

Vision Made Personal

We are in the midst of a period of great importance. God's simple yet far-reaching vision for First Church is being brought into sharp focus. This vision has not changed since 1635.

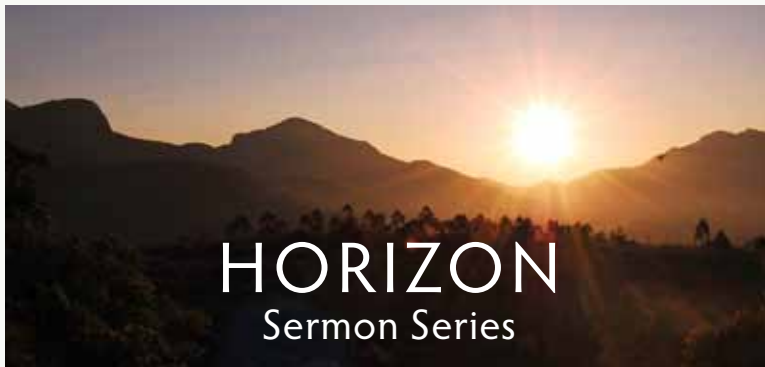
Our vision statement is: *Foster a grassroots movement of Kingdom communities who love God and love others in*

profound ways and live to extend His Kingdom. (See insert.)

Over the next few weeks, we will learn in practical terms how this will play out in our church—and personally, in our individual lives.

Starting with the April 22 sermon, catch any you missed or want to hear again by going to firstchurch.org/audio.

TRADITIONAL SERVICES: 8:45 & 10:30 AM
WIND CONTEMPORARY SERVICE: 10:30 AM



APRIL 22

What Is On the Horizon?

Text: Jeremiah 29:10-14 • Message by Deryk Richenburg

*Where is God leading us as a congregation, moving forward?
What is His preferred future for us?*

APRIL 29

Thy Kingdom Come

Text: Matthew 6:9-13 • Message by Deryk Richenburg

God's goal is for His glory and His Kingdom. God created the Church to be the vehicle toward that goal. How does our vision help us to live out what God designed us for?

MAY 6

How Will the Walls Come Down?

Text: Joshua 5:13-15 • Message by Deryk Richenburg

Joshua was looking over Jericho, trying to figure out how the walls would come down. Jesus shared how it would happen. How is Jesus leading us, as a congregation, to practically live out God's vision?

MAY 13

The Way of Life

Text: Deuteronomy 6:4-9 • Message by Deryk Richenburg

*How can I live out God's vision in my own life?
Is there a program I can take? Or is there something better?*



ONE OF MY MENTORS asked me the other day, "What could hold you back from moving the vision forward?" He was simply asking me this: *Are there things in your life or in your church that could block the vision from moving forward?*

To be honest, I have been struggling with these questions for a few years. God has impressed upon me a number of times His vision for me and First Church. I have written it down and even gotten excited about it. Unfortunately, I then concluded, it's too big, it's too big for me.

I have struggled like Moses when God revealed to him His desire to save His people in Egypt. Moses was excited about what God wanted to do. He was not excited about God's desire to use him.

Moses, we know, came up with every excuse as to why God should choose someone else. Moses argued that no one would believe him. He then said he couldn't speak eloquently. Finally, he asked if God could send someone else.

I have given all of those excuses to God. I have argued. I have tried to run away. God has answered every excuse and has revealed His power to fulfill what He desires.

I believe this vision is from God. I believe His desire is for us to *foster a grassroots movement of Kingdom communities who love God and love others in profound ways and live to extend His Kingdom.*

If we believe this vision, then we need to make sure we do everything to move forward with it. We must ask ourselves the question I was asked. Is there anything that could block the vision from moving forward?

If you believe with me that this vision is God's desire for us, then we must do everything to bring it about.

—Pastor Deryk

Living Out God's Vision

OUR HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH have been going over to Hartford City Mission to tutor inner-city youth. These senior-highers have been transformed through their serving. They have built relationships, shared Scripture, and impacted those they are serving.

As I think about our vision and how we live it out, this example of serving the outside community is helpful. Our youth are providing a model that shows how serving others can help us not only *be* disciples but also *make* disciples.

Serving others helps us grow as disciples.

One of the first things Jesus did with His disciples was to send them out. He didn't wait for them to graduate first. He sent out the twelve disciples in Luke 9, and in Luke 10 He sent out the seventy-two. Jesus knew that we grow as disciples when we are out working in the field. We don't learn to ride a bike by reading a book or watching a video. We learn to ride by getting on the bike and doing it with someone's help. In the same way, we learn to *be* His disciples by *acting* as His disciples.

With this knowledge, we are to go out and serve all over the world. Mission trips to the Dominican Republic and Peru are great because they help us grow as disciples. In the mission field we learn to trust God for His provision. We learn what it means to partner with Him and do His work.

Of course, we don't always have to travel long distances in our mission work. There are great needs around us. Last summer the Deacons served together (*top photo*). Learning to walk with God into these places of need is vital for our growth as disciples.

Let's face it, there are some things that can be learned only through serving others.

Serving others helps us extend His Kingdom.

Obviously, we don't just go out because we want to grow. We go out because we want to extend His Kingdom as well. God is already at work around us. When we serve others, we are partnering with Him to do His work. Addressing the needs around us gives us wonderful opportunities to love and serve people. It allows us to show our love for Jesus—and for them—by our actions. Sometimes, God gives us occasions to share His story through not only action but words as well. Furthermore, through our actions, we get to show others what God's Kingdom *looks* like.

Growing as disciples also happens at church.

Serving others is important to our growth as disciples. Obviously, it is not the only way to grow. Vital growth happens in the building as well. Corporately, we worship our amazing God in church. We also can learn more about God through classes and interaction with others. We can serve and love others who are part of our congregation. Disciples grow both inside and outside the church.

The Marsh Building

Some have been wondering how the upcoming Marsh Building renovation fits in with our vision. This project enables us to fulfill our vision because we use that building to grow disciples. The Marsh Building is where we raise our children to be disciples. It is one of the essential places we gather for weekday meetings to go deeper with God and one another. And it is the place where a significant portion of our people worship God. The Marsh Building is vital to our disciple-making mission.

The Marsh building is in desperate need of repair. The walls downstairs where the children learn are showing an even deeper problem. For one thing, there are issues with drainage around the foundation. This problem is not going away unless we fix it. I shudder when I see a new family going down there. Will they leave because they believe we are not creating a healthy environment for our children?

We are trying to be a community that lovingly provides a haven of hope. All of our buildings should be welcoming—especially where our children are.

Begin the conversation with others.

God's vision for us involves other churches!

Many of you know Christians who go to other churches. As you connect with them, *share the vision*. Think through ways you can partner together to extend His Kingdom. Pray together. Show off God's great love together.

I believe God wants to do great things in our midst, and I believe He wants us to do it together with others.



Take a Journey to True Financial Freedom!

THE KEY to any successful journey is preparation. Just as a vacation trip with no planning can end up stressful and unfulfilling, not knowing where you are headed financially can lead to disappointment and regret for years to come.



Important and effective help is at hand.

Join us in Keith Jones Hall on **Saturday, June 2**, for the **Crown Money Map** seminar, to learn God's true plan for your finances. This nonjudgmental, Bible-based program will help you:

- Learn practical steps for eliminating debt.
- Develop confidence in your financial decisions.
- Create a personalized plan for managing your finances and your life.

There is a nominal registration fee of \$25 per individual or per couple to cover the cost of materials. For more information, please visit firstchurch.org/crown.

Job Seekers Boot Camp Concludes May 15

Led by top pros **John Madigan** and **John Brubaker**, this free seminar series has attracted a large group. Join us for the final of three presentations—*The Job Interview*—and empower your job search! We will meet in the Fireside Room from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. on **Tuesday, May 15**. Please let us know you're coming by calling **Eileen** at 860.529.1575, x210. Details can be found at firstchurch.org/jobseekers.

Spring Work Day at the Church

Can you help us on **Saturday, May 12**? Projects include weeding, mulching, window washing, power washing (foundation walls), and dumpster enclosure staining. We start at 8:30 a.m., followed by provided BBQ lunch at noon. *Anyone able to bring a wheelbarrow for working on mulch will be twice blessed.* There is a sign-up sheet in the Wells Area, or call **Bob Keleher** at 860.529.1575, x299.

Help Record Our Services?

We need you, once or twice a month, to record the 8:45 or 10:30 service. All you

need is a little easy training. Contact **Jeff Tinker** at 860.951.1714 or jeffctinker@gmail.com for details. *Thank you!*

Cindy McDowell to Speak at Women's Fellowship Luncheon

On **Wednesday, May 9**, all women are invited to join us as local author and speaker **Lucinda Secrest McDowell** encourages us on *Growing Older GRATEfully*, with her wonderful wit and wisdom. We will gather at noon in the Fireside and Worship Rooms.

A longtime member of First Church, Cindy has authored more than 11 books and speaks nationally at conferences and events. Her books will be available for purchase. Women of all ages are welcome.

Sign up through **Kathy** at 860.301.6263 or k.rodriquez@comcast.net so that we have an accurate count for the caterer.

Send your \$6 "First Church of Christ" check in advance to **Michelle Adams** at the church. Also, visit firstchurch.org/WF.

D. R. Mission Golf Tournament

The sixth annual **Dominican Republic Mission Golf Tournament** will be held at Blackledge Country Club on **Saturday, June 9**.

The tournament starts at 8:00 a.m. with a shotgun start. Each team will use a scramble format for scoring. Continental breakfast will be served beginning at 7:00 a.m., and a barbecue lunch will be provided at the conclusion of play. All golfers are welcome, regardless of experience level. You

can register your team or we will match individual golfers to form foursomes. The cost is \$125 per golfer. NOTE: There is an early registration discount of \$10.00 (by **May 20**). This fee includes 18 holes of golf with cart, breakfast, lunch, on-course contests including longest drive and closest to the pin, and a tax-deductible contribution to support the mission trip.

Individuals, businesses, families and small groups can get involved by sponsoring a hole or special event sign, donate raffle prizes, or by sponsoring a youth golfer. Registration and sponsorship brochures are available at firstchurch.org/golf and also in the Wells Area.

Please contact **Dana Crompton** at 860.635.1530 or dcrompton@sbcglobal.net with any questions.

Downsizing Seminar Offered For Adults of All Ages

The **Seniors' Ministry** is sponsoring a free seminar for all ages on *Downsizing*, with speaker **Christine Lautz**, on **Wednesday, June 13**, from 10:00 to 11:30 a.m. in the Fireside Room. Christine is a Certified Relocation and Transition Specialist. **Tim Geary** from Covenant Village will also participate.

This presentation is open to all who are interested in how to take practical steps to downsize their possessions and simplify their lives now or for a move in their retirement years. For info or to register, please call **Michelle** at 860.529.1575, x212, or call **Pastor Mike** for details at x201.



Some of those who serve in our Alpha Prison and Community Ministry, led by Larry Mayer (top, blue sweater), gather for a group shot. They run nine correctional and two community programs in the state. Learn how offenders' lives are renewed: firstchurch.org/prisonalpha.

BOOK OF LIFE

BORN

Ezra James Willard, son of Todd and Tegan Willard, March 1, 2012

Matthew John Collura, son of Mark and Leeanne Collura, March 4, 2012

Thaddeus Prescott Hicinbothem, son of Christina and Robert Hicinbothem Jr., March 9, 2012

Alanah Eve Angus, daughter of Sean and Jessica Angus, March 21, 2012

Alexis Mairead and Keira Elise Solomonides, daughters of Jason Solomonides and Kerry O'Neal, April 2, 2012

Dominic James Kratzer, son of Kevin and Katie Kratzer, April 10, 2012

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

Traditional Services in the Meetinghouse:
8:45 and 10:30 a.m.

Wind Contemporary Service
in Keith Jones Hall: 10:30 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, x218.

Atessa M. Afshar Associate Minister
Wayne E. Luman Director of Caring Ministries
Marcia J. McCann Dir. of Children's 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 June issue of *The Spire*, which will be mailed/emailed on May 30, must be submitted to Dave Gilbert by noon on Friday, May 18, at daveg@firstchurch.org or 860.529.1575, x225.

DATED MATERIAL
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ASOF Winners' Concert

The winners of last September's national **Albert Schweitzer Organ Festival** competi-

Hartford Symphony Orchestra and serves as pianist and organist at the Chinese Baptist Church of Greater Hartford.

Christopher Ganza, first-place winner in the Young Professional Division, lives in Norman, Oklahoma, and is originally from Waterville, Maine. His CV in organ study, performance and occupation is already extensive, and currently he is pursuing a master's degree in organ performance at the University of Oklahoma.

This exciting musical experience will be enhanced by closed-circuit projection, allowing all present to view the organists as they play.



tion will present a rich and varied program on our Austin pipe organ on **Sunday, June 10, at 7:00 p.m.**

Mary Pan, who took first place in the High School Division, is an award-winning organist and pianist from Burlington, Connecticut. She has appeared as piano soloist with the

Following the concert, attendees will have a chance to meet these two young virtuosi at a reception.

An offering will be received, and childcare will be available (up to age 8). Don't miss this very special event—you will experience brilliant organ works from various periods.

Peru Trip Nears!

It's been a year since we first began our partnership with Temple Zion Church in Barranca, Peru, both directly and through Compassion International. As a congregation, we continue to develop bonds with the church and its pastor and parishioners—learning from each other and sponsoring children who attend Temple Zion's after-school program.

From May 15 to 22, seven from our church will travel to Barranca to build upon this partnership and some of the relationships already begun through correspondence with (and support of) individual children.

Here is how the rest of us can participate in this trip, from home:

SPONSOR A CHILD

If you are not currently a sponsor, visit the sponsorship table in the Wells Area on **any Sunday through May 13**, where you can

choose a specific child to sponsor and receive a photo/information packet.

HAVE US TAKE A GIFT FOR YOUR CHILD

If you currently sponsor a child, you can provide a small gift, which will be presented to your child. The item should be able to fit into a 1-quart Ziploc bag and must be clearly labeled with the child's name and Compassion Child ID number. They can be dropped off at the church **through May 6**.

PRAY

- Pray for travel mercies, protection—and for courage for first-time mission travelers.
- Pray that the team will be open to God's leading and sensitive to the work the Lord is doing, and how we as a church can further support this work.
- Pray that our team will discern ways that Temple Zion's own Kingdom work can serve as a model for First Church.