

Living as Disciples

I WOULDN'T BE THE FIRST to tell you that the world around us has changed. The church is no longer part of the essential fabric of the culture. Due to a variety of factors, the church has become marginalized.

Over the last twenty years, churches have tried to adapt to these changes. They have tried new programs. They have

changed worship. They have tried harder. But in the end, it hasn't worked.

Quite simply, our maps about "doing church" have changed. We program the data into our GPS system, but it is not leading us to the place we desire. The internal maps are all wrong. We can't get from here to there by our old maps. The way we have done church over the last fifty years doesn't work anymore. Why?



No matter how much we change the church, the people around us will not come in. The church is too foreign for them. They don't understand what we believe, and they believe something else.

The answer is not to change the church so that they come to us. We need to adapt as a people so that *we can go to them*.

Isn't this how Jesus did it?

We need to become people who live like Jesus. We need to love those around us, serve the community, and share with them about our King, Jesus, and His Kingdom.

We don't need to develop a program. All churches have learned to develop programs over the years. Yes, they provide pizzazz, but in the end they don't work. It might excite people, but new people are not added to the Kingdom.

What we need to do is develop *people who will follow Jesus and go to where people are*, rather than asking them to come to us.

In order to develop people, we need to focus on three areas. **First**, we need to spend time together in God's Word so that we can listen to His guidance, moving forward.

Second, we need to live out Hebrews 13. This means being intentional like Jesus and moving out of our comfort zones to the places of need. It means living as disciples wherever we are in life—going to people where they are, and meeting them there.

Third, we need to corporately provide opportunities to grow as disciples. Some of these opportunities need to be in church and some of them outside church.

Yes, our world has changed. The maps we knew don't work. We face an unknown future. The natural tendency is to get scared because we don't know what is on the horizon.

God has blessed me with thoughts of something different. Yes, we might not know exactly what will be around the bend. But isn't that what is fun about it? We get to be like Lewis and Clark and explore new territory. God will show us new and exciting things that are not on our existing maps. I can't wait to see those new things! —**Pastor Deryk**

10:00 AM Worship—Traditional and Contemporary

FAMILY GIFTS

Ephesians Sermon Series



Parents love to give gifts to their children. Our Heavenly Father is no different. He has gifted His children with spiritual gifts. What are they, and how are we to use them?

JULY 1 — Deryk Richenburg — Romans 12:3-8

JULY 8 — Michael McDowell — 1 Corinthians 12:1-11

JULY 15 — Deryk Richenburg — 1 Corinthians 12:12-31

JULY 22 — Logan Singerman — Luke 19:1-9

JULY 29 — Deryk Richenburg — Ephesians 4:11-14

AUGUST 5 — Michael McDowell — Ephesians 4:15-16

AUGUST 12 — Tessa Afshar — Non-Series Message

FAMILY WALK

Ephesians Sermon Series

We are part of God's family. As family members, we are to walk the family way. What does that look like?

AUGUST 19 — Tessa Afshar — Ephesians 4:17-24

AUGUST 26 — Deryk Richenburg — Ephesians 4:25-32

SEPTEMBER 2 — Todd Willard — Ephesians 4:32

Metcalf Scholars Gather to Celebrate and Inspire

The Metcalf Scholarship Program, serving the community for over 30 years, selects students who are graduates of Hartford public high schools. They provide a ministry not only to the students but to their family members as well.

The annual Metcalf Scholarship “picnic,” held on June 10, was truly inspiring. Several students spoke of their special connection with the committee member who has served as their mentor and friend—relationships that often last long after graduation.

There were reports on previous graduates—one is a physician in Puerto Rico, another is forming his own business, another is going for a master’s degree in social work. The college graduation rate of those supported by this program remains close to 100%.

Chairperson **Chris Dukes** gave a moving talk on what the financial and personal support has meant to those in need—including himself, having been a Metcalf Scholarship recipient years ago (*see his letter, next column*). He introduced special guests **Betty Metcalf**, widow of Frank, who chaired the committee for many years, and **Terry Shook**, incoming chair of the Outreach Committee. The opening prayer was given by **Pastor Mike**.

This was an opportunity to extend best wishes to three graduating college seniors who had benefited from their scholarships and mentoring, and to welcome three new recipients. There are also three sophomores and three juniors in the program.

The graduates are **Gresa Ajeti**, UConn; **Michael Budhram**, UConn; and **Miguel Vazquez Jr.**, Babson College.

The three students just entering the program are **Nicole Barracliff**, **René Evans**, and **Rochelle Forbes**, all in the Class of 2016. Nicole is a graduate of Hartford’s Sport and Medical Sciences Academy, a magnet school, and she will be a freshman at Saint Joseph College. **Chris Dukes** is her mentor. René, a graduate of Hartford Public High School, will attend Howard University, mentored by **Jim Roberts**. And Rochelle, a graduate of the Sport and Medical Sciences Academy, will attend Cornell University, mentored by **Suzanne Thorburn**.

Other Metcalf Scholarship mentors are First Church members **Susan Coogan**, **Christine Dukes**, **Barbara Mentzer**, **Elizabeth Onyebuchi**, **Al Phillips**, and **Christina Phillips**.

Currently there are two openings on the committee. Call Chris Dukes, at 860.524.9113, for more information. Becoming a Metcalf member is a highly rewarding and fulfilling experience.

A Letter from Chris Dukes

WHEN I WAS 19, the Outreach Scholarship Program, known today as the Frank Metcalf Scholarship Program, was my first exposure to Christian outreach and mission work.

I made the same mistake others still tend to stumble on—as they try to understand the purpose and effectiveness of this form of outreach. Perhaps the word “scholarship” contributes to the misunderstanding.

I credit the program for being my first exposure to faith-based mentorship. Little did I know that the seeds which were sown during my participation would be blessed and grow into the roots that lie at the foundation of my leadership within First Church today. Through Christ, I am blessed with the strength to have served as section leader/soloist in the Ministry of Music, and I am honored to serve as a second-year Deacon and current Chairperson of the Metcalf Scholarship Committee (since 2004).

For the past eight years, I have heard Metcalf Scholars express almost identical testimonies to mine concerning the unforeseen impact this outreach would have on their lives. This form of mission work is not limited to the individuals selected to participate. The outreach extends to parents, siblings, grandparents, etc., who attend our gatherings and are led to engage in ongoing Christian fellowship. Such fellowship reaches far beyond the Metcalf Scholars’ graduation.

The most important factors concerning the Metcalf Scholarship Program are that it is true mission work—with the desired elements of discipleship that are stressed from our pulpit—and that those we serve are only a few miles from First Church. The benefits to the community and those impacted by this mission far outweigh the financial costs.

The common terms used by past and current scholars to describe their experiences include *love, family, and friendship*.

Those words are a far cry from the realities in which these individuals were found. Like me, these scholars have witnessed, first-hand, the toils and snares of substance abuse, poverty, physical/sexual abuse, and domestic violence. Through Christ, they have been spared. Through the Metcalf Scholarship Program, they have been uplifted, inspired, and guided to live by Christian values and to know they are loved and that they will always be welcomed by our church.



In this photo are (*seated*) Chris Dukes; Miguel Vazquez, Class of 2012; James Hightower, 2015; René Evans, 2016; Erinda Daci, 2014; Al Phillips; (*middle row*) Na’Tasha Bryan, 2013; Christine Dukes with Natalie; Nicole Barracliff, 2016; Rochelle Forbes, 2016; Gresa Ajeti, 2012/13 (5-year program); Michael Budhram, 2012; (*top row*) Sue Coogan; Suzanne Thorburn; Jim Roberts; and Barbara Mentzer.

THE MARSH BUILDING: Are We Ready?

OUR VISION, God's preferred future for us, is to see God's Kingdom come here in our midst as a church and in the communities around us. This vision is bigger than us, yet it must begin right here at home, raising up disciples among us. The **Marsh Building Revitalization Project** enables us to move forward toward our vision. That excites me. I recognize that this will be a tough undertaking, but I believe it is both doable and urgently necessary. —*Pastor Deryk*

The recently completed **Readiness Study** conducted by Rev. **Bill VanderWyden** of VanderWyden Consultants has given the Marsh Building Committee renewed enthusiasm and confidence in our church's ability to undertake this ambitious project and has led to a refinement of our thoughts concerning one of the most important elements of the plan—drainage and water management. The following points summarize our thinking:

- **The Marsh Building** is an important but poorly performing asset in our facilities complex.
- **The conditions** resulting from years of poor drainage, dampness, and standing water after rain have led to pervasive, ongoing destruction of walls, window frames and sills throughout the building, and carpeting and floor tiles in the basement Church School classrooms and hallways.

Longstanding problems with mold have virtually destroyed carpeting and resulted in unacceptable dampness and odors in classrooms and corridors.

- **New families** considering First Church have been put off by these sights and smells and walked away, never to return, as they toured classrooms with their children for the first time.
- **An exhaustive study** of the water and drainage issues profoundly affecting the Marsh Building is underway and includes evaluations by expert civil engineers and consultants familiar with the water flow conditions surrounding our campus. This study will ensure that the proposed remedies are thorough and designed to permanently address all the conditions contributing to the problem.
- **The Marsh Building** is legally compliant with all life safety codes for public buildings, but once the interior of this vintage,

1950s building undergoes renovation, we will present a revitalized multi-use facility that is clean and inviting, that frees us from the major underlying issues that have plagued us for decades, and that provides a more efficient use of space.

- **The Readiness Study** reflects a solid level of positive support for the Revitalization Project, and the study results also underscore the need for a comprehensive approach to the underlying, systemic problems afflicting the building.
- **The Marsh Building Committee** is encouraged and energized by the high level of support among those we have already approached at this early stage, and by the soundness and clarity being achieved with the needs and solutions.

The Committee is proceeding with the preparations for final decision-making by church leadership and the congregation on allowing this project to go forward.

Please watch for the next steps in the process, and address any questions to **John Davis**, Marsh Building Committee Chair, at 860.633.4388.

—*The Marsh Building Committee*



ABOVE: First impressions of our Church School areas.
BELOW: Keith Jones Hall, reconfigured and revitalized.



Community Cubed: Love and Deep Healing

Community Cubed is a place where I can finally be myself...and receive God's love and forgiveness through the unconditional love and support of the group's leaders and members. I am forever grateful for this most freeing experience. —C

Many of us hunger for a deeper, more genuine faith experience. We long to be in a community that truly knows us and helps us draw nearer to Jesus. We desire to be free of old wounds and anything that blocks the healing of our souls. We thirst to be more like our true selves in the maturity of Jesus.

Is it possible to have such an experience?

Community Cubed is a 16-week ministry designed to promote healthier community with God and with one another.

As one of our members put it: *How encouraging to discover that in God's Kingdom you are never too old to learn how to grow closer to Jesus and His children. You just have to be willing to move out of your comfort zone, trust the process and others—our loving God will do the rest. My soul has been longing for this for many years. —N*

This is not an easy process. It requires self-examination, trust, repentance, grace, and self-revelation. But it is a healing process when entered into fully.

Another participant shared this about Cubed: *Through Community Cubed I was brought to the edge where my personal secrets lay hidden from view. It was time to give my secrets*

to my Father. It was time to repent for my part. As I released the broken pieces of my life, I felt the holes being filled with God's love for me. —P

Appropriately sharing the secrets of our lives with one another and receiving acceptance and love in exchange is the first step toward the process of deeper healing. Accepting responsibility for our wrong responses and actions, and forgiving, is the next step. These are the simple facts of our Christian heritage (James 5:16). The problem is that we rarely have the opportunity to live out these truths with any real depth.

One of the most powerful aspects of the Cubed process is that those who attend and lead it become equipped to carry that healing process into our families, into the lives of other Christians, and even into the world of those who have yet to know Christ.

If you are ready to have your life changed, come and join us.

—Wayne and Tessa

Wayne Luman, 860.529.1575, x203 • Tessa Afshar, x202



Alpha Returns, Striving to Expand Its Reach



Is Jesus relevant to life today? Why do I need God in my life? I think religion is created by people and just leads to strife. How is Christianity any different? Alpha addresses these and many more questions that seekers and even new Christians might have.

This year we are joining South Church and offering our Alpha experience on their Hartford campus. By doing so, we feel we are able to reach more people for God's Kingdom, particularly in the Hartford area.

In the future, we look forward to partnering with other churches that might benefit from our support and experience, although we hope to periodically offer Alpha at First Church as well. Our desire as we reach out to other churches is to share the message of the Gospel with as many people as we can, and a partnership increases our ability to accomplish this goal.

Although Alpha will not be held on our church grounds this September, the leaders and helpers will still come from First Church since this is the first time South Church is hosting Alpha. This is still a First Church event, as much as it is also a South Church event. So we appreciate your continued support and prayers. *And please do invite friends and coworkers to this amazing time of fellowship.*

Alpha starts on **Wednesday, September 26**, and ends on **Wednesday, December 12**. Complimentary dinners are part of this beautiful ministry. **Terry Shook** (photo above) will be the Alpha Director this year, and he would be delighted to answer any questions you may have. For more information or to register, please call **Marilyn Danielson** at 860.529.1575, x213.



The seven who recently traveled to Peru found their experience profoundly meaningful as they developed bonds with Temple Zion Church in Barranca and with many of the children sponsored by our members. We look forward to hearing from them and from those who will be serving in the Dominican Republic and in Birmingham, Alabama, this summer! Back from Peru are Tina Balmer, Lisa Breglio, Andrea Henderson, Barbara Plante, Deryk Richenbun, Drew Shattuck, and Kate Stiffle.

Partnering at First Church

Opportunities to Serve Brochure Enclosed

One of the meanings of “partner” is “to serve as the partner of.” When we serve God at First Church—using our gifts and talents and giving of our time—we become partners in building up His Kingdom.

Kathy Rodriguez has worked hard to prepare a delightful, organized and very handy form that lists many of the opportunities available for serving. It is in the form of a brochure (in the printed *Spire* and at the church) and is also online as a form that can be completed and submitted from your computer or mobile device (firstchurch.org/serve). The brochure can be dropped into the Opportunities to Serve box in the Wells Area or mailed to Kathy c/o First Church. Let us give you all the details about the items that catch your eye!

No matter which opportunities are chosen—large or seemingly less important—the rewards are great and the results have eternal significance. Will you take a few minutes to consider how you can make such a profound difference?

Bob Papertsian on Wonposet

On Saturday, May 19, six men joined me and other church teams and individuals from around the state to help prepare Camp Wonposet (sister camp of Camp Hope) for its summer opening.

We painted cabins, did yard work, moved bunks, and helped with other assorted jobs. Much work has already been completed during the past months and years, but much still needs to be completed. The leadership of the camp is confident God will provide the resources for what is yet unfinished.

I would like to thank **Bob Anderson, Bill Cookson, Ted Hulbert, Justin McDowell, and Larry Smith**, as well as **Lans Anderson** from Berlin Congregational Church, who all joined me in doing this Kingdom work for our Father.

20th Annual Men's Advance

The fall weekend of **September 28-30** marks the twentieth year of First Church's conference for men, and the twelfth year at Pilgrim Pines in southern New Hampshire. Our guest speaker, **Bill Paige**, will present the theme **All In: Steps to Significant Discipleship**.

This promises to be an incredible weekend for both men and youth. Informative

brochures are available in the Wells Area and online. Questions? Contact **Bob Papertsian** at bobpapertsian@cox.net or **Drew Shattuck** at 860.529.1575, x223, or drews@firstchurch.org. **Register now!**

Nursery School Registration

Registration for the 2012-13 Nursery School year is still open (and proceeding at a record rate)! We offer classes for children who are 2¾ to 5½ years old. At this time, we have availability only in our afternoon classes. If you have a little one, or know someone who needs a wonderful nursery school, contact Pat at 860.529.1575 or at patg@firstchurch.org. Much more information is available online at firstchurch.org/nurseryschool.

Remember Last Summer's Great Wednesday Barbecues?

Drop by this summer for a cookout and fellowship on the church lawn, on Wednesday nights starting at 5:30, **from July 11 to August 29**. **Bruce Johnston** and **Ed Ryszkiewicz** will grill hot dogs, hamburgers and chicken and provide side dishes and ice-cold lemonade. We look forward to seeing you and your friends!

If possible, please sign up at the reception desk the Sunday before, or call the receptionist any weekday (except Fridays) at 860.529.1575. There is no charge, although freewill offerings will be accepted. For details, call Ed at 860.778.1245. See photos at firstchurch.org/BBQ.

Road to Nineveh

Simultaneous Adult and Children's Classes On the Book of Jonah, July 11 to August 29

YOUTH AND ADULTS LED BY PASTOR DERYK

Compassion. God has it in abundance. All of us have benefited from it and love it. Jonah loved it when it was directed at him. He hated it when it went to the people Jonah was called to share God's message with. Like Jonah, God is calling each of us to be His witnesses and share His compassion. How will we respond? Will we be like Jonah? Or Jesus?

Join us as we study the Book of Jonah and discuss practical ways we can share God's compassion with those He calls us to; meeting on **Wednesdays**, in the Meetinghouse, 6:30 to 8:00 p.m., **July 11 to**

August 29. To register for childcare (up to completed kindergarten), call **Debbie** at 860.529.1575, x303.

CHILDREN

A children's Bible study, for those who have completed grade 1, 2, 3, or 4, will be held at the same time and dates as the adult study of Jonah—6:30 to 8:00 p.m. on **Wednesdays, July 11 to August 29**—this year held in the Worship/Fireside Rooms.

Guided by the *Joy of Living* Youth Bible Studies, children will study the Book of Jonah through Scripture reading, games, crafts, and more. Our Children's Ministries team will lead this valuable class. And have your children bring their friends!



THE FINAL DEACONS' MEETING of the season, led by outgoing chairperson Nan Green, was held on June 5 and also included Deacons Emeriti; in all, about 60 were present. Nan set aside time for the Deacons to give reflections on the year just ending—many spoke about the wonderful sense of community they all share—and presented them with olive tree crosses from leaders Deb Chilberg, Joe Clark, and herself. Guest speakers were Tina Balmer and Barb Plante (on Peru), Pastor Mike (about Senior Ministries), Judy Franzen (Church Board), and John Davis (Marsh Building Revitalization Project).

BOOK OF LIFE

ENTERED ETERNAL LIFE

Margaret L. Willard, May 12, 2012
Robert Tatters, May 19, 2012
Donna Bristol-Amoruso, June 2, 2012
Helen Henry, June 11, 2012
Carl Howard Johnson, June 17, 2012
Elizabeth Neild, June 21, 2012

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

BORN

Nathaniel Slater, son of Jason and Lizbeth Slater, May 28, 2012

BAPTIZED June 17, 2012

Thaddeus Prescott Hicinbothem, son of Robert and Christina (Stamos) Hicinbothem Jr.
Sophia Isabel Rodriguez, daughter of Felix and Carolyn (Rame) Rodriguez

UNITED IN MARRIAGE

Matthew Raymond Noeker and Danielle Bernadette Acampora, June 16, 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 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, 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. Richenbourg 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 9/5/12, must be submitted to Dave Gilbert by noon on Wed., August 15, at daveg@firstchurch.org or 860.529.1575, x225.

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ASOF XV

The 15th annual **Albert Schweitzer Organ Festival**, featuring an important national competition for students of the organ as well as a world-class concert, will be held September 7-9. The extraordinary Celebration Concert opens the festival on **Friday, September 7**, at 7:30 p.m., featuring the artistry of three noted organists: **Faythe Freese**, acclaimed recitalist, educator, and recording artist; international concert organist **Cherry Rhodes**,

whose playing has been described as “a joyous celebration of unrivaled artistry”; and organ virtuoso **Gordon Turk**, whose worldwide performances have won top awards. The concert will also feature the Festival Choir, conducted by ASOF co-founder **David Spicer**. Visit our Web page—firstchurch.org/ASOF—or contact the Ministry of Music and the Arts at 860.529.1575, x209, for more information about this exciting event.



On Saturday, May 26, members of the Pilgrim Youth Choir enjoyed the musical “Amazing Grace” at the Norma Terris Theatre in Chester and had dinner at La Vita Gustosa in East Hadam, thanks to a generous anonymous donation. Participants were (top row) Elissa Coleman, Grace Nelson, David Johnston, Jared Darius, Rachael Allen, (middle row) Ben Henderson, Abby Ziegler, Noelani Liz, Anne Allen, (front) Robert Johnston, and Kevin Shattuck.

We thank all of our PYC members for a wonderful year of outstanding music, including those who could not attend the May 26 trip: Austin Bednarz, Ben Goldman, Andrew Morin, Clark Otis, Sara Penn, Catherine Preysner, and John Preysner.



Greg and Ellen Voth's Sunday morning Bible study class decided to add a community project to their usual summer picnic. Their latest study, based on *Our Father's World*, a book by Ed Brown of the environmental missions organization Care of Creation, inspired them to make a serious clean-up effort at Wethersfield Cove. Some of the class members who helped that day posed afterward; pictured above are Laura Shively, Justin McDowell, cove expert Phil Munroe, Bill Cookson, Greg Voth, and Eileen McGuinness.