nick Frasco, Ericka Miskin, Bill Cookson, Walt Miskin, Tina Balmer, Heather Rosborough, Pam Salvatore, Terry Shook, (*seated*) Sheryl Montanari, Patty Chaffee, Patti Sicord, Bill Kimball, Kathy Hallett, (*not in photo*) Tessa Afshar, Judy Carson, Kathy Olson, Dennis Leghorn, Marcia McCann, and Paul McCann.

Freedom from Debt



More than ever before, many of us struggle with—and suffer from—the burden of financial debt, often for external reasons.

A practical and compelling two-part video series from Willow Creek—*Freed-Up from Debt: How to Get Out and Stay Out*—will be offered in Conference Room 1 on the **Wednesdays of September 15 and 22, 7:00 to 8:30 p.m.**, facilitated by **Anton Hertle** and **Steve Soderberg**.

You will receive a biblical perspective and a practical, seven-step strategy for getting out of debt and staying out, or for helping a friend or relative achieve those goals. There is a \$10 fee for materials (\$15 for two). Seating is limited! Free childcare is available. *Please register as soon as possible, through Marilyn at 860-529-1575, ext. 213.*

You and Pastor Deryk: Getting to Know Each Other



Once a month, our senior minister meets with a number of parishioners in a casual get-acquainted meeting, after the Sunday services have finished. Would you like to be among them?

There is a sign-up poster in the Wells Fellowship Area. If interested, please provide your name and telephone number. You will be called to reserve your spot at one of Pastor

Deryk's upcoming meetings this season. They are always fun, informative, and relationship-building!

Michelle Adams Steps Down; Eileen Murray Joins Staff



Our faithful friends **Michelle and Luke Adams** are literally pulling up anchor (to navigate the Intracoastal Waterway), and **Michelle** (*at left in photo*) has resigned her post as the Caring Ministries administrator. There was no problem Michelle wouldn't leap into to solve. Her cheerful personality, her always-ready-for-action attitude, and her great compassion and high energy made her a truly outstanding assistant and partner in ministry. She and Luke will both be greatly missed.

First Church member **Eileen Murray** (*at right*) has been called to fill this vital ministry position. Eileen is a mother and grandmother, and she served in hospitality and Sunday school teaching at her previous fellowship. At First Church, she has served in the Wind service for the past six-plus years, preparing the PowerPoint presentations. Eileen has a bachelor's degree from UConn, with concentration in Web design, and brings compassion combined with extraordinary abilities. Please welcome this gifted, godly woman whose heart is to serve our Lord in this ministry.

Brian Shea Leaves; Racquel Whipple Becomes Wind Worship Leader



Brian Shea's time with us as contemporary worship leader has been inspiring and fruitful, especially in the building up of our Wind service through his abundant gifts in music. He will be missed and we wish him the best.

Please heartily welcome **Racquel Rosser Whipple**, who will lead worship at Wind. Racquel had been a lead singer at Wind and has been our summer worship leader this year. Her recent concert in the Meetinghouse was exceedingly well received. She is a gifted performer and Christian recording artist with a heart for the Lord, eager to bless others with the talent she has been given. We are excited to see what God will do in her and in us.



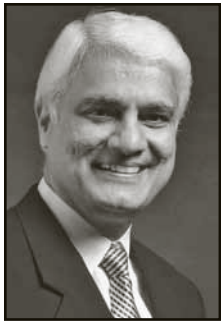
HOW DOES THE STAFF spend its lunch hour? Would you believe, reading the latest blockbuster from Moody Fiction? Pastor Tessa's irresistible *Pearl in the Sand* has just been released, and it's a gripping biblical romance novel already collecting rave reviews!

Pastor Todd thinks there should be a new sermon series entitled *Passion and the Pentateuch: A Biblical Theology of Romance* by Pastor Tessa.

Seriously, you won't want to miss Tessa's **BOOK SIGNING**, after each service on Sunday, September 19. Bring your own copy or purchase one at the signing!

THE 2010 EDWARDS PUBLIC FORUM

Ravi Zacharias At First Church!



On Saturday and Sunday evenings, October 9 and 10, we will welcome to the Meetinghouse one of the most prominent Christian spokespersons of our time, presented by our **Edwards Forums** committee.

He has appeared before such divergent venues as the Lenin Military Academy in Moscow, a World Evangelism Conference in Amsterdam, an opening Prayer Breakfast at the United Nations, and innumerable Christian conferences across the U.S. and around the world. He is highly sought after for

campus engagements at leading universities, and just prior to his arrival in Wethersfield he will be speaking at Yale and Wesleyan Universities.

At our First Church public forum, **Dr. Ravi Zacharias** will speak on the topic ***Christ, Christianity and the Culture of Our Time: Is Christianity Still Relevant?*** at 7:00 both evenings (Part 1 and Part 2). Following each talk there will be an opportunity for audience questions.

Dr. Zacharias is known to hundreds of thousands through his radio program "Let My People Think," heard in this area on WIHS-FM and WVNE-AM. He is also an international award-winning author. In his National Day of Prayer address in Washington, DC, in 2008, he told his audience, "You are not completely sovereign over yourself: there's a sovereign Power that arranges the threads, that brings these threads together if you will but respond to His nod." (His book *The Grand Weaver* will be discussed at our own Brown Baggers Book Club; see bottom of this page.) A large selection of his books will be available in the Wells Area on both nights of the Edwards Forum.

Because Dr. Zacharias proclaims a Christian worldview with great clarity and accessibility—punctuated with fascinating illustrations—this forum will provide an excellent opportunity to invite neighbors and friends.

Our speaker is expected to attract large numbers—from a wide area. Please pray for all aspects of this singular event in the life of First Church.

Be Enriched: Join a Growth Group!

■ Info in the Wells Area Sept. 12, 19, 26

DNA & Discipleship is the name of a groundbreaking churchwide thrust coming in October, which will unfold from the pulpit and from First Church Growth Groups. *DNA & Discipleship* growth groups will meet for eight weeks, beginning the **week of October 17**. First Church Growth Groups, each consisting of 10 to 12 members, meet regularly for about two hours, usually in participants' homes, for fellowship, Bible study, sharing and prayer.

Many First Church members and friends have already discovered the special vitality that belonging to a growth group brings into their lives. Growth groups have been described as an essential ingredient of vital, vibrant churches.

As Rick Warren said, "We were never meant to live out God's purposes in solitude." And from Philip Yancey, "Christianity is not purely intellectual, internal faith. It can only be lived in community." Indeed, First Church's new mission statement describes our congregation as *a community of Jesus followers who love God, love one another, and make disciples*.

On **September 12, 19 and 26**, visit the Growth Group information table in the Wells Fellowship Area. Members of the Growth Group team will be there to answer your questions. For details, please call **Arlene** at 860-529-1575, ext. 211, or contact Associate Minister **Michael McDowell** at ext. 201 or at michaelm@firstchurch.org.

Furthermore...

BROWN BAGGERS BOOK CLUB — On **Monday, September 13**, we will gather for a lively discussion of our summer reading, **Umberto Eco's** *The Name of the Rose*, a mystery novel set in an Italian monastery in 1327. All are welcome to attend, even if you have not yet read the book. So brown bag your dinner and plan to join us, in the Morgan House's Chestnut Room, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. (*This group normally meets on first Mondays.*)

The reading for our **October 4** gathering is *The Grand Weaver: How God Shapes Us Through the Events of Our Lives*, an illuminating and highly encouraging book by **Ravi Zacharias**. Just a few days later—on October 9 and 10—Dr. Zacharias will speak in our Meetinghouse! Questions? Call **Linda Papertsian** at 860-257-7566.

OUR 375th-ANNIVERSARY INTERVIEWS are available on high-quality DVD (\$10) through **Shepherd's Voice** or from the Sunday receptionist, or they may be viewed at www.firstchurch.org by clicking on the link at the bottom of our home page. These rare interviews feature several who have been key to the life of our church over the past 25 years.

ITEMS FOR AREA SHELTERS — Your donations of various goods are highly appreciated by both **St. Elizabeth House** (Wethersfield Avenue, Hartford) and **South Park Inn** (Main Street, Hartford). Use the **blue bin** in the Main Street entrance vestibule to leave contributions of hygiene items (shampoo, toothpaste, toothbrushes, soap, etc.) and small houseware items (glassware, dishes, towels, pillowcases, tablecloths, etc.). There is also a great need for men's shoes. No toys or other clothing

at this time, please. For more information, please call **Myra and Howard Miner** at 860-563-0943.

HATS FOR THE HOMELESS — **Women**, there is another way you can reach out to our homeless neighbors. Some of our church ladies have started a group knitting hats for homeless people in the greater Hartford area. *They hope to provide the local shelters with a hat for each resident for this winter.* For more information about this new ministry, please call **Betty Hartinger** at 860-571-8888.

COFFEE SERVERS NEEDED — Coffee servers are needed for the 9:15 and 11:00 worship services. Each volunteer works only once a month, after only one of the services. It's a fun way to meet people and meet a need at the same time! Another option is to be listed as a possible substitute. Call **Paula Johnston** at 860-529-4573.

BOOK OF LIFE

ENTERED ETERNAL LIFE

Stephen Plaag, May 27, 2010

Judy (Brooks) Fitzpatrick, July 6, 2010

Patricia (Carpenter) Savery, July 12, 2010

William R. Diehl, August 18, 2010

*Our Church unites
in an expression of
heartfelt sympathy
to their families.*

BAPTIZED

Chase Rocco Cassandra, son of John J. Jr.
and Heather (Stevenson) Cassandra, June
20, 2010

Luke Patrick Grandpré, son of James R. and
Justine (Coutu) Grandpré, June 20, 2010

UNITED IN MARRIAGE

Kevin Michael O'Shea and Dawn Louise
Skidgell, May 22, 2010

Justin Thomas Billard and Ellen Orine Small,
June 5, 2010

Michael Edward Bird and Amber Sue
Hatfield, June 19, 2010

Jeffrey Philip Heyer and Daniela Endara,
August 7, 2010

First Church

FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST IN WETHERSFIELD
CONGREGATIONAL

860-529-1575 • Fax: 860-721-7861
250 Main Street, Wethersfield, CT 06109
Website: www.firstchurch.org
Email: fcw@firstchurch.org

First Church on Facebook:

www.facebook.com/FirstChurchPage
www.facebook.com/WindService

What will you leave behind?

Please remember First Church in your will.

e-GIVING reduces paperwork and helps
keep track of your yearly pledge. For info
about contributing electronically via a monthly
automatic withdrawal from your bank account,
call the Finance Office, 860-529-1575, ext. 218.

Atessa M. Afshar Associate Minister
Vicki A. Huffman... Director of Children's & Family Ministries
Linda T. Jackson..... Church Administrator
Wayne E. Luman..... Director of Caring Ministries
T. Michael McDowell..... Associate Minister
Donald W. Morgan..... Minister Emeritus
Deryk P. Richenburg..... Senior Minister
David C. Spicer..... Minister of Music & the Arts
Todd E. Willard..... Associate Minister

OUR MISSION

*We are a community of Jesus
followers who love God, love one
another, and make disciples.*

DEADLINE

Material for the October issue of *The
Spire*, which will be mailed September
29, must be submitted to Dave Gilbert by
noon on Friday, September 17, at daveg@firstchurch.org
or 860-529-1575, ext. 225.

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Whole-church series, starting in October:



Join One of Our Choirs!

*Experience a glorious way to worship God! Share your musical gifts in our Sunday
morning worship and our Concert Series. For details or to sign up, call 860-529-1575, ext. 209.*

Wind Worship Team — Contemporary Worship, Sundays at 9:00 a.m.
Rehearsals — Thursdays, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

Brass Ensemble information will be published soon.

VOCAL CHOIRS

Cherub Choir — Age 5 – Grade 2
Rehearsals: Tuesdays or Wednesdays
4:00 to 4:40 p.m.
Starts September 14 and 15

Carol Choir — Grades 3–6
Rehearsals: Tuesdays or Wednesdays
4:40 to 5:40 p.m.
Starts September 14 and 15

Pilgrim Youth Choir — Grades 7–12
Sings every Sunday at 9:15 a.m. service
Rehearsals: Sundays, 6:00 to 7:30 p.m.
Starts September 12

First Church Choir — Adults; age 18+
Sings every Sunday at 11:00 a.m. service
Rehearsals: Thursdays, 7:30–9:45 p.m.
Starts September 2

Cantata Singers — Adults; age 18+
Sings at concerts only
Rehearsals: Thursdays, 8:30–9:45 p.m.
Starts September 2, at 7:30 p.m.

HANDBELL CHOIRS

Carol Handbell Choir* — Grades 4–6
Marti Bernardi, Director
Rehearsals: Wednesdays
4:00–4:40 p.m., Room M-1
Starts Tuesday, September 28

Laudate Handbell Choir* — Grades 7–12
Rehearsals: Sundays
5:15–6:00 p.m.
Starts September 19

Campanella Handbell Choir
Adults; age 18+
Rehearsals: Sundays, after the 11:00 service.
Starts September 26

Belles & Beaux Handbell Choir
Retired Adults
Rehearsals: Tuesdays
11:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon
Starts October 5

**Membership in these handbell choirs
is drawn from our vocal choirs.*