



The February 2012

Landmark

**The First Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
Guilford, Connecticut**

An Open and Affirming Congregation

Vol. 58, Number 2

LENTEN PROGRAM 2012

We very much look forward to offering you a five week Wednesday evening Lenten program this year. During our first session we will view the PBS film "Journey of the Universe: and Epic Story of Cosmic, Earth and Human Transformation." This film and book project is a collaboration of evolutionary philosopher Brian Thomas Swimme and historian of religion Mary Evelyn Tucker. They weave a tapestry that draws together scientific discoveries in astronomy, geology, and biology with humanistic insights concerning the nature of the universe.

In following sessions we will discuss some of the most fundamental issues of life: How do these cosmological facts affect our image of God? Who are we and why are we here? What is our proper relationship with the earth and one another? As Thomas Berry puts it: "The human venture depends absolutely on the quality of awe and reverence and joy in the Earth and all that lives and grows upon the Earth." There will be much to learn during these sessions and much to expand our religious consciousness and personal spirits.

Please join us for all the sessions, but if your scheduling does not permit please know that each individual session will have its own integrity and usefulness. If you cannot make the first session, you can watch the film on the DVD we own. Also please know that child care will be available and that older children and youth may also be fascinated by this film. They are most welcome!

We begin Wednesday, February 29th and continue through Wednesday March 28th. Supper begins at 6:00pm in Fellowship Hall. We will provide the meal for the first four weeks and the last meeting we will have a pot luck supper. The program will begin at 7:00pm.

Clare and I look forward to sharing this sacred time with you.

Kendrick

OFFICIAL CALL TO ANNUAL MEETING 2012

To the members of The First Congregational Church of Guilford, Inc.:

The Annual Meeting of the First Congregational Church of Guilford, Inc., will be held on Sunday morning, February 5, 2012 at 11:00 AM in the Sanctuary, directly following the 10:00 AM service to:

1. Receive and act upon the reports and recommendations of the Ministers,
2. Receive and act upon the reports and recommendations of the Boards, Committee and Organizations of the Church,
3. Act upon the proposed changes to the By-Laws of the First Congregational Church of Guilford, CT, as submitted by Church Council,
4. Act upon the recommendation of the Church Council to support and join in a joint application with our Senior Pastor, Kendrick Norris, for a National Clergy Renewal grant from the Lilly Endowment, Inc.,
5. Act upon the proposed 2012 Operating Budget, as submitted by Church Council,
6. Act upon the proposed 2012 Community and World Concerns budget, as submitted by the CWC Board, and
7. Receive the report of the Nominating Committee and act upon their recommendations for Officers and Members of Boards and Committees of the Church.

*Respectfully submitted,
Dianne Hughes, Clerk*

FEBRUARY WORSHIP & PROGRAM SCHEDULE

Sunday, Feb. 5: Communion, Kendrick preaching
 8:30am Worship-Chapel
 9:00am Bible Study – Church School Bldg Rm 9
 9:00am Sr. Choir Rehearsal – Choir Room
 10:00am Worship, Nursery care, Church School
 11:00am Annual Meeting – Sanctuary
 Noon Luncheon – Fellowship Hall
No Pilgrim Fellowship

Sunday, Feb. 12: *Confirmands' Service*
 8:30am Worship - Chapel
 9:00am Bible Study – Church School Bldg Rm 9
 9:00am Sr. Choir Rehearsal – Choir Room
 10:00am Family Service; Nursery care
 11:30am Adult Forum- Chapel
 5:00pm Pilgrim Fellowship Parent Meeting-Sanct.
 7:00pm Pilgrim Fellowship-Fellowship Hall

Wednesday, Feb. 15 7:00pm Service of Prayer
 and Healing-Sanctuary

Sunday, Feb. 19:
 8:30am Worship - Chapel
 9:00am Bible Study – Church School Bldg Rm 9
 9:00am Sr. Choir Rehearsal – Choir Room
 10:00am Worship, Nursery care, Children's Pgm
 (Pre-K – Gr. 4)
 11:30am Adult Forum – Chapel

Ash Wednesday, Feb. 22: 7:30pm Worship–Sanct.

Sunday, Feb. 26:
 8:30am Worship – Chapel
 9:00am Bible Study – Church School Bldg Rm 9
 9:00am Sr. Choir Rehearsal – Choir Room
 10:00am Worship, Church School, Nursery care
 11:30am Adult Forum: Chapel

Wednesday, Feb. 29: 6:00pm Lenten Supper
 7:00pm Program



NEW IN MINEAR LIBRARY

Firstlight collects 13 of Sue Monk Kidd's early stories and essays previously published in the devotional magazine *Guideposts*. These "moving, thoughtful, often humorous meditations on faith, death, love, compassion, solitude and grace" can be found on the mantel for you to borrow using the sign-out approach.

Marjorie Colton, Librarian

IN MEMORIAM:



George R. Linck, Jr.
 March 26, 1934— December 15, 2011

Janet Duthie Hoff
 November 27, 1915—December 14, 2011

Thomas A. Tennyson
 October 13, 1937—December 13, 2011

DEACONESS OF THE MONTH

Deaconess for February is Dianne Hughes (203-453-4529). Please notify her of births, adoptions, or anyone who may need a note of sympathy or encouragement. Mary Norris (203-457-9483) is the contact person for the Deaconesses' **Prayer Shawl Ministry**. New hands are always welcome to knit or crochet shawls; materials are provided. If you know of someone who would welcome a Prayer Shawl as a tangible sign of First Church's love and prayers, please call Mary. **CDs of Sunday services** are available to sign out in Spencer House kitchen and **sermon recordings** are available on the church website: www.firstchurchquilford.org.



ALPHA CLUB MEETING

The Alpha Club will meet on Tuesday, Feb 28th at 6:00pm in Fellowship Hall for its annual Comfort Evening. Soup, bread and dessert will be served. Chris Solimene, Acting Director of Children and Family Ministries will be the speaker. All are welcome!



Thanks to Office Angels for January:
 Cindy Caligan, Liza Catino, Dianne Hughes,
 Susan Leete, Alice Mitchell, Jane Rowen and
 Daphne Stitt.

Thank you all for your help!!

CHURCH COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

January 10, 2012

Joe Catino called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. Kendrick led us in Prayer. Joe led us in Covenant Time which focused on our goals and hopes for our church in 2012. Joe also made mention that this would be the final Church Council meeting for a few of our members as new terms begin at the Annual Meeting in February. Council broke into small groups to discuss hopes and goals for 2012.

Associate Pastor Search Committee Michael Smith reported about 60 profiles have been received and reviewed. Each profile is given a score and a second review. If the candidate is still of interest to the committee, then two members of the committee conduct a phone conversation with that candidate. There were seven candidates of interest following the phone interviews, but three of those have withdrawn from the process. Skype interviews are being conducted with the four remaining candidates, which should be completed by Thursday. Candidates of interest will be invited to visit First Church. Additional profiles are still being received and those candidates are reviewed as they come in. It appears there may be as many as three new candidates worthy of phone interviews.

Kendrick reminded Council that he will be going on Sabbatical in the fall of 2013. He would like to apply for a Lilly Foundation National Clergy Renewal Grant. The deadline is May of 2012 for the 2013 year. The Foundation would give up to \$15,000 to the church which would help pay for a minister to come in during Kendrick's sabbatical on a full-time basis. This would be beneficial as our new Associate Pastor will have been on the job only about one year when Kendrick goes on sabbatical. For his sabbatical time, instead of further formal education, Kendrick is proposing to focus on his body and health during his four month sabbatical. He would attend the Duke Health and Fitness Center program for one month and then have a personal trainer for the remaining three months. In order to apply for and receive this grant, the full support of the church is required. Kendrick proposed making this statement of support via a vote at the Annual Meeting. The grant requires that the minister would serve at least one more year after the grant. Kendrick and the church will benefit from this grant and sabbatical plan.

Shannon Clarkson reiterated the financial benefits of members of our congregation buying grocery cards.

Financials: Debbie Peluse reported that we ended 2011 in the black primarily due to the delayed 2012 first quarter pension bill payment to January of 2012 as a result of our recently approved change to staff compensation. All of the outstanding major invoices for the Portico Restoration Project have been paid. This was accomplished (\$153,000 thus far) without affecting the Current Expense budget. Debbie Bishop reported \$10,000 in additional pledge payments as a results of letters reminding people of their outstanding shortfalls for payments vs. pledges in 2011.

Stewardship: Doug Scales reported we are currently at the same number of pledges as we were for 2011 however we are about \$20K less in the Operations Expenses budget and \$4K less in the CWC budget for 2012 versus 2011. Some smaller further efforts are being undertaken to get a few more pledges in.

2012 Budget: Susan Leete reported we are currently facing about a \$13,000 gap between the currently proposed Operating Budget and the Available Funds. This is in contrast to about a \$20,000 gap in the last two years. Joe proposed that we take this budget to the congregation at the Annual Meeting with the understanding that a fundraiser will be necessary to help bridge this gap.

Joe discussed the Call to the Annual Meeting and clarified that only items listed in the Official Call can be discussed at the Annual Meeting. Debbie Peluse made a motion and Doug Scales seconded to approve the above Official Call to the Annual Meeting which was unanimously approved.

Liz Halverson has done some research into available certification training in the use of the AED (the emergency defibrillator). She has written a draft protocol for use of the device. She suggested that we invite a trainer from Defibtech to give an overview of the device to anyone interested in learning about it. Liz is also recommending that some additional safety items be purchased to be kept in the church for emergency situations including oxygen, a blood pressure cuff, a stethoscope, latex free gloves, and a barrier device for mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. There is also an option for Dave Larson to lead a CPR certification program here at the church perhaps during January or February.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:31 PM. The unison benediction was read by all.

Stuart Wilkie
Recording Secretary

CHILDREN AND FAMILY MINISTRIES

Greetings on this mid-winter day! This is a great time to find quality time to curl up with a good book in front of a fire, cook some hearty comfort foods and dream about fair-weather gardening and activities *and* to partake in the many opportunities First Church offers for meaningful worship, fellowship and spiritual reflection!

Please mark your calendars for the Confirmation-led worship services on Feb 12. Peace has been First Church's theme this year and our teens are preparing a service that will touch on three aspects of peace: Inner Peace and the how and why's to achieve it, Community Peace with relationships right here in 'River City' being the focus and World Peace – the illusive yet desirable goal presented with concrete ways that our actions can match our words! I believe this service will be a God-filled experience you won't want to miss.

Our church school is bustling with creative projects. The fantastic leadership was recently celebrated at a Teacher Appreciation Breakfast. We know that volunteer teachers and their helpers are the heart and soul of our faith education programs. Students are learning Bible stories as well as important life lessons in compassion, empathy and service. Be sure to walk through our brightly decorated hallways and classrooms. See the children's artwork and lesson projects – all lit by our newly installed hallway lights!

Stay tuned for announcements about Youth and Family Happenings. It's wonderful for me to see and hear the crowded happy cherubs in Cherub Choir and the many younger youth playing, singing and sharing fellowship in Junior Choir on Wednesdays. Indeed, there are many blessings First Church offers to our congregation and our children most certainly benefit.

Stay warm, be well and be sure to share in the joys the Creator Spirit offers to our lives. If you have ideas for our children and families, I'd love to hear from you!

Peace!
Christopher Solimene
Acting Director of Children and Families Ministry

SILVER LAKE SUMMER PROGRAMS

Silver Lake is the outdoor ministry of the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ. It is located in the beautiful northwestern corner of the state in Sharon. Silver Lake offers 9 weeks of camp experiences with various themes for youth aged 8-18 years. Please see the posters in the Church School Building and in Fellowship Hall. They'll swim, sing, conquer the high and low ropes courses, play basketball and other games, eat s'mores around a campfire, get creative in ceramics and much more! Make new friends, develop sustainable connections with nature and each other in sustainable and spiritual ways! Many of First Church youth return year after year! Register early as some conferences fill up quickly. Get more info about registration and the open house at www.silverlakect.org Need-based limited scholarships available by speaking with Chris, email him at chris@firstchurchguilford.org or call the CE office at 203-453-3324.

COLLECTION FOR RESETTLEMENT MINISTRY

Sunday, February 12 at both services

Our Resettlement Ministry has been asked to provide 12-14 backpacks filled with items for the women who will be released from York Correctional institution in Niantic in February and March. The women usually leave with only the items they originally brought with them. ***The following items are requested: back packs, person hygiene items (soap, toothpaste, shampoo, etc), umbrellas, towels, socks, scarves, gloves, wallets, writing paper, stamps, pens, small clocks or watches.*** This would be a great time to re-gift. Monetary contributions will also be accepted.

UPCOMING JOYFUL NOISE! CONCERTS

Mark your calendars to join us for these wonderful Sunday afternoon concerts. Admission is free; the free-will offering benefits the Myrtha Licht Fund.

March 11 - Bill Welch & Friends

April 29 - ConnArtists

May 20 - Chad Hardin

June 10 – Shoreline Soul Gospel Concert

For more information call the Music Office at [203-458-9701](tel:203-458-9701) or visit firstchurchguilford.org.

HISTORIANS' CORNER
CHURCH THE FABRIC OF OUR LIVES
February 2012 part 8

Deacon Frederic Davis, grandson of Deacon Edwin O. Davis and grandfather of our Deacon Peter Rebuzzini, was the personification of a man who lived his faith. During one winter blizzard when the driving conditions were impossible, Fred started walking alone down Clapboard Hill through the snow to attend church. Being a tired farmer who had already milked the cows, he occasionally was observed closing his eyes during the sermon and thought by many to be asleep. His children, Martha Rebuzzini and Joel Davis, do not agree with this assumption as the topic of conversation at their ensuing Sunday dinner was an analysis of the scripture and how it was interpreted in the sermon. All meals were blessed and after breakfast on Saturdays he would read the Bible to his family. His children were raised with uncontested rules, no card playing, movies, profanity on any day of the week. Like Deacons Read Ripley and Charles Hubbard, his stewardship reached out in the town where he served in varied capacities. The accidental death of young son was the greatest tragedy in this family. The devastated father is recorded as saying, "Grievous loss can come only where great blessing has been".

In 2002 when Bill Farrar spoke at his father's memorial service, he recalled his Dad being a track man who ran in relays where the smooth transfer of the baton is essential to winning. He went on to use the metaphor of the baton Bill in life continued passing to others joy, humor, sorrow, wisdom and humanity. With his father now deceased, his final challenge for those sitting in these very pews was to take that baton and carry on his good work.

Today we worship here because Deacon Davis and other church men and women passed their faith on to us. As we look up at the cross, gaze out the windows and touch the pews in front of us, can we sense their presence, hear this message, their laughter and feel their tears? May the gift of this heritage inspire us so that we pass it on to those who will follow.

To be continued

Edith Nettleton
 Ruth Nettleton
 Church Historians

ADULT FORUMS

Feb 19th Anger and Forgiveness with Sonali Chakravarti, Assistant Professor of Government at Wesleyan University, who studies the role of the emotions in political life after war. She recently completed a manuscript on the role of anger at the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission; her current project is on post-genocide justice at the local level in Rwanda. Both will be discussed in her presentation. She graduated from Swarthmore College and received her Ph.D from Yale University.

Feb 26th Slavery in Connecticut??? Human Trafficking is the focus of Pamela Pillsbury, who leads workshops and trainings on the topic. She is Co-Director of the Pennsylvania Center for Public Safety Innovation and was trained by the Bureau of Justice Assistance. This is the third in a series of discussions on the issue of slavery and human trafficking. Unfortunately, as we are learning, slavery is alive and well in the USA.

On the Horizon: Prison Reform in CT - David McGuire, staff attorney for the ACLU, gave us a comprehensive update on current progress in state prison reform. His audience included state senator Ed Meyer, as well as prison reform advocates Sandra Wiens, Bev Plyer, David Colton, Charlotte White, and Patty Ann Meyer. We learned that the prison budget is 3 times higher than that for higher education in the state, that the disparity of incarceration between Hispanics and Whites is the worst in the USA, and that the ratio between Blacks and Whites is forty-sixth.

McGuire reported that the state is working on alternatives to incarceration for certain minor crimes. After establishing programs to help ex-offenders adjust to civilian life, NY has reduced their recidivism rate by approximately 30%. Connecticut is hoping to enact similar programs.

Charlotte raised concern that York Correctional Institute for Women is a Level 5 [highest] for security concerns, although only 10 women fall into that category, thus placing the majority of the inmates at a disadvantage. Frequent counts, up to 8 in a 24 hour period, interrupt all programming, and make visitation sessions uncertain.

McGuire encouraged us to make our voices heard in Hartford on legislation we feel is important. He offered to notify us when reform bills are coming forward so we can call legislators and/or go to Hartford.

WHAT IS THE RATE ON YOUR SHORT TERM MONEY?

In order to reduce the financing cost of our mortgage (about 5.75%) would anyone consider making a loan to our church to reduce this cost? The interest rate you would receive is 110% of an average of the semi-annual midterm and long term AFR rate. For 2012, this rate is 2.25%. Thus, you would receive above market interest rates on a short term basis and help the church at the same time.

Please contact Tom Grant (Chair of Trustees) at tcgrant9215@gmail.com or 860-598-9419, or Joe Catino (Chair of Church Council) at j.catino@comcast.net or 203-453-0494.

Thanks.

Tom Grant, chair
Board of Trustees



A GIFT WITH DOUBLE DIVIDENDS

In several ways, A United Church of Christ Gift Annuity is a gift that creates "double dividends," providing benefits for both the Church and the Donor! Consider some of these benefits:

- **A Gift Annuity provides lifetime income to the donor...**
 - *And future income to the Church*
- **A Gift Annuity may provide a charitable deduction to the donor...**
 - *And offers the Church the donor's witness of generosity as a stimulus for ongoing education regarding stewardship of accumulated assets.*
- **A Gift Annuity gives the donor the satisfaction of making a significant contribution to the future mission and ministry of the Church...**
 - *And gives the congregation a means of building its endowed funds to fulfill a vision of mission and ministry beyond its annual giving*

Thanks.

Tom Grant, Chair
Board of Trustees



"TAKING STOCK" OF YOUR GIFT GIVING

Using appreciated securities (stocks, bonds, and mutual funds which are worth more now than when you purchased them) to fund a charitable gift can have considerable tax advantages for the donor. By giving an outright gift to the church, you can bypass the capital gains tax that would be due on an ordinary sale, and can enjoy a charitable tax deduction (if you itemize) for the full amount of the gift.

If you hold stock which is worth more today than it was when you purchased it but the dividends paid are low, you may be able to significantly increase your spendable income by using these appreciated securities to fund a life-income gift (Gift Annuity, Pooled Income Fund gift, or Charitable Remainder Trust). Donors of life-income gifts also enjoy a tax deduction, but not for the full amount of the gift; the charitable deduction is prorated, based on the part of the gift that is considered "charitable," and the part that returns income to you.

Please note two cautions regarding gifts of stock: 1) If securities are *appreciated*, they must be *transferred* to the church in order to preserve the capital gains advantage. We have a sample letter you can use with your broker to make this transfer. 2) If your stock is worth less today than when you purchased it, you *should* instruct your broker to sell these depreciated shares, thus enabling you to declare the loss on your income tax return and then donate the proceeds to gain an income tax deduction as well.

Please help us help you. When you make a gift of stock it is *very* important to let our Financial Secretary, Debbie Bishop, know that this gift has been made. Otherwise, we do not know who made the gift or when, thus making it very difficult to credit you for the gift made.

For more information about "Double Dividends" or "Taking Stock" please contact The UCC Financial Development Ministry at 800-846-6822 or Tom Grant (Board of Trustees) at 860-598-9419 or tcgrant9215@gmail.com.



