



THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF DARIEN
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Parish Columns

NOVEMBER 2014

Inside this issue:

Advent Workshop	2
In Brief	2
Women's Association Thanksgiving Fair	3
Board of Outreach Feed My Starving Children Update	3
FoodFirst Sunday	3
More Outreach News Open Door Shelter	4
Dove Boxes	4
Christmas Tree for ElderHouse	4
Turkey Distribution	4
Connecting Teens with Work	5
Expanding Church Friends	5
From the Desk of Teri Manning	5
4th Grade Bible Sunday	5
Youth Group News	6
YSOP	7
Ski Trip	7
Confirmation	7
Church Calendar	8

The Building of Hope

Something occurred on Youth Mission Sunday, wonderful on the face of things, yet pregnant with deeper meaning. Something beyond the fine job by Finley, Josh and all of the other youth. During the announcements, I presented our former pastor, Rev. Ron Evans and his wife Janet to familiar friends and introduced them to newer members. I could sense our eagerness to greet and applaud as I bid them to rise, and you poured out a heartfelt and much-deserved reception.

Then I explained to those who hadn't met them how very much they had done, Ron as faithful shepherd to this flock for 25 years, Janet as seemingly involved in every force for good in town. The couple gave their lives to build up First Congregational and to better our life here in Darien. As this unfolded, I noticed appreciative tears well up in your eyes, smiles lighting up your faces. Spontaneously, I asked us to show our appreciation again, this time a rousing, standing ovation!

And do you know what? It would have been painful and wrong to do any less in that moment. That deserved praise was buried in us, waiting to come out, begging for expression, just right. Fix that moment in your mind next time you invite someone to praise God with us and they say, "Why would I want to do that?" We Americans are practical and utilitarian. We evaluate all things inasmuch as they will benefit us. And praising God is about as practical and utilitarian as holding your beloved's hand or stealing a spontaneous kiss from her lips. Part of the beauty of worship is its pointlessness, like going to the beach, or driving a Ferrari to nowhere in particular.

Why do we praise God? Why is worship the most vital thing we do? It defies common sense. But think about it. As much as Ron and Janet have done, God provides the air we breathe, the water we drink, the parents who love us into adulthood, the children to carry on as we're gone. God is our origin, who created us; our destiny, who'll receive us; the very ground of our being. God is the Maker of all life, the Creator of all things beautiful, and our Redeemer from death. Did you know the word worship derives from the old English "worth-ship"? That gives us a clue.

Ron and Janet remind us, if we couldn't respond to God's generous goodness with thanks and praise, it would be painful. As we do, it gives us a feeling just right, down to our bone marrow. And the rightness of worship also derives from the truth that we become like what we worship. If we worship power, we become ruthless. If we worship money, our soul is as lifeless as an ATM. But as we gaze on the image of God in Christ and lift it up, as we give up our admiration and wonder to God without reservation, we ourselves bathe in the rare, holy light God radiates.

We praise God above all, for God has marked us with love, care and goodness in giving us Jesus. And not to answer God's initiative with praise and thanksgiving just feels excruciatingly wrong. Yes, other things happen as we worship. We learn things. We motivate ourselves to do good. But these are byproducts of the one essential reason: because we've been loved by God in an extraordinary way. If one thing matters in this life, it is to return God's love. Our worthy praise of God is deep in us, waiting to come out, begging for expression, just right. See you on Sunday!

THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF DARIEN

14 Brookside Road
Darien, CT 06820
Phone: 203-655-0491
Email: info@uccdarien.org
Website: www.uccdarien.org

CLERGY AND STAFF

Rev. Dale Rosenberger, Senior Minister
DRosenberger@uccdarien.org

Daniel Hague, Music Director
DHague@uccdarien.org

Max Pakhomov, Organist
MPakhomov@uccdarien.org

Dennis Hanlon, Church Administrator
DHanlon@uccdarien.org

Teri Manning, Nursery School Director
fccns@sbcglobal.net

Karen Hansen, Treasurer
KHansen@uccdarien.org

Justin Inners, Youth Minister
JInners@uccdarien.org

Kate Nelson, Church School Director
KNelson@uccdarien.org

Sally Bassler,
Lay Minister for Pastoral Care
SBassler@me.com

Tim Wilson, Sexton

Jerzy Kamowski, Nursery School Custodian

PARISH COLUMNS STAFF

Kathy Cramer, Editor

Nancy Sheed, Communications Chair

To submit information, send an email to:
ParishColumns@uccdarien.org

SUNDAY SERVICES

8:30 a.m. and 10:00 a.m.
Church School and child care available
during the 10:00 a.m. service

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

Tuesday-Friday, 8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.



The Board of Christian Education would like to invite you to an:

Advent Celebration

Sunday, December 7

4:00-6:00 p.m.

Come for all or part of the evening. All are Welcome!
Invite a friend or neighbor. There will be something for everyone.

Crafts for kids begins at 4:00 p.m. and there will be plenty
of snacks and drinks on hand for parents

Carols in the sanctuary will start at
5:00 p.m. with Justin

Dinner is at 5:30 p.m. with ham, scalloped potatoes,
sides, and lots of desserts

****Stay tuned for the sign- up sheets in Parish Hall****
Questions: please email Liz Werner,
lrwerner@optonline.net

In Brief..Church Announcements

FMSC M&M tube collection

- Don't forget to return your donations for FMSC (either with the M&M tube or without) to the Church Office. \$14.00 per tube and checks can be made out to First Congregational Church of Darien.

11th hour 'Come As You Are Service' meeting - Sunday, November 2

- Join Justin Inners and other members as we discuss the possibilities for an informal service on Saturdays.

House Tour meeting - Wednesday, November 5

- We are very excited to share with you what's happening with the new fundraising event the FCC House Tour. Please, come join us to see how you can contribute at the next meeting which will be November 5 at Church at 9:30 a.m. We look forward to seeing everyone there!

Book Signing

- Dale Rosenberger and co-author Verlee Copeland signed copies of their book, "Sex and the Spirit" at Barrett Bookstore recently.



Women's Association presents: Thanksgiving Fair

Sunday, November 23

We are trying to go outside our membership to attract more fair goers, so be sure to invite friends and neighbors to come by to see what we have to offer. The Fair begins after the 8:30 a.m. service and goes until 3:00 p.m. We have some really great items to raffle off this year! Some of them will be on display after Church services and raffle tickets will on sale, too. Buy 5 tickets for \$20. or \$5. each.

Yummy baked goods are needed for Giant Bake Sale. We need a lot more quick breads, cakes, cookies, etc. this year. If baking isn't your thing, how about soups that can be frozen or flavored vinegars and oils? Drop your donations off on Friday, November 21, Saturday, November 22, or early Sunday morning. Remember to wrap and label everything

Rummage Sale is Back

We are reestablishing the Rummage Sale! Check your gift closets and donate those undistributed gift or look for small gently used home goods that need a new home. Or consider the Jewelry Boutique, a Thanksgiving Fair favorite and a great place for kids to shop! Check your drawers for unwanted or seldom worn treasures to donate. A collection box outside the Church office is waiting for your items.

Still Opportunities to Help

There is still time to help make craft items. November 5, 6:00 - 9:00 p.m. and November 12, 9:00 -11:00 a.m. Or you can also join the fun of baking and sampling! November 19, 6:00 - 9:00 p.m., November 20, 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon and/or November 21, 6:00 - 9:00 p.m.

Women's Association Christmas Luncheon

Mark your calendars and come to the annual Christmas Luncheon on Friday, December 12, 12:00 - 2:00 p.m. Back this year: The Accabellas! Join us to enjoy lunch, fellowship, and sensational singing. Sign up sheet in Parish Hall.

Board of Outreach News

Feed My Starving Children

Over 200,000 meals packed!

The Board of Outreach would like to send a big note of "THANKS" to all members of the Congregation who helped contribute and volunteer and for helping to make the 6th annual FMSC Mobilepack Event a success. We met our goal of 200,000 meals over the weekend of October 17-19, by packing 202,176 meals which will be sent to starving children around the world.

As part of our global outreach, we are blessed to have so many willing and able volunteers in our Congregation who took up this challenge with us.



FoodFirst FoodFirst FoodFirst Sunday, Nov. 2

Don't forget FoodFirst Sunday and place your donations at the front of the Church around our Communion Table. All contributions will be delivered to one of two local charities we support through the Board of Outreach. Pantry supplies are low and the need is still high, so please do what you can to help those in need. Hearty Soups are always needed this time of year.

Other Outreach News

Open Door Shelter Cooking and Serving Opportunities

November 13 and 14; December 11 and 12

NEW Evening time for cooking opportunity for the Open Door Shelter. In case you can't make our day time activities, this cooking session in the evening might work for your schedule. This is very rewarding work and we hope to include more of the Congregation with the evening hours. See dates below for November and December;

Thursday, November 13, 6:30 p.m.—cook at First Congregational Church in Darien

Friday, November 14, 11:45 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.—serve at Open Door Shelter, 4 Merritt Street, South Norwalk.

Thursday December 5, 8:00 a.m.—cook at First Congregational Church in Darien

Friday December 6, 11:45 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.—serve at Open Door Shelter, 4 Merritt Street, South Norwalk.

“Most of the families and individuals who come to the Open Door Shelter arrive with almost nothing and depend on community donations for household goods, food, and other necessities. There is a particular need for department store or grocery gift certificates, kitchenware, baby clothes and supplies, and disposable items such as soap, toothpaste, and paper products. Donations can be dropped off at The Open Door Shelter at 4 Merritt Street in South Norwalk.”

Please let Heather Raker know if you would like to help by emailing her at HRaker@me.com.

46th Year of Dove Boxes

Beginning November 16

Doves will be winging their way into our Parish Hall, starting in November, so please be sure to pick out a **green dove** (financial assistance) or a **white dove** (food box donation) and support local families in need during the Christmas season. Doves will be available on November 16, 23, 30 and December 7, in Parish Hall. This is the 46th year of the Person-to-Person Dove program, and we want to continue this wonderful tradition by sharing our blessings with the community at the holiday time. Our Confirmands will help deliver the Dove Boxes on December 13.

Should you have any questions regarding Doves, please feel free to contact Board Members: Annette Madden-Kline: a_madden_kline@hotmail.com or Gayle Appleby: Gayle@applebycapital.com

Christmas Tree for Elderhouse

Beginning Sunday, November 16

The Board of Outreach will be donating a fully decorated tree to Elderhouse in Norwalk for the Seniors who attend their day care and other social services. Please help us create a spectacular tree for those who may not have one of their own at home. We will collect small cash donations, ornaments, lights, ribbons, candy canes starting Sunday, November 16. Vince Hough, member of the Board of Outreach, will be the “go to guy” for this project. If you have questions or would like to assist Vince in this effort, please contact him at houghvince@gmail.com.

Thanksgiving Turkey Distribution

Tuesday, November 25, 8:30 – 11:30 a.m.

We currently have 150 Turkeys and groceries for a full Thanksgiving dinner for each family to distribute at the Open Door Shelter and we need at least 10 volunteers to help make this holiday even better for those in need. If you are interested in helping out the Outreach Board and distributing a Thanksgiving meal to those in need, please contact Bob McGee at rmcgee03@sbcglobal.net or sign up in Parish Hall.

Board of Deacons Connects Teens with Work

Do you have a teen who is looking to make a little extra money—babysitting, mowing lawns, dog walking, or pet sitting (easy things like fish and hamsters)? We are looking to create a list of teens who have a service to offer to our Congregation. Have your teen send Karen Brennan an e-mail at KBrennan15@aol.com with his/her name, grade, contact information, service(s), and hourly or project rate(s). We'll then share the list with the Congregation in a few weeks time and start connecting our families!

Deacons Expanding Church Friends

Did you know that we have a small (but mighty) group of volunteers ready and willing to lend a hand when you need it? We cook meals for when a member is in need of a night off for health or other reasons, we run errands when you can't get out, we drive you to and from doctor's appointments ... and more. If you would like to be included on the e-mail distribution list so that you can hear the call when it goes out, please send an e-mail to Karen Brennan at KBrennan15@aol.com. When you get the e-mail and have the time to give, you help out. If you are busy, you just lend a hand when you can. Join us!

Board of Christian Education From the Desk of Teri Manning ...

Teachers at The First Congregational Church Nursery School believe in the power of play. In a recent New York Times op-ed piece, "The Building Blocks of a Good Pre-K", Dr. Nancy Nager and Bank Street President, Shael Polakow-Suransky, champion this philosophy.

"As they play, children develop vital cognitive, linguistic, social and emotional skills. They make discoveries, build knowledge, experiment with literacy and math and learn to self-regulate and interact with others in socially appropriate ways. Play is also fun and interesting, which makes school a place where children look forward to spending their time. It is so deeply formative for children that it must be at the core of our early childhood curriculum."

Bravo!

4th Grade Bible Sunday



*Congratulations to the 4th Graders who received their bibles on October 26! Pictured from left to right:
Ryan Hapgood, Lily Voigt, Richie Almy, Almond Nickerson, Lucy Brennan and Jillian Fox.
Not pictured, Sloane Mullin and Morgan Lindell.*

Youth Group News

Mission Trip Service 2014 in pictures



Halloween Party Fundraiser for Mission Trip 2015 in pictures



Bravo to the High School Youth Group who came up with this great, new idea. Also, thank you to Leila Wetmore, Justin Inners, Finley Wetmore, and Roisin Burke for all of their help with this event. Thirty youngsters enjoyed all the games and Halloween treats. Many thanks to the confirmands and other volunteers who helped make this party run smoothly. Everyone had a great time.

Upcoming Events for November

On November 9, from 5:00-7:00 p.m., we will be holding a combined youth gathering for all youth in both Middle School and High School. There will be food, games, and a time of discussion.

On November 23, from 1:00-3:00 p.m., we will be holding a combined youth gathering for all youth in both Middle School and High School. This will be the first question night of the year. Please bring your questions about life, faith, the bible, or anything else that you've been wondering about. Together we will discuss our thoughts on each topic and hear what scripture says about it. It will be a great way to explore how our faith is related to our everyday life.

Our next trip to New Covenant House will be November 11. We will meet at the Church at 4:00 p.m. and return around 6:00 p.m. Please let Justin know if you are interested in helping serve by emailing him at JInners@uccdarien.org.

Youth Group Fall Retreat

November 14 - 16

Silver Lake Conference Center

\$130./person

This weekend will consist of fun, fellowship, games, bible study, and sharing. This retreat promises to be a wonderful opportunity to build friendships and grow deeper in faith. Contact Justin Inners for more information:

JInners@uccdarien.org

YSOP - December 13

Our Youth Group and previous Confirmation classes have participated in this program before and it has been a great experience. We will all be assigned a soup kitchen, food pantry or some experience helping with the less fortunate of NYC. The Staff do a great job of discussing homelessness and the safety of our youth while on this project. We divide into groups and head out to various sites around the five boroughs. YSOP uses all of these organizations regularly.

After several hours of hands-on help, we will meet back at YSOP. The office is close to Union Square and the staff will facilitate a discussion on what we did and what we saw in the facilities. It is a truly amazing day and one you and your child will not forget. Great for mentors to join as well. Kids are welcome to bring friends.

Contact Justin Inners if you would like to participate in this service project, JInners@uccdarien.org.

Youth Group Ski Trip

Stowe, VT - Save the date: March 6 - March 8

Join the youth group for this fun ski trip to the Round Hearth at Stowe in Stowe, VT. Save the date for this all-inclusive weekend, which includes:

- 2 nights at the lodge
- Day Lift Tickets for Stowe (Saturday and Sunday)
- 3 Full Meals (Saturday breakfast + dinner and Sunday breakfast). All meals at Round Hearth are home cooked and all-you-can-eat!
- ALL GAMES at Round Hearth on FREE PLAY!! (Arcades, Billiards, and Air Hockey)

Round Hearth at Stowe has a hot tub! You can contact Tracey Berry with any questions regarding the trip at tbcb@optonline.net.

Confirmation Class Notes

Our Confirmation Class has taken off and has been busy with activities throughout October. The Confirmands enjoyed a game of man-hunt at the Raker's home (thank you!) as the parents enjoyed some fellowship with a pot luck. They also helped package some of the over 200,000 meals for the Feed My Starving Children organization's mobile pack event in Darien. The confirmands were also busy collecting Halloween Costumes for Neighbors Link Stamford. Over 50 costumes were delivered in October to many happy children!



November/December Events

Sunday, November 2, 6:00 p.m., Mentor/Confirmand Dinner at the Freemans home (MaryannFreeman@me.com)

Sunday, November 9 and **Sunday, November 16** - Confirmation Classes at 11:15 a.m.

Wednesday, November 12, 3:15 p.m., at Temple Beth El in Stamford, (contact Emily Fox, emkfox@optonline.net)

December sneak peek: Dec. 6, Advent Workshop (contact Liz Werner, rlwerner@optonline.net);

Dec. 13, YSOP, (contact Justin Inners, JInners@uccdarien.org);

Dec. 14, Dove Box Delivery (contact Gayle Appleby, gayle@applebycapital.com);

TBD, Confirmands vs. Senior at Atria event (contact Liz Werner, rlwerner@optonline.net)

Church Calendar Notes

November 1: Mystery Dinner #2, 6:30 p.m., Various

November 13 and 14: Cook/Serve, 6:30 p.m./11:45 a.m., Church Kitchen/Open Door Shelter
Join us as we prepare a meal and then serve the following day for the residents of the Open Door Shelter.
Contact Heather Raker at hraker@me.com for more information. Page 4 has other details.

November 16 - December 7: Dove Box Program, Parish Hall

This 46 year tradition continues with the kick off on November 16. Select your Dove and have it back to Parish Hall by Saturday, December 13 for distribution.

November 23: Annual Thanksgiving Fair, 9:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m., Parish Hall

Don't miss this wonderful annual event directly after the 8:30 a.m. service. The usual favorites will be available, from holiday 'recycle' shopping in our Jumble Sale to home made quiche and other baked goods.

November 25: Turkey Distribution, 8:30 - 11:30 a.m., Open Door Shelter

We need at least 10 volunteers to help with the turkey distribution at Open Door Shelter in Norwalk.

December 7: Advent Workshop, 4:00 - 6:00 p.m., Parish Hall

Make a keepsake craft, sing, eat, and be joyful with friends and family! See page 2 for more information.

**THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF DARIEN
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

14 Brookside Road
Darien, CT 06820
Phone: 203-655-0491
Email: info@uccdarien.org
Website: www.uccdarien.org

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
DARIEN, CT
PERMIT NO. 51