

Summer Update

A GREAT PROBLEM TO HAVE is not being able to fit the abundance of great news and information in a single issue of *The Spire*. This is actually Part 2 of the June edition!

Continue to refer to the last issue (available at church or at firstchurch.org) for summer opportunities—such as Pastor Deryk's

Wednesday night class on James, which has drawn many enthusiastic attendees (and equally-thrilled kids in their own version).

Part 2 focuses on important recent developments and touches on what is coming up in the fall. In this issue you will discover many ways God is working mightily through First Church.

Sunday Worship Services

SUMMER SERVICE TIMES

Traditional Service: 10:00 a.m.

Wind Contemporary Service: 10:00 a.m.



Ephesians Sermon Series

This sin-destroyed world has torn the family apart. As God's children, we have rebelled against our Heavenly Father, and then turned on each other. In Ephesians, Paul reveals the glorious way that God is restoring His family.

Ephesians 1:7-12

JULY 17 — Both Services
Message by Todd Willard

Ephesians 1:13-14

JULY 24 — Both Services
Message by Deryk Richenburg

Ephesians 1:15-19

JULY 31 and AUGUST 7
(alternate services)
Message by Tessa Afshar

Ephesians 1:19-23

JULY 31 and AUGUST 7
(alternate services)
Message by Deryk Richenburg

Ephesians 2:1-3

AUGUST 14 — Both Services
Message by Tessa Afshar

Ephesians 2:4-10

AUGUST 21 — Both Services
Message by Todd Willard

Ephesians 2:11-15

AUGUST 28 — Both Services
Message by Deryk Richenburg

Ephesians 2:16-22

SEPT. 4 — Both Services
Message by Deryk Richenburg

HOW DO YOU MEASURE

God's presence? How do you quantify God's activity in our midst? One of the ways is by looking at different kinds of numbers, like attendance and budget. But numbers can be deceiving. Numbers don't describe the work that God does in our hearts. So we must look for other measurements.

As I write this and think about what's going on this summer, I get excited because I see evidence of God's handiwork.

We have a group of teens going down to do work in North Carolina. We have a group preparing to leave for the Dominican Republic. We have a couple traveling to Mexico to do missions work. We even have others who are preparing for long-term missions.

We have this wonderful story of a man many of us have never met, named Cetin. We were able to help pay for his education and now God is using him to bless others in Turkey. Plus, there are all the children in Peru that are being helped through our sponsorships.

Then we also have others who are helping with needs in our own midst. We have a growing group of caring, faithful Stephen ministers who are walking alongside people and loving them like Jesus would. We have a group who cares for the needs of those in the hospital. We have those who contribute to our vital Good Samaritan fund. Our Deacons will be serving together with the program "Feed the Starving Children."

We also know of people who are coming to know Jesus through some of the ministries in our midst, such as Alpha and Divorce Recovery, not to mention our incredible worship services where our extraordinary God is being worshiped.

I don't know how to measure all of this work God is doing all around us. I believe we don't have enough space to describe all of the personal stories and testimonies. I know He is at work. I see it. I hope you do, too.

—Pastor Deryk



New Stephen Ministers

Five of our members were commissioned on May 29 as our newest **Stephen Ministers**, entering a special ministry of care and concern for others and culminating a period of extensive training and preparation by our **Stephen Ministry Leaders**. Two weeks earlier, **Marti Bernardi** (right) was commissioned as our newest leader.



The newly-commissioned Stephen Ministers are (seated, in photo below) **Evelyne Castiglione**, **Colette Charette**, (standing) **Jim Caulfield**, **Charles Floyd**, and **Chris Rhines**.

All of our Stephen Ministers have studied and practiced skills in such areas as dealing with feelings, crisis intervention, asserting oneself with gentleness and firmness, and numerous other topics preparing them



to help people who are facing problems. They assist in our congregation and community, working with people who are experiencing such life crises as hospitalization, retirement, financial setback, the loss of a loved one, or any number of other difficulties. We thank God for their gifts of caring and listening.

The ministries of these skilled and compassionate servants of God will greatly increase the overall ministry of our Lord at First Church. Please keep them in your prayers as they carry the love of Christ to their care receivers.

DWM Scholarship Recipient Is Ordained in Turkey

A heartening story of God's faithfulness through First Church began a few years ago when a student from Turkey applied for our **Donald W. Morgan Scholarship for Theological Studies**.

Cetin E., who heard of us by way of the network of Christians whose work we support, was awarded the \$1500 scholarship twice, which enabled him to continue his education in the U.S. and earn his M.Div. from Denver Seminary. He considers those years pivotal in his spiritual life and work.

On January 8, Cetin was ordained as the senior pastor (even younger than Pastor Deryk!) of a small church in his homeland. He writes that in Turkey, where there are only

4,000 Protestants among the nation's 73 million people, "seeing one person coming to the Lord here is a great miracle." Yet he reports that his church's evangelistic activities are showing progress, even as he asks for prayer that his congregation will continue to "bear the fruits of the Spirit and grow both in quality of our faith and in number."



Praying for Cetin at his ordination.

The latest word is that God has brought him together with "the right woman" and that she is a fellow Turkish believer. Their wedding is set for October 1.

Metcalf Scholarship Participants Gather to Celebrate

On June 5, thirty-nine people attended the annual Metcalf Scholarship "picnic" held in the Fireside Room. Present were scholarship students, family members, and First Church members who serve as mentors to the students.

This was an opportunity to extend best wishes to four graduating college seniors who had benefited from their scholarships, and to welcome three new Metcalf Scholarship recipients.

The graduates are **Oprah Ellis**, North Carolina Wesleyan College; **Raymond Fraser**, University of Richmond; **Amneris Torres**, Saint Joseph College; and **Deaci-Ann Wallen**, UConn.

The three students just entering the program are **James Hightower**, **Shantel Honeyghan**, and **Ruthcecelia Whitworth**, all in the Class of 2015.

James is a graduate of Hartford's Sport and Medical Sciences Academy, a local magnet school, and he will be attending Southern Connecticut State University. **Chris Dukes** is his mentor. Shantel, a graduate of Bulkeley High School, will attend UConn in Storrs, mentored by **Christine Dukes**. And Ruth, a graduate of Weaver High School, will attend Drew University in Madison, New Jersey. Her mentor is **Barbara Mentzer**.

Other Metcalf Scholarship mentors are First Church members **Susan Coogan**, **Elizabeth Onyebuchi**, **Al Phillips**, **Christina Phillips**, **Jim Roberts**, and **Suzanne Thorburn**.

The Metcalf Scholarship Committee, serving the community for over 30 years, selects students who are graduates of Hart-

ford public high schools. They provide a ministry not only to the students but to family members as well. Scholarship checks are provided each semester, totaling \$5000 over a four-year period.

Over the past decade, Metcalf participants have achieved a college graduation rate of almost 100%. Currently there are two openings on the committee. Call chairperson Chris Dukes, at 860-524-9113, for more information. Becoming a Metcalf member can be a truly rewarding and fulfilling experience.



In this photo are (seated) Na'Tasha Bryan, Class of 2013; Deaci-Ann Wallen, 2011; Amneris Torres, 2011; Gresa Ajeti, 2012; Ruth Whitworth, 2015; (standing) Beatriz Frausto, 2014; Raymond Fraser, 2011; Michael Budhram, 2012; Shantel Honeyghan, 2015; and Erlinda Dacy, 2014.

Keep Alpha in Your Mind This Summer

OUR ALPHA TEAM

Millions have come to Christ around the world 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 and have an opportunity to feel loved where they are at.

Having experienced the power of Alpha firsthand, I (Tessa) am a passionate supporter. We all have someone in our lives we love dearly who is not convinced that Jesus has anything to offer them. Someone who finds the church irrelevant and boring. And it's very difficult to communicate the love of God to someone like that. *Alpha helps.*

You can make a difference. You can participate in changing someone's eternal destiny, starting today. **First**, we need guests! Without guests, Alpha can have no influence. This summer, invite your friends and coworkers, and then plan to accompany them (most people won't go to a strange church in the middle of the week by themselves). We have invitation pamphlets that explain about the program. Pray about whom to invite, and use the pamphlet to extend an invitation. It couldn't be easier. Don't get discouraged if someone says no. Just ask someone else.

Second, we will not charge a single penny to our guests for dinner, books, or attendance. This is a gift. So if you want to help support us, we would be delighted to accept! **Third**, Alpha's suc-



cess rate depends on prayer. Please pray for us. And **fourth**, we can always use volunteers for clean-up, or those who bake our yummy desserts!

If you have attended Alpha previously, you may attend again if you bring a guest with you who has never been before.

Will you join me and change Connecticut one friend at a time? The **Alpha Banquet** is on **Tuesday, September 20**, with the course starting on the **27th** and ending on **December 8**. Attendance is limited, so please sign up soon.

— **Tessa Afshar**, Staff Coordinator; **Terry Shook**, Director; **Tina Balmer**, Assistant Director

Women of Faith Conference

REGISTRATION DISCOUNT DEADLINE: SEPT. 1

Escape from the everyday at the 2011 **Women of Faith** conference, at Hartford's XL Center on **Friday and Saturday, November 11 and 12**. The conference is entitled *Imagine*.

Among this year's featured speakers are **Sheila Walsh, Luci Swindoll, Lisa Harper, and Angie Smith**, with music by **Mary Mary** and **Natalie Grant**. Also appearing are special guest **Henry Cloud** and dramatist **Nicole Johnson**.

First Church has reserved 30 tickets at the special group rate of \$89, covering the full conference and two box lunches. To qualify, you must **register and pay in full by Thursday, September 1**. For details and to register, contact **Kathy Rodriguez** at 860-301-6263 or k.rodriguez@comcast.net. Checks may be mailed to the church, payable to *First Church of Christ*, with *Women of Faith* on the memo line.

WOMEN'S MINISTRIES will kick off its Wednesday morning fall programs with a brunch on **Wednesday, September 14**, at 9:30 a.m. in the Church Parlor. During this time of fellowship and prayer, the fall classes, which begin on September 21, will be announced. Bring a dish to share. Childcare will be provided.

Fellowship Gathering Draws Many

A celebration of the joy of fellowship, gratitude, and recovery was hosted by First Church members on Saturday, June 25, with an estimated 360 people attending. This event was inspired by a challenge during one of the recent courses in the **Couples' Class**—a challenge to practice hospitality by reaching out to friends, family, neighbors, and others who may not have had an opportunity to participate in Christian fellowship.

During initial planning, **Walt and Anne Kelly** felt compelled to offer up their property. Thirty-seven volunteers from the class, the Singles Ministry, and Celebrate Recovery—and others—hosted this exciting gathering, which included food, **Dan Keifer** as DJ, games, and fellowship. Walt shared about his walk with the Lord and how God has blessed him.

As a result, over 20 people asked for follow-up conversations, one of whom next attended the Men's Prayer Breakfast and accepted Christ. All involved in planning and hosting were deeply blessed by sharing God's love with others! — **Lisa Peery**

THE COUPLES' CLASS will resume on **Rally Sunday, September 11**, at 9:15 a.m. in the Morgan House Drawing Room. New couples are always welcome. For more information, call **Steve and Lisa Peery** at 860-757-3853.

Men's Advance

Men — Set aside the weekend of **September 30 to October 2** for our 19th annual **Men's Advance**, held for the eleventh time at Pilgrim Pines in Swanzey, New Hampshire.

Our speaker, back by popular demand, is **Fouad Faris**, whose theme will be ***A Blueprint for Right Living: Modern Lessons from Old Testament Saints***. Since 1999, Fouad has been serving the New England region for the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, the largest Christian



sports organization in America, where Fouad's focus is to challenge coaches and athletes at the professional, college, and youth levels to use the powerful medium of sports to impact the world for Jesus Christ.

This promises to be an incredible weekend for both men and youth. And, to make it even better, *rates are being held at the 2010 levels*.

For details, and to register, pick up a brochure at one of the information tables, or contact **Bob Papertsian** at bobpapertsian@cox.net or **Arlene Eriksen** at 860-529-1575, ext. 211.

Confirmation



Our fantastic Confirmation students, who were confirmed on Sunday, May 15, and are now members of First Church, are (*standing*) **Nicole Silva, Caitlyn LaJoie, Lindsey Blustein, Sarah Hoag, Shelby Jagel, Ashley Vasel, Andrea Jaskulski, Alana Ciarcia**, (*seated, clockwise from left*) **David Johnston, Erik Rodriguez, Shane Sullivan, Tristan Gervais, Christopher Jagel, Jared Darius, Dillon Roy, Charlie Shattuck, and Zachary DiPinto**. Standing in the back is **Pastor Todd**.

New Members

Our wonderful new members, who joined our family of faith on Sunday, May 22, are (*standing*) **Jenny Bullard, Catherine "Cat" Chase, Adelina Coelho, Orland Baton, Christopher Allen**, (*seated*) **Jim and Norma Clark, Karen Canna, Tom and Terri Englert**, and (*not in photo*) **Peter Canna**.



THE FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST NURSERY SCHOOL

is accepting registrations for the 2011-2012 school year. Tours are at any time during the summer.

Please call 860-529-1575 to request a tour or get details, and be sure to visit www.firstchurch.org/nurseryschool.

Deacons on a Mission

The 21 members of our **Deacon Board** are excited to be joining other volunteers from local church, school, business and civic groups to joyfully work a two-hour shift, the evening of August 25, hand-packing hundreds of nutritious children's meals at the three-day **Feed My Starving Children** mobilepack event in Berlin.

This Christian organization (www.fmsc.org) provides sealed meals of chicken, rice, vegetables and soy to disaster- and poverty-stricken children worldwide.

Divorce Recovery

First Church's life-changing **Divorce Recovery seminar** will be held on **Friday evening, September 9**, from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m., and **Saturday the 10th** from

8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The seminar fee of \$115 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. Brochure/registration forms are available on the church website or in the Wells Fellowship Area. For details, call 860-529-1575, ext. 213.

Summer Singing

You are cordially (*chord*-ially) invited to join the **Summer Ensemble**. From **now through August 14**, we are singing for the 10:00 a.m. traditional service, gathering at 9:00 a.m. in the choir loft. We sing easily attainable music (at least one anthem and several responses), and some past experience in choral singing would be helpful. See you in the loft!

So, How Do I Give?

LAST IN A SERIES ON FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

Over the last few months, we have been talking about giving:

- We are called to give. There is a minimum, but God wants us to give generously.
- We know that God promises to abundantly bless our giving.
- We know that the quality of our lives improves by giving, because of the fruits inherent in it: more joy, stronger faith, and better relationships.

So how do I make this happen? How should I give?

Give Now!

First, I suggest that you give now. There is great joy in seeing your gift work in God's Kingdom. That does not preclude the importance of estate giving in your will, which is an additional way of giving from God's abundance. But giving biblically means generously supporting God's work throughout one's lifetime.

Give to Many!

To whom should you give?

Of course, your home church should be the first place you give. This is common sense and is supported by Scripture. Give to your local church and you not only help your brothers and sisters in Christ at the church, but the entire local community, and beyond. Minister Emeritus Don Morgan told me long ago that the "lion's share" of my combined tithes and offerings should go to First Church of Christ.

Not only that, you should also give directly to other people and organizations with whom you have a relationship.

Give in Different Ways!

Use whatever method you are comfortable with: cash, check, money order, electronically through the church website (coming soon) or e-giving (most convenient since it's an automatic draw out of your banking account). Envelopes and financial pledge cards are available from the church finance office, if you use them.

Give in Secret!

"But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you."

—Matthew 6:3-4 (NIV)

Jesus wants us to give, not for our own self-promotion, but for God's approval. And since we are looking for His approval, we are to remember that all of it is God's stuff. If we use it the way God desires, He will reward us.

Conclusion

Giving generously out of the abundance that God has given you not only makes your soul rejoice, it makes God smile. He loves to see that you are taking good care of His stuff and that you are using it as He intended—to make the earth a little more like heaven. He gives us extra so we can bless others; so we can share in His generous spirit. And that privilege—sharing in God's generous spirit—is a gift beyond measure.

—Anton Hertle

The Good Samaritan Fund: *We Can Help*

The Good Samaritan Fund offers a legacy of stewardship for helping the community of First Church of Christ. *In this delicate and difficult economy, have you, or a loved one or a neighbor, experienced the loss of employment, a reduction of income, the sudden onset of injury, or poor health?*

The Good Samaritan Fund exists to confidentially address, through limited funding, the emergency or short-term financial needs of members and attendees of First Church, and others, in the areas of nutrition, health or personal care, shelter, and transportation, all in a fashion consistent with the fund's policies and procedures.

This benevolent ministry was created in the spirit of the parable told by Jesus Christ as recorded in the Gospel of Luke 10:30-37. To this end, the first perpetual fund was established in 1817 with a bequest from Elizabeth Talcott to help the needy in the First Church community. Additional funds were provided in subsequent years through the wills of Timothy Stillman (1857), Nancy Wells (1889), and by Dr. E. Myles Standish. Dr. Standish provided two funds, one in 1942 to honor



his parents, Jared and Martha Standish, and another in 1943 in memory of his brother Captain James Standish. Through the years, others have designated contributions to these funds through various means, including the special blue envelopes found in the Bulletin on Communion Sundays, normally the first Sunday of each month.

In the twelve months ending April 30, \$17,191 was provided through the fund to give assistance, as described above—not with cash, but through checks to the providers in full or partial payments, or through prepaid business cards.

Under the guidance of our Deacons, the Good Samaritan Fund is distributed by members of the church staff who share "on-call" responsibilities on a rotating basis, and by members of the Deacons' Good Samaritan team on a weekly basis.

If you, or someone you know, should experience critical financial need because of a difficult life circumstance, please communicate that need by contacting Caring Ministries and completing an Application for Assistance. God provides!

BOOK OF LIFE

ENTERED ETERNAL LIFE

Richard T. Almquist, June 18, 2011
Mary (Griswold) Brownsword, June 29, 2011
Elizabeth (Clark) Ellis, July 1, 2011
Our Church unites in an expression of heartfelt sympathy to their families.

BAPTIZED

Madison Elizabeth Jeski, daughter of Ryan Jeski and Caitlin Palmer, June 19, 2011
Isabella Marie Rosado, daughter of Laurie Delgado, June 19, 2011

UNITED IN MARRIAGE

David William O'Brien and Ellen Raiselis, June 18, 2011

Love never ends.

1 Corinthians 13:8a (ESV)

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: info@firstchurch.org

Sunday Worship Summer Times

Traditional Service in the Meetinghouse:
10:00 a.m.

Wind Contemporary Service
in Keith Jones Hall: 10:00 a.m.

First Church on Facebook

www.facebook.com/FirstChurchPage

Dial-A-Message: 860-529-1785

Uplifting Messages
Provided by Caring Ministries

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
Linda T. Jackson Church Administrator
Wayne E. Luman Director of Caring Ministries
Marcia McCann Interim Dir. of Children's & Family Min.
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 September issue of *The Spire*, which will be mailed/emailed on **Sept. 7**, must be submitted to **Dave Gilbert** by noon on **Monday, Aug. 15**, at daveg@firstchurch.org or 860-529-1575, ext. 225.

DATED MATERIAL
Mailed July 13, 2011

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



ASOF XIV

A Celebration Concert, featuring special performances by our distinguished judges, will open the 14th annual **Albert Schweitzer Organ Festival** at 7:30 p.m. on **Friday, September 9**.

This year's judges are **Gregory D'Agostino**, organist for the New York Philharmonic Orchestra; **Michael Barone**, host of the nationally broadcast Minnesota Public Radio program *Pipedreams*; and our returning judge, **Frederick Hohman**, an internationally recognized organ virtuoso from South Bend, Indiana.

The competition will be held on **Saturday the 10th**, from 9:00 a.m. to noon and from 2:00 to 5:00 p.m. And on **Rally Sunday**, all finalists will participate in our services of worship. From 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. that day, the

finalists, and any who come to observe, will benefit from a masterclass with our judges.

Our exceptionally gifted finalists, coming to us from several states, are **Mary Pan** and **Jacob Reed** (High School Division); and **Christopher Ganza**, **Justin Maxey**, and **Ian Tomesch** (Young Professional Division), with **Samuel Backman** as alternate. I am so very happy that our church can host this wonderful event, an outreach of encouragement and growth to young organists, many of whom will become organists for churches.

One past finalist wrote that the Festival helped him through a time when he was considering going into another field. Erik Meyer ultimately earned his master's degree in organ performance and has been Cantor of Luther Memorial Church in Erie, Pennsylvania, since 2004. In addition, he teaches organ on the college level.
—*David Spicer*

Transitions

Marianne Vogel has been appointed organist for our 8:00 a.m. Sunday worship service, replacing **Bruce Henley**, who left this position after 16 years.

Marianne majored in music theory and is an accomplished violinist as well. She played in the orchestra for *Messiah* on Good Friday, and many will remember her outstanding violin solo at the start of our traditional worship service on June 26.

Each week during the regular season, after playing the organ for the 8:00 service, she is quickly en route to the First United Methodist Church in Middletown, where she is organist and choir director.

We welcome Marianne to our music staff.

After 14 years of dedicated service leading our Shepherd's Voice Media Ministry, **Peter Carbone** (photo, left) is moving on to other things. Many thanks, Peter, for all of your faithful work!

Jeff Tinker (right) is taking over, making sure the master DVDs and CDs are made of services and events. We also thank Jeff—and the rest of our wonderful team of volunteers!

