

'DNA & Discipleship' Is Explored

...through Pastor Deryk's sermons, DVD series, blog, Spire articles (PAGE 3)
and Pastor Todd's exciting initiative with our young people! (PAGE 4)

Thanksgiving

Service of Thanksgiving: Wednesday, November 24, at 6:30 p.m. (PAGE 2)
Community Thanksgiving Dinner: Thursday, November 25, at 5:00 p.m. (PAGE 2)

Women's Retreat Announced! (PAGE 7)



FROM THE SENIOR MINISTER

I AM SURE you have had this experience before. You are at a social gathering and you meet someone new. One of you then asks the inevitable question, "What do you do?"

It is a question that expresses interest and a desire to continue a conversation. Yet there is also a downside to it. This question reinforces our cultural values on what we believe is important. Society tells us the important thing is **what we do** rather than **who we are**. Another way to say this is that we are **defined** in our culture not by who we are but what we do.

When we look at this question through the lens of Scripture we find that God is more concerned with who we are. A disciple's focus must first be on who we are rather than what we do.

And who are we? Well, we are beloved children of the living God. We hear this in the baptism of Jesus. When Jesus was baptized, the Holy Spirit came on Him. Then after He came out of the water He heard His father exclaim, "**You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased**" (Mark 1:11). John then tells us, in 1 John 3:1, "**See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and such we are.**"

We are God's beloved children. We are King's kids. We are princes and princesses. That's who we are. We are children who are deeply loved by our Heavenly Father.

I want to go back to Jesus' baptism for a moment. I have said this before, but it needs to be mentioned again. Jesus was told He was a beloved Son **before** He did anything. **He was loved not because of what He did but because of who He is.**

A disciple must learn and live out of this great truth. For many of us, this is a struggle. We are so used to being told that what matters is what we do, that we try to **achieve** God's love. We try to do things in order to earn God's love. Then we also want to take a step further away from this truth and call ourselves not sons and daughters but servants or slaves. In a sense we are saying that we have not done enough—we have not earned the right to be His children. We live out of a lie and don't realize our true identity.

Disciples must live out of their true identity. This affects everything. Obviously, it affects how we feel loved by God. Yet, it also affects how we love God. Will we continue to try to love Him by doing things for Him? It will also affect how we love one another. Remember the commandment is to **love one another as you love yourself.** If we cannot love

SERMON SERIES • ALL SERVICES

DNA & Discipleship

SERMONS BY DERYK RICHENBURG
See service times on back page.

Oct. 31 — *Disciples Love One Another*
John 13:31-35

Nov. 7 — *A Disciple Makes Other Disciples*
Matthew 28:16-20
Family Communion Sunday

Nov. 14 — *The Disciple's Way of Life*
Deuteronomy 6:1-9

Nov. 21 — *The Disciple's Relational Life*
John 14:1-7
Family Sunday

Nov. 28 — *The Disciple's Worship*
Romans 12:1-2

Dec. 5 — *The Disciple's Community*
Acts 2:42-47
Communion Sunday

Dec. 12 — *The Disciple's Mission*
Luke 10:1-12

ourselves, how are we to love others?

Beloved, let me say it again. You are God's beloved children. You are princes and princesses. You are wonderfully created by a loving Father. **You are loved not because of what you do but because of who you are.**

Next time you are at a party, ask a different question: "Who are you?"

—Pastor Deryk

Thanksgiving 2010 At First Church

SERVICE OF THANKSGIVING

The Psalmist begins Psalm 107 with these words:

**Oh give thanks to the LORD, for He is good,
for His lovingkindness is everlasting.
Let the redeemed of the LORD say so.**

Unfortunately, we do not meet together very often during the year to publicly give thanks for all the great things God has done.

That is why we are so excited about our upcoming Thanksgiving service. This year's service will not be on Thanksgiving Day but will be the night before—on **Wednesday, November 24, at 6:30.**

Pastor Deryk's message will be ***A Disciple's Gratitude***, with Luke 17:11-19.

This service will be different than past Thanksgiving services, as there will be significant time, for those who wish, to give thanks publicly. What a glorious night it will be, to recount God's blessings over the past year! Then, on Thanksgiving Day, people will be able to give thanks in their homes with their families and loved ones. Will you be with us Wednesday evening, and invite others as well?

COMMUNITY THANKSGIVING DINNER

On Thanksgiving night—**Thursday, November 25**—there will be a wonderful community dinner served at **5:00.** Let us gather together and give thanks to the Lord for His goodness!

All are welcome to the First Church Thanksgiving Dinner in Keith Jones Hall, whether from our church or from the wider community. The entire festive turkey dinner will be provided free of charge, prepared by Chef Reed and his helpers. A free-will offering will be received.

This is not a potluck event, but if you can't resist bringing a dessert to share with others, we won't turn it down! If you plan to attend, please mark the sign-up poster in the Wells Fellowship Area or call the Caring Ministries office at 860-529-1575, ext. 210.



WHAT A JOY to share God's Word in the community! Every year our "scarecrows" highlight a church program or a spiritual message supported by Scripture. God tells us in Isaiah 55:11 that "My Word...will not return to Me empty."

This year's display depicts three moms praying for their children and their schools—representing Moms in Touch International. The verse is from Lamentations 2:19,

which reads, "Pour out your heart like water before the presence of the Lord! Lift your hands to Him for the lives of your children." This year's constructors were Vicki Huffman, Laura Mayo, and (not shown) Carol Harrison and her boys, Gregory and Jacob. If you have an idea for next year or would like to help, please contact Children's and Family Ministries before next September.

Destiny Africa Returns!

Friday, October 29, at 7:00 p.m.

Join us for an evening of hope and inspiration with the **Destiny Africa Children's Choir** from Kampala, Uganda, as these orphaned children return to the Meetinghouse on their second annual USA tour.

Experience their passion, their story, and their talent on **Friday, October 29**, at 7:00 p.m. in the Meetinghouse. No tickets are required. A free-will offering will be taken to support the work of the Kampala Children's Centre.

If you cannot attend, donations are gladly being accepted through Partners in Transformation, P.O. Box 2181, South Burlington, VT 05407. Visit their websites: www.destinyafrica.org and www.kampalachildren.com.

A Festival of Hymns of the Church II

Sunday, November 14, at 4:00 p.m.

Due to the overwhelming response to last year's ***Festival of Hymns***, the Ministry of Music and the Arts is pleased to again share glorious hymns of the church, accompanied by our own magnificent Austin pipe organ, played by our organist, **David Spicer**. A reception will follow.

This year's music will be even more spectacular, with the addition of choir, festival brass and percussion. The audience will have chances to sing and to suggest hymns!

The event is free and open to the public. Bring your neighbors and friends to experience the warmth and excitement of the hymns of our faith! An offering will be received, which will support this year's Concert Series.

Family Communion/Worship Training



The next Family Communion and Worship Training will take place in the Chapel on **Wednesday, November 3**, from 5:30 to 6:15 p.m., led by Associate Minister **Tessa Afshar** and Director of Children's and Family Ministries **Vicki Huffman**.

This important teaching for children and their parents about Communion, with preparation to receive it, has broadened to include instructions in family worship. Attendees will receive great tips on how to guide and instruct their children before and during the service in order for them to fully engage in the transformational act of worship!

First Church encourages families to worship together and believes that our children can participate fully when given the right tools. Call Vicki at 860-529-1575, ext. 206, to register for this class—or just come. There's always room for more!



At our beloved First Church of Christ, we want to have the same focus as Jesus, which is discipleship—helping people to grow into maturity and faith in Jesus Christ.

What does this look like? Our emphasis will be on living a disciple's life of loving God with all of our heart, mind, soul and strength; on loving one another; and then, with that love, reaching out to make more disciples.

For several weeks, our sermons, Growth Groups, even Pastor Deryk's weekly blog posts will all explore the meaning of dis-

cipleship and why we are so excited to be making it part of our very DNA—as individuals and as a church.

But this is only the beginning. We can't wait to see what God will do in us and through us in the coming months and years.

Think of *DNA and Discipleship* not as a weekly series but as a way of life. Let us be open to wonderful changes, both subtle and exhilarating, while moving forward as a

community of Jesus followers who love God, love one another, and make disciples.

DERYK'S DVD SERIES — Pastor Deryk has recorded an engaging *DNA & Discipleship* DVD series for us, with study guides, to be used in existing and new Growth Groups.

We feel that Growth Groups provide the best way to benefit from the series, but the videos are also uploaded to firstchurch.org, every Monday, so that they may be used independently or for group members to review.

GROWTH GROUPS are meeting with this focus for nine weeks, beginning the week of October 17. Some groups may still be accepting new members. Call Arlene at 860-529-1575, ext. 211, or contact Associate Minister Michael McDowell at ext. 201 or at michaelm@firstchurch.org.

SERMONS (see box above) introduce aspects of *DNA & Discipleship* that are then made even more personal and accessible during the week. The DVD series expands upon the sermons, yet is also complete without them. ***The sermons may be heard starting the same afternoon through firstchurch.org.***

DERYK'S BLOG — Pastor Deryk's blog posts—at pastorderyk.blogspot.com—are weekly during this period. Every Wednesday noon, look for a new post that will further enhance your understanding of *DNA & Discipleship*—in a most compelling way!

SERMON SERIES • ALL SERVICES

DNA & Discipleship

SERMONS BY DERYK RICHENBURG

Oct. 17 — ***Jesus Called Disciples***
Mark 1:16-20

Oct. 24 — ***A Disciple Loves God***
Matthew 22:34-40
Family Sunday

Oct. 31 — ***Disciples Love One Another***
John 13:31-35

Nov. 7 — ***A Disciple Makes Other Disciples***
Matthew 28:16-20
Family Communion Sunday

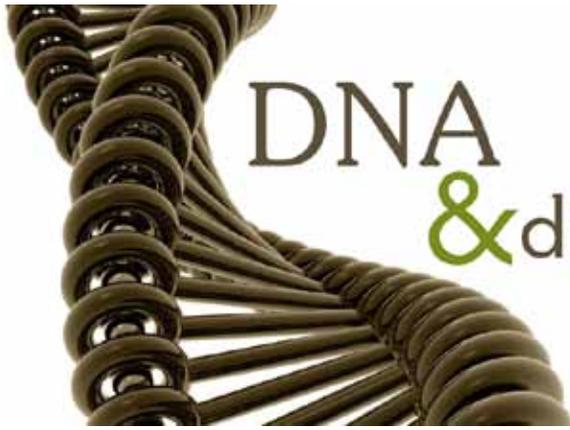
Nov. 14 — ***The Disciple's Way of Life***
Deuteronomy 6:1-9

Nov. 21 — ***The Disciple's Relational Life***
John 14:1-7
Family Sunday

Nov. 28 — ***The Disciple's Worship***
Romans 12:1-2

Dec. 5 — ***The Disciple's Community***
Acts 2:42-47
Communion Sunday

Dec. 12 — ***The Disciple's Mission***
Luke 10:1-12



DNA & discipleship

YOUTH FOCUS

And they were bringing children to Him that He might touch them, and the disciples rebuked them. But when Jesus saw it, He was indignant and said to them, "Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the Kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the Kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it." And He took them in His arms and blessed them, laying His hands on them.
—Mark 10:13-16 (ESV)

What will it look like for our church to become a place that engages with children, teenagers, and college-age students in a more profound way?

For some time now, Jesus' words to His disciples in Mark 10:13-16 have been on my mind.

I can only imagine that Jesus' response was shocking to His disciples. Here they were, thinking they were doing the right thing by "bodyguarding" their Rabbi. To their surprise, Jesus is outraged and commands them to get out of the way. Why is this one of the few recorded moments in the Gospels when Jesus becomes indignant? And what does He teach us through his response?

His reaction strikes me in two ways.

The first way is in Jesus' rebuke to his disciples, *"Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the Kingdom of God."* I'm reminded here of my own capacity to stand in the way of others who are seeking to dive into the lap and arms of Jesus. When I think about the children and teenagers in our midst I have to ask myself, "Is there some way in which I am hindering them from entering into community with Jesus Christ?" Does my attitude or do my actions in any way reflect a disconnect with Jesus' words, "to such belongs the Kingdom of God"?

I'm also struck by the fact that *Jesus points to children as a model*

for all, adults included, of the way in which we are to live out our lives as His disciples. His words are sobering: *"Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the Kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it."*

What would it look like for you and me to adopt a childlike response to Jesus' invitation to follow Him? Let's face it; children can sometimes express a whirlwind of emotions and an honesty that causes us to blush or to exile them into the land of time-outs.

Still, Jesus' words remain before us. A favorite author of mine, Mike Yaconelli, in his book *Dangerous Wonder*, explores this question of childlike faith. He writes, "I want a lifetime of holy moments. Every day I want to be in dangerous proximity to Jesus. I long for a life that explodes with meaning and is filled with adventure, wonder, risk, and danger. I long for a faith that is gloriously treacherous. I want to be with Jesus, not knowing whether to cry or laugh." I want that too, don't you?

In the next few issues of *The Spire* I will to share some thoughts on what



it might look like for our church to become a place that engages with children, teenagers, and college-age students in a more profound way. As we continue to unpack *DNA & Discipleship* together, I believe there will be many connecting points between the two conversations.

We will be focusing on three steps: *awareness, engagement, and empowerment.*

I desire to see First Church become a place where we have collectively responded to His command "do not hinder them" and where we have collectively embarked on a journey filled with "dangerous wonder."

—Pastor Todd

OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD

Livia's Shoebox: A Story of Hope and Love



Livia was two years old when her mother placed her in an orphanage in Galati, Romania.

Livia lived a "life of darkness" while in the orphanage, which was understaffed and devoid of any love or compassion. The children living there wore the same clothes week after week, rarely brushed their teeth, and bathed in dirty water. Food supplies were lacking, and often Livia would go out on the street to beg for bread or money. If the children received

presents, they were taken away by the staff to give to their own children. Livia says she never celebrated her birthday.

When Livia was twelve, Samaritan's Purse arrived at the orphanage with shoeboxes filled with small gifts for the children. The orphanage eventually agreed that they would allow the boxes to be distributed by a mission group.

A short time later, an American missionary named **Connie Satterfield** hand-delivered Livia's shoebox to her. They spent an entire day together, and a great bond began to form. Livia immediately fell in love with Connie and wanted to be with her forever.

When Livia was finally able to open her shoebox, at the very top was a set of hair clips. She could not believe her eyes. Hair clips were a very simple thing that she had always longed for, and in no time, she had put them all in her hair. She also received a set of necklaces, each with a piece of a heart on it. Livia gave one of the necklaces to Connie, telling her that "maybe one day we can bring our hearts together."

By the end of the day, Connie had decided that she wanted to adopt Livia. During the two year adoption process, Livia was transferred to a Christian home called Bethesda house. It was here that she received Jesus Christ as her Lord and Savior.

"Every day I prayed that Connie would come back for me," Livia said. "Finally, two years later, the day came. The papers were done, everything was paid for, I boarded a plane for the United

States—and the very next day, the Romanian government slammed the door shut on international adoptions. That's when I knew for sure that God was watching over me. He meant for me to receive that special shoebox and be with Connie."

Operation Christmas Child is here! Stop at the OCC table in the Wells Area any Sunday for your shoebox and details. The final filled shoebox collection date is Sunday, November 14. Questions? Call Marcia at 860-529-1575, ext. 208.

Today, **Livia Satterfield** is 22 years old and lives in Georgia, where she is attending college. She is an active spokesperson for **Operation Christmas Child**, the same program that had provided her with a shoebox when she was a child.

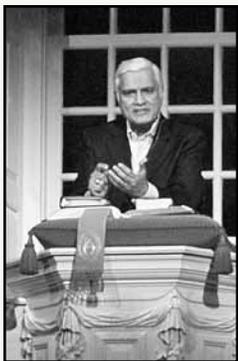
ANGEL TREE CHRISTMAS

Brightening Christmas for a Child of a Prisoner

Will you help make the Christmas season more meaningful to a child of a prisoner? Christmas is no time for a child to fall through the cracks. The **Angel Tree Christmas Party for over 200 children** we are supporting will be held on **Saturday, December 4**, from noon to 3:00 p.m. in Keith Jones Hall, when we will present them with gifts of toys and clothing.

If you would like to purchase a gift for a child who might not otherwise receive any Christmas gifts, stop by the **Angel Tree**

table in the Connector between services (or after the 11:00 services) on **November 7 or 14** to select a gift tag. Wrapped gifts corresponding to that tag must be returned to the Connector by **Sunday, November 21**. *NOTE: We need volunteers to help pass out gift tags on the 7th and 14th.* For details on all of our volunteer needs, or to donate toward the purchase of food, supplies, and gifts, please contact **Wendy Parker** at 860-371-0367 or wendysparker@gmail.com, or visit www.firstchurch.org/angeltree.



The Profound Impact of Ravi Zacharias at First Church

"The entire event was extraordinary!" • "I will cherish what occurred last night forever."

"Thank you for your church's magnificent generosity!"

"The presence of the Holy Spirit was felt by us both!"

Comments from attendees of the Jonathan Edwards Forums, the evenings of October 9 and 10, hint at the enormous impact of world-renowned Christian apologist Ravi Zacharias and his presentations on the topic "Christ, Christianity, and the Culture Of Our Time: Is Christianity Still Relevant?" Close to 1,000 people from near and far filled the Meetinghouse, Keith Jones Hall, and the Wells Fellowship Area each night. Thanks to our great team of Forum Commission members and volunteers, both evenings flowed smoothly and visitors felt warmly welcomed. And many also remarked on how deeply moved they were by the pre-forum organ music and hymn singing, led by David Spicer.

Four years ago, First Church joined with InterVarsity Christian Fellowship to invite Dr. Zacharias to speak at First Church and at Yale University. Two nights before our event, he addressed an overflow audience of over 600 at Yale, many of whom signed cards wanting to know more. God has truly used our church in a significant way for this far-reaching influence.

To obtain CDs of one or both evenings, please make your check payable to "First Church of Christ" and either bring it or mail it to the church, attention Dave Gilbert. For one CD (specify which evening), the cost is \$3; for two CDs—one of each evening—the total cost is \$5. Your order will be mailed to you (both prices include postage). These recordings, made for us by radio station WIHS, are available for a limited time only.

Dominican Republic Mission Trip Informational Meeting

First Church is very pleased to announce the **fifth inter-generational mission trip to the Dominican Republic**, set for **July 15 to 23, 2011**.

The team will be doing construction projects in the Good Samaritan Hospital and conducting medical clinics, food distribution, evangelism, and children's programs, as well as building and installing clean water filtration systems for Haitian sugar cane workers on the batay (sugar cane fields).

This is a life-changing trip both for the people we serve and for the team members. No specific skills are required— if you have an interest, God has a plan for you!

If you would like to know more about this opportunity, please join us in the Fireside Room on **Sunday, November 7**, from 12:30 to 2:00 p.m., for an informational meeting. Pizza will be provided.

Unable to make the meeting on the 7th? Please contact **Dana Crompton** at 860-635-1530 or dcrompton@sbcglobal.net for more information and also to join the email distribution list.

Crib Room Offers Pagers

Pagers are now available! In order to support members and visitors with infants or children who may need time to adjust to being away from Mommy and Daddy, we now offer pagers that will vibrate to notify you that your child needs you. They are available to **sign out from the Crib Room** on Sunday mornings and during weekday programs that offer childcare. **Any parent with a child in the preschool wing** (first floor of the Cadwell Building) is welcome to use this service. Ages in this wing range from infants through kindergarten.



Damien Cregeau to Portray Colonel Tallmadge at Women's Fellowship



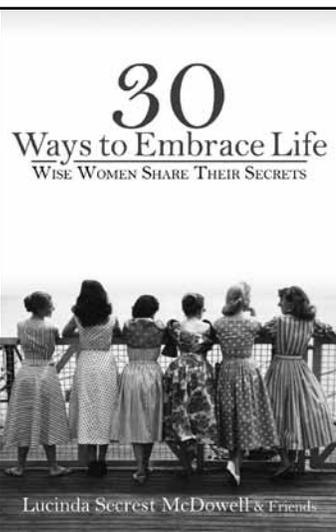
Men and women are cordially invited to the **Women's Fellowship Luncheon on Wednesday, November 10**. Enjoy a luncheon catered by **Judy Carson**, followed by a fascinating historical reenactment. Wethersfield resident **Damien Cregeau** will portray Colonel Benjamin Tallmadge, who was cofounder of the elite 2nd Regiment Light Dragoons and was the superintendent of Wethersfield High School from 1773 to 1776. During the American Revolution, Tallmadge served as George Washington's chief intelligence officer.

The luncheon begins at noon, in the Fireside Room. Suggested donation is \$6 per person. Come enjoy a delicious meal and warm fellowship. You are welcome to bring a friend! Make your reservation by calling **Judy Tatters** at 860-529-5362, by **Monday, November 8**.

GriefShare: Surviving the Holidays

The holidays can be an especially painful and lonely time for those of us who have lost loved ones. Caring Ministries is offering a special session of **GriefShare** in the Morgan House on **Sunday, November 14**, after the 11:00 a.m. service. Join us for hot soup and bread, followed by our meeting.

With facilitator **Betty Metcalf**, come share some fellowship and learn real strategies for making it through the holiday season. A \$5 suggested donation covers lunch and a booklet. For more information, please call **Wayne Luman** at 860-529-1575, ext. 203, or **Betty** at 860-632-2024.



Cindy McDowell's Book Signing

First Church Bible teacher **Cindy McDowell** will be signing her new book, *30 Ways to Embrace Life: Wise Women Share Their Secrets*, from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. on **Saturday, November 6**, at Heart of the Country in Old Wethersfield (169 Main Street). Stop by for some encouraging words! Cindy's inspiring blog/website is found at www.EncouragingWords.net.

HATS FOR THE HOMELESS — Some of our church women have been knitting hats for homeless people in the greater Hartford area. We hope to provide the local shelters with a hat for each resident for this winter. Time is growing short—can you help us? For more information about this ministry of compassion, please call **Betty Hartinger** at 860-571-8888.

BROWN BAGGERS BOOK CLUB — On **Monday, November 1**, we will gather for a lively discussion of *How the Irish Saved Civilization: The Untold Story of Ireland's Historic Role from the Fall of Rome to the Rise of Medieval Europe*, a national bestseller by **Thomas Cahill**. All are welcome—including those who have not yet read the book. Brown-bag your dinner

and join us in the Morgan House Chestnut Room from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. The reading for our **December 6** meeting is our own **Tessa Afshar's** internationally acclaimed novel *Pearl in the Sand*, a riveting fictional account based on the dynamic biblical story of Rahab. For more information, call **Linda Papertsian** at 860-257-7566.

ART ENJOYMENT CLASS meets **Tuesday mornings** at 10:00, in the Worship Room. All are welcome! **November 2: Lola Hance** on the English Impressionist landscape painter **Alfred Sisley**; **November 9: Myra Miner** on the French Post-Impressionist artist **Henri Rousseau**, who painted in the Primitive manner; **November 16: Show and Tell**. After a winter break, meetings will resume on **March 1**.

PISTACHIOS AND PECANS will again be offered as a benefit in the Wells Fellowship Area by **Women's Fellowship** during **November** and **December**. Pistachios are \$8, and pecans are \$9, per one-pound bag, with limited availability. Also available is information on how your purchase is used to help others in need.

THE WETHERSFIELD FOOD BANK needs nonperishable food items for **Thanksgiving**, including boxed or canned potatoes, cranberry sauce, gravy, beans, dessert mixes, beverages (in cans or bottles), soups, and "quick" bread mixes (e.g. corn bread). At this time, the Food Bank does **not** need any more pumpkin pie mix or canned vegetables. Items should be left with the church receptionist.

Women's Retreat with Christine Wyrzten!

APRIL 1-3, 2011 • LITCHFIELD, CONNECTICUT

Not many things get cheaper in our day and age: prices tend to go up—not come down. The First Church Women's Retreat is an exception. For the first time in years, our two-night retreat will cost under \$200, a savings of almost \$50 compared to previous years.

At the same time, our speaker, **Christine Wyrzten**, a respected author, speaker, and recording artist whose nationally syndicated radio program, *Daughters of Promise*, has made her well known to many, promises to make this weekend one of the most memorable ever.

Christine has been nominated for a Dove Award and has long been celebrated for her ability to communicate. Joni Eareckson Tada calls her "real and deep, gentle, graceful, yet powerful." Steve Brown, popular radio host says, "Christine moves you from the treadmill of knowledge and law to the wings of grace, mercy and love." For samples of Christine's powerful teaching, please go to www.daughtersofpromise.org and click on "Listen Online." Or, if you prefer, you can listen to her daily on WIHS, 104.9 FM, our local Christian radio station. Our worship will be led by **Racquel Whipple's** beautiful voice, although Christine will have a couple of sweet surprises up her capable sleeves for us as well.

This year, our retreat will be located at **Wisdom House Retreat**



and Conference Center in the scenic hills of Litchfield, just an hour away from First Church. The simple, monastic location—on 54 acres of meadows, woods, and brooks—is a gracious setting for this wonderful retreat, providing double and triple rooms, as well as several singles. Half a mile down the road we have booked additional rooms in the lovely **Lourdes in Litchfield**, a sister retreat center to Wisdom House.

The Retreat Team is delighted to offer our women this rare opportunity for an incredible time of spiritual refreshing. Because of space limitations, we are absolutely unable to accommodate more than 140 women (this includes commuters). **Please register as early as possible in order to guarantee a spot this year.**

The retreat dates are **Friday, April 1**, with registration and appetizers (no dinner) starting at

6:30 p.m., ending on **Sunday, April 3**, at 2:00 p.m. For more information, please contact **Arlene Eriksen** at 860-529-1575, ext. 211, or email her at arlenee@firstchurch.org.

For those of you who have attended previous Women's Retreats, you know that a weekend of meaningful Christian fellowship, love, friendship, prayer, and learning awaits you. We hope to welcome many familiar and new faces.

Tessa Afshar and the Retreat Committee

Money Management

SECOND IN A SERIES ON FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

Did you ever wonder about how God wants you to handle the money he has entrusted to you?

Money is talked about constantly in the Bible, second only to prayer. Some passages are very detailed, while others are more general. From all this information we can identify principles that will help us master money and keep it from mastering us.

Give money its proper importance.

There is nothing wrong with men possessing riches. The wrong comes when riches possess men. —Billy Graham

We talked about this last month. Money is a tool—nothing more. If you make it something more than a tool, something else that is really much more important will suffer, and lots of other problems are created.

Money is a gift from God.

You shall remember the LORD your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth, that He may confirm His covenant that He swore to your fathers, as it is this day.

—Deuteronomy 8:18 (ESV)

Money isn't the only way God blesses us, but it is one of the most flexible. It is the one tool that fixes or avoids many earthly problems. It always fits and it's always the right color. God created money (along with everything else) to be used and enjoyed.

God blesses us with money so we can be a blessing to others. We use the money he graced us with to provide for our families, our neighbors, and our church. Releasing God's blessing into the world allows the blessing to be spread and multiplied. This is the foundation of the biblical command to be generous.

Pay cash or do without.

Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law.

—Romans 13:8 (ESV)

This is just one of several scriptural references that tell us debt is undesirable. We should be lenders, not borrowers.

These Scriptures are not complete prohibition on borrowing. There are many verses that talk about when it is appropriate to borrow, how much interest is reasonable, and how fast you should pay it off. The principle here is that debt shouldn't be part of your lifestyle. If you don't know exactly when you are going to be debt-free and how you are going to get there, you are violating this.

Save consistently.

Precious treasure and oil are in a wise man's dwelling, but a foolish man devours it. —Proverbs 21:20 (ESV)

This Scripture is not a license to hoard, but a reminder to not spend everything you make. Life is not a straight line. Just as there are times of work and times of rest, there are times of plenty and times of lack. God gives you extra in the peaks so you will have enough in the valleys. Save a little every month. Most Christian-based financial ministries recommend saving 5 to 10% annually.

All of these principles are foundational to all stewardship—not just money. What have you done with all of what God has entrusted to you so far? How are all of God's blessings reflected in your life?

Your life may be the only gospel that someone hears.

BOOK OF LIFE

ENTERED ETERNAL LIFE

Muriel (Jensen) MacKenzie,
September 24, 2010

Our Church unites in an expression of heartfelt sympathy to her family.

BAPTIZED

Cole Bjorn Svendsen, son of Sondre and Jennifer (Gilbert) Svendsen,
October 10, 2010

UNITED IN MARRIAGE

Adam Joseph Griffin and Morgan Willard,
September 25, 2010

Jason Selden and Emily Bazzano,
October 2, 2010

Andrew Bucci and Sarah Pumphrey,
October 10, 2010

Kyle Tucker and Marci Izard,
October 15, 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

Sunday Worship

Traditional Services in the Meetinghouse:
8:00, 9:15 and 11:00 a.m.

Wind Contemporary Service
in Keith Jones Hall: 11:00 a.m.

First Church on Facebook

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

Dial-A-Message: 860-529-1785

Messages of Uplift
by Minister Emeritus Donald Morgan

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.

SPIRE DEADLINE

Material for the December issue of *The Spire*, which will be mailed November 24, must be submitted to Dave Gilbert by noon on Thursday, November 11, at daveg@firstchurch.org or 860-529-1575, ext. 225.

DATED MATERIAL
Mailed Oct. 27, 2010

PERIODICAL
POSTAGE PAID
at Hartford,
Connecticut

The Spire (USPS 441-830) is published monthly, except July and August, by The First Church of Christ in Wethersfield, 250 Main Street, Wethersfield, Connecticut 06109.

POSTMASTER — Send address changes to: *The Spire*, 250 Main Street, Wethersfield, CT 06109-1893

Everywhere the Cross

Mary Goldman

It was Friday, October 1, and our mail had just arrived. I sat in my favorite spot in my kitchen and read *The Spire*, as I do every month.

When I turned to the back page, I noticed the title of Pastor Deryk's article "What's in a Logo?" —and then I saw, for the first time, the cross in the new First Church logo, right there on the left side of the back page.

There was something very familiar about that cross, so I continued on, reading the article about our new logo. I finished reading and set it aside for the boys to look at later in the day and started to get dinner ready.

There I am, standing over my kitchen sink doing what I do so many times each day, and *right before my eyes is the cross that has become part of our new logo!*

To my amazement and pure delight, I had discovered our cross, the one in our logo, in the design of the garbage disposal in our kitchen sink!

There are so many times that I am standing over the sink washing dishes. Even



though we have a dishwasher, I find it relaxing and almost therapeutic to simply wash the dishes by hand. I've talked to myself, I've cried, I've prayed standing over that sink washing dishes.

How wonderful to rinse out the sink and see our cross now! I find it inspiring — it's yet another small reminder, many times during the day, that God is

always there with me.

A lot goes down that disposal. And now when I stand there washing dishes and dealing with everyday struggles, I've learned to say a prayer and send that down the disposal, too.

Pastor Deryk ended the article with this: "I hope that whenever you see it, you will be reminded of our mission of being a community of Jesus followers who love God, love one another, and make disciples."

I see it every day, and by sharing this story with you, it is my hope that you will find inspiration in truly delightful and surprising ways as well.

Help Church School Children Support World Vision!

Looking for a perfect hostess or Christmas gift that will encourage someone all year long? Consider a beautiful, colorful *God's Creation* wall calendar.

Our church school children will be offering them in the Wells Fellowship Area on

Sunday, November 21. All proceeds will support two World Vision children whom our children have been sponsoring for the past 12 years.

Please stop by the table that morning and say hello!