

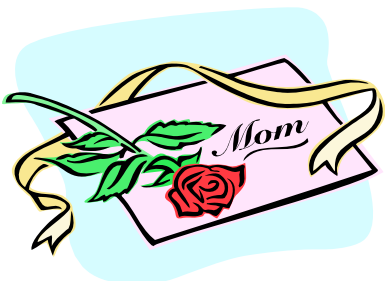


THE CRITER

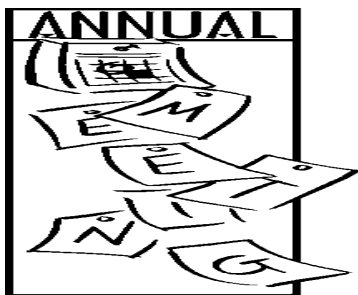
*A Monthly Publication of
The First Church in Marlborough (Congregational)
United Church of Christ
May 2009*



**The Walk for Hunger
May 3, 2009
Support Our Youth**



**Mother's Day
Sunday
May 10, 2009**



**Sunday
May 17, 2009**

May Worship Schedule
See page 4

The Journey...

Easter tide or the Easter Season is the fifty day from Easter Sunday to Pentecost Sunday. It is a joyful feast that is centered on hope. Jesus conquered sin and death by the resurrection, so we can live in the faith that our God can overcome everything that human beings can throw out as road blocks.

We are an Easter People, or some say Eastering People. We trust that God has a joyful outcome for us, even when we are dealing with situations that look bleak. We believe that our God is alive in the world. We may only recognize that Presence has indeed been with us after the fact. But that is the promise, that where two or three are gathered, Jesus will be there. Emmanuel, God with us, does indeed show up in a sacred conversation, journeying together or breaking bread. That is our faith.

What a great opportunity we have to live into this faith in these days. The opportunity can happen in our personal lives, when the issue is employment, family concerns or illness. The world sees loss and fear. We wonder what God will do next. The opportunity is there our common life, too. We are wrestling with financial issues that are tied to the economy. We can choose fear or we can choose hopeful anticipation, trusting that God will show us a new way.

Friends, we are called to be witnesses to the amazing, unexpected ways that God fulfills the promise to see us in our Galilee, to bring new life here in our days.

Rev. Betsy

Our Church Staff

Reverend Betsy Waters Senior Pastor

Reverend Sarah Hubbell

Pastor of New Opportunities

Russ Goliger Music Director

Jim Duncan Organist

Diane Burke Bell Choir Director

Steve Kotsopoulos UpPraisers Director

Jenn Bastien Senior High Fellowship Advisor

Steven Levy Multi-Media Director

Amy Lapetina Church Secretary

Deb Marino Clerk

Cindy Vail Moderator

Joan Beauchemin Treasurer

Cliff Fenton Sexton

Susan Pellerin Collector

Bob Horne Computer Systems Director

First Church Mission Statement

...is to welcome all to a positive environment for personal and spiritual growth through the Worship of God; to foster a caring, friendly, and inviting ministry of people who are committed to knowing God, God's will, and the teachings of Jesus Christ; and to reach out to all with Faith and Love.



May 20, 2009
5:00 - 7:00 PM

Our Youth

Thanks to all that helped the youth with City Reach. We left Friday for our adventure. . . now onto the next youth group event . . . The Walk for Hunger.



The Walk for
Hunger

On May 3rd a group of us will be walking 20 miles to raise money for the hungry in MA. Please help support us at www.projectbread.org.

We are walking under the team name "The First Church Blisters." You can pick a person to donate for or just donate to the whole group.

Thank you in advance . . .

The WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP BANQUET

will be held on
June 9, 2009
at Coral Seafood
at 6:30 pm

The menu choices to be announced.
The cost will be \$20.00 and
reservations are a MUST.

CRIER POLICY: The CRIER welcomes all material submitted on a timely basis for publication. Every effort will be made to include all works submitted. However, the Editors need to reserve the right to make corrections to ensure quality of presentation and correctness of information, to and use a consistent format throughout. All material should be submitted with the writer's name and daytime phone number. When major corrections are necessary, we will make every attempt to contact the writer. Personal notes, such as a thank you, etc., will be printed as submitted. Overly long items may be shortened for space considerations. All material should be submitted before the published deadline (15th day of the previous month).



WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP SCHOLARSHIP

The Women's Fellowship of First Church is accepting applications for its scholarship. Applicants must be active members of First Church who are pursuing graduate level studies toward a full-time career in the Ministry, Christian Education, the Mission Field, Christian Service, or teaching in Christian Higher Education.

Applications are available in the First Church office and are due May 15th.

Note: This is a completely different scholarship from the Alice Blakeley Scholarship for undergraduate study.

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

MAY 12, 2009

7:30 pm

DEVOTIONS: Deb Marino

HOSTESSES: Janet Yurkus and Kate Yurkus

COMMITTEE: Hedy Berry

INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS

PROGRAM: Rev. Sarah Hubbell will talk about the grant that is providing for her work with us.

Chip-in for Children Mini-Golf tournament

June 14, 2009 – 1:00
Children's Sunday

This is for people of all ages. Ali Haas, one of our new members, is organizing a team from our church.

The cost of \$15/ person and \$5 for children under 12 will pay for a t-shirt and golf fees. Our church will raise some money for children/youth programming and so will the state program.

This will be lots of fun.
Sign up and bring your friends.
Contact Ali Haas for more information.
Alison Haas 508-251-2536



FOCUS GROUPS

As most folks know, the church is experiencing financial difficulties that have been made worse by the downturn in the economy. In order to plan for both the budget for 2009-2010 and to develop a vision, focus groups are planned. There are six scheduled as this goes to press – Wednesday, April 22ND, at 7:00 pm; Thursday, April 23RD, at 10:00 am; Saturday, April 25TH, at 10: am (children welcome); Sunday, April 26TH, at 7:00 pm (at Liz Mahoney's); Tuesday, April 28TH, at 7:15 pm; and Sunday, May 3RD, after worship. Each person has been placed in a group, but these placements can be changed to fit people's schedule. Please check the list and request a change of placement if that is needed.

The goal of these meetings is to share information and take steps toward discerning our direction. Frank Marino makes a presentation on the situation via video, so that all groups receive the same information. There are four categories of response: decrease costs; increase income immediately; raise large funds; and radical Changes. Attendees participate in creating a scenario of their preferred approach, considering how the idea would work both in the short term and the long term. Each group will identify the pros and cons of their choices.

Scenarios will then be presented to the whole focus group. Then individuals get to indicate their preference. This information will be given to the current financial team, Steve Ziegler and Frank Marino, to design this year's budget. This year's budget will be voted at the May Annual Meeting.

For longer term planning, the Trustee, Council, Search Committee, and appointed task groups will gather more information related to the direction or directions that emerge from the focus groups. Any decisions will be brought to the whole church for discussion and votes, as is appropriate.

WANT TO . . .

. . . talk about The Shack? . . . or talk about The Shack some more? Join Rev. Betsy May 3rd after worship. If you need a copy of the book, ask around. There are lots available.

. . . save some trees? Receive your Annual Report electronically instead of on paper. Request an electronic copy from Amy in the office.

. . . be part of a retreat to the Weston Priory? A group of half a dozen folks traveled to Weston Priory for Good Friday. Conversation has begun about putting together a longer retreat this summer. If you are interested, contact Rev. Betsy so we can figure out an appropriate time.

The Search Committee gets started

The Search Committee will meet with Peter Wells, the conference minister, on the evening of May 7th. Peter Wells will describe the search process and launch the work of this group.

Rev. Betsy will work with the group at different times during the writing of the church profile.

Stay tuned for more news.

Special Worship Services planned

May 3	Caring for the Earth
May 10	Of Vines and Love
May 17	Music Appreciation Sunday
May 31	Confirmation Sunday
June 7	Baccalaureate
June 14	Children's Sunday, with Strawberry Social and Mini-Golf

Annual Meeting rescheduled for May 17.

FAQs

What's a Capital Campaign?

A capital campaign is a one-time fundraising initiative over a long time span (3-6 years). Its purpose is to raise significant funds for the specific purpose of building a building, undertaking a major building renovation or expansion, or purchasing a major piece of necessary equipment.

Does the financial crisis mean we can't search for a new pastor?

The key to the search is being clear about what gifts and abilities you want in a pastor. This includes a job description that is doable and just, paired with a compensation package that matches what is being asked. As long as we have a unified vision of what we are searching for (which is the first task of the search committee), then we can proceed.

What do most full time pastors get paid?

The historic comparison has been between pastors and principals at the high school in the town being served. It means that salary plus housing allowance would be equivalent to what the principal receives for salary and that the benefits package would be equivalent. The current package offered is less than an experienced teacher receives in the city of Marlborough.

What tasks do pastors do with their time?

Preparing for Sunday and carrying out Sunday worship takes about 20 hours a week. For the remaining 20-30 hours/ week, there is support of all boards and ministry teams (including mission, Sunday School, stewardship, diaconate), Bible Studies and other spiritual formation groups, support of staff and key lay leaders, communication (e.g. Crier, website, brochures; linking different people and groups; conflict management), pastoral care, assisting with incorporation of new members, connecting to Interfaith and wider UCC..and things specific to the call of that pastor.

How would a part time pastor work? What would they do and how much would they be here?

With a church of this size, the only plan that seems possible is to decrease the number of weeks that someone is present. The church would save about \$1,600 for each extra week of furlough. The pulpit would be filled by people inside the church as is done now. We probably have maxed that option out. Pulpit supply costs between \$175-200/ week. You would likely get a variety of people to do this task.

Could other staff be volunteers – secretary, custodian, music director, nursery?

Only if folks make a huge commitment of time for free. Would you like to do so?

Do we know how much the common would sell for?

We really don't know. The fire house has been on sale for \$800,000 and hasn't sold.

Can we get more members?

Five percent growth rate is excellent when churches of all denominations across the country (including most evangelical churches) have declining memberships.

Can we merge with another church?

This rarely works as a means to grow. It's like getting married to solve a budget crisis. It's the wrong reason to form a merger.

WANT SOME STRATEGIES FOR HELPING YOUR CHILDREN DEVELOP THEIR RELATIONSHIP AND RESILIENCE SKILLS?

If you answered "yes" to the above question, come to an informal workshop on developing resilience through story telling on Thursday night, May 14th, from 7:30-8:30 at First Church in Marlborough. Using New Orleans-tested techniques, we will use children's stories from Dr. Seuss and others to demonstrate how you can have conversations with kids that can help them develop their own strengths to move through anxious times with more confidence and resilience.

This workshop is open to parents, grandparents, and anyone who works with children. It is designed to be for both church goers and non-churchgoers, so feel free to invite a friend and come together. For more information, contact Rev. Sarah at aileen22hub@hotmail.com or at First Church in Marlborough.

Everyday Serenity

Keeping the Sabbath

The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.

— Luke 4:2

Where did the day of rest go? Whether your religious tradition observes Saturday (the original Sabbath) or Sunday, or even if in your tradition there is no day of rest at all, we all need a day of rest — not a day of shopping, catching up on work, or running all over the place on errands. A day of rest, a day of doing nothing.

A recent Sunday newspaper comic strip, Greg Howard's *Sally Forth*, featured an agenda for Sundays:

THINGS TO DO ON SUNDAY

Have a cup of tea

Gaze into the distance

Read the paper

Stretch

Have another cup of tea

The essence of the traditional Sabbath is to celebrate one's spiritual practice and to rest from work.

For some, work in the yard or garden is not really work, but pleasure.

For others, an outing with the family or friends is a way to rest.

However, if you're like me, you hear yourself saying, "Fine, but when am I supposed to get the chores done?" Sometimes you have to settle for a partial Sabbath. Find a chore you can skip this week and take a couple of hours on Sunday morning with coffee and the newspaper or a Saturday afternoon's long walk in the park.

This week inaugurate or rejuvenate your Sabbath observance.

Remember: no work for at least part of the day.

— David Kundtz



Thought For Food

A monthly Crier blog on the where-what-hows on our relationship with our food
By Steve Kotsopoulos

May 2009

"Who will mother Mother Earth?"

John Steinbeck's "The Grapes of Wrath" is often thought of as a labor movement call-to-arms. It certainly reads like one as it chronicles the exploitation of the American farmer by the growing industrialized agricultural conglomerates. I remember having to read it in high school, but when I read it again last summer, I came away with a different perspective. After all, great literature often works on a number of levels, depending on how one approaches it. The second time around, I also saw the lament about how man is slowly losing his spiritual bond with the soil that harbors his food, his connection to the earth that keeps his family alive and thriving, slowly but steadily ceding to industrialized convenience. One passage struck me as poignant and thought provoking:

"...in the tractor men, there grows the contempt that comes only to a stranger who has little understanding and no relation. For nitrates are not the land, nor phosphates; and the length of fibre in the cotton is not the land. Carbon is not a man, nor salt nor water nor calcium. He is all these, but he is much more, much more; and the land is so much more than its analysis. The man who is more than his chemistry, walking on the earth, turning his plough-point for a stone, dropping his handles to slide over an outcropping, kneeling in the earth to eat his lunch; that man who is more than his elements knows the land and is more than its analysis. But the machine man, driving a dead tractor on land he does not know and love, understands only chemistry; he is contemptuous of the land and of himself. When the corrugated iron doors (of the tractor shed) are shut, he goes home, and his home is not the land."

Many think of the farmer's soil as some sort of incubator, producing crop after crop of bounty like an inexhaustible machine, needing only the occasional chemical infusion to keep things running. Joel Salatin has a different view of the land.

Joel Salatin owns and runs Polyface Farm in Virginia's Shenandoah Valley. Polyface Farm (<http://www.polyfacefarms.com/principles.aspx>) is the poster child for a new generation of farming sustainability that lives and operates under the credo of "Eat Local, Eat Seasonal, Eat Pastoral". By eating locally, not only do we support our own farming neighbors, but we also cut down on transportation costs and fossil fuel pollution. More importantly to us, local bounty is fresher, lasts longer before spoiling, and is consumed at its nutritional peak. Eating seasonal again reinforces the notion that the earth offers us her best at the optimal time of the year. Eating pastoral explores the circle of life model, offering livestock and feed animals the opportunity to enjoy life on the land in their natural state before they serve us at the table. In addition, we also replenish the land by rotating crops and herding animals to prevent over-grazing. I urge you to visit the Polyface website and read Joel's hopeful story of renewal and resurrection.

Establishing a connection with our food is a transcendent experience, one that can never be achieved by assuming that chicken breasts are hatched inside shrink-wrapped foam packages, or that lettuce grows in triple-washed bite size pieces inside cellophane bags with cool graphics. The Rev. Sarah Hubbell is putting together a church field trip to a local sustainable farm on Saturday, May 9, where we get to partake in seed planting and a communal meal as a means to experiencing a connection with God's creation. Everyone is welcome to join us for this family adventure.

Until next month...be well!

-Steve

SIGN UP AND COME TO STEARNS FARM ON SATURDAY, MAY 9th--

It's not too late to participate!

We will be doing a farm tour and, depending on your time frame, stay for light work and lunch on Saturday, May 9th. Sign-up sheets are available at the office. Please sign up by May 5th so we can let the farm know how many people to expect.

For further information, contact Rev. Sarah at aileen22hub@hotmail.com or by phone at 978-460-3275 (cell).



It's getting Easier to be Green

Here is a list of local/organic/sustainable farms. I don't know much about them individually, but they are certainly worth checking out. Thanks to Steve for finding most of them.

Babcia's Farm (Barre, MA)	Caledonia Farm (Barre, MA)
Misty Brook Farm (Barre, MA)	Chase Hill Farm (Warwick, MA)
Robinson Farm (Hardwick, MA)	Chestnut Farm (Hardwick, MA) (meat, too)
Chicoine Family Farm (Easthampton, MA)	Crescent Moon Farm (Belchertown, MA)
The Farm School CSA (North Orange, MA)	Green Ledge Farm (Francestown, NH)
Holiday Farm (Dalton, MA)	Manda Farm (Plainfield, MA)
Moon In The Pond Farm (Sheffield, MA)	Moon In The Pond Farm (Topsfield, MA)
Oake Knoll Ayrshires (Foxboro, MA)	River Rock Farm (South Westport, MA)
Sojourner Sheep (Northampton, MA)	Steady Lane Farm (Ashfield, MA)
Wheel-View Farm (Shelburne, MA)	Blood Farm (West Groton, MA)

And here are a couple with web-sites:

<http://www.eatwild.com/products/massachusetts.html>

<http://www.small-farm.org/>

<http://stearnsfarmcsa.org/sfwiki/Public/HomePage/>

Happy, healthy eating!

MAY WORSHIP LEADERS

May 3	Communion Ushers: Jim Saart, Deb Beauregard, Linda Warren, Bob Murphy (bread), Anne Tennyson, Bill Davis Lay Leader: Liz Mahoney Greeters: Rachel Heim and Sally Tripp
May 10	Mother's Day Ushers: Marian Hopkins, Tambre Knox, Bob Knox, Janet Yurkus Lay Leader: Steve Ziegler Greeters: Dick and Lois Carlson
May 17	Music Appreciation Ushers: Jim Saart, Peggy Clark, Laurel Hill, Max Wills Lay Leader: Pauline Wills Greeters: Calvin and Deborah Jones
May 24	Memorial Day Weekend Ushers: Bob Murphy, Deb Marino, Frank Marino, Cindy Vail Lay Leader: Steve Levy Greeter: Peter Nott
May 31	Confirmation Ushers: Linda Warren, Allan Christensen, Marcia Fitzgerald, Sandy Stetson Lay Leader: Jeremy Crocker Greeter: Peter Nott

Strengthen the Church

On May 10, 2009, the second collection will be for the United Church of Christ mission called Strengthen the Church, rather than the Deacons' Fund for First Church. Strengthen the Church support teens through ministries such as the National Youth Event as well as the Stillspeaking Ministry.

The National Youth Event brings thousands of UCC teens together every four years in a "transformative gathering of praise, study, reflection and fellowship..." (2009 Strengthen the Church)

All Things Bright and Beautiful

*All things bright and beautiful, all creatures great and small
all things wise and wonderful, in love God made them all.*

*Each little flower that opens, each little bird that sing,
God made their glowing colors, and made their tiny wings.*

*The purple headed mountain, the river running by,
the sunset and the morning that brightens up the sky.*

*The cold wind in the winter, the pleasant summer sun,
the ripe fruits in the garden, God made them, every one.*



MAY 2009 at First Church in Marlborough (Congregational)

Worship Service: Sunday @ 10:00 am with Sunday School and Nursery

Joyful Ringers: Monday @ 7:00 pm **Chancel Choir:** Tuesday @ 7:00 pm; **Youth Choir:** Sunday @ 9:30;

UpPraisers: Sunday @ 11:30 am **Sweet Adelines:** Wednesday @ 7:00 pm

Bible Study: Monday @ 6:00 pm, Wednesday @ 10:00 am

AA: Friday @ 8:00 pm; **Early Risers:** Saturday @ 6:45 am, Sunday @ 6:45 am

Assembly of God Shalom: Worship: Thursday & Sunday @ 7:30 pm; **Choir:** Thursday @ 5:00 pm

AA - Friday 7:30 pm.

<i>Sun</i>	<i>Mon</i>	<i>Tue</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>Thu</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>Sat</i>
					1 8:00 pm AA	2
3 Walk For Hunger <u>The Shack</u>	4 7:15 Focus Meeting	5	6	7 7:00 Search Committee	8 8:00 pm AA	9 9:00 Stearns Farm
10 Mothers' Day	11 7:00 Trustees	12 7:30 Women's Fellowship	13	14 7:30 Stress Workshop	15 8:00 pm AA CRIER Deadline Wms. Fellowship Scholarship Aps. due	16
17 Music Appreciation ANNUAL MEETING	18 7:00 Deacons 7:30 Missions Ministry	19 Our Father's Table 7:30 Men's Fellowship	20 5:30 Spaghetti Supper	21	22 8:00 pm AA	23
24	25 7:00 Council	26	27	28	29 8:00 pm AA	30
31 Pentecost						

THE BOOK OF LIFE

HAPPY MAY BIRTHDAY

- 2nd Elaine Eisenhauer
5th Hedy Berry
7th Sarah Hanahan
9th Laura Lane
10th Eddie Beauchemin, Jr.
11th Bruce Cooper, Spencer Ziegler
12th Edward Eaton
15th Nancy Gould
17th Noa-Lee Bastien
18th Susanna Buckingham, Eva Kotsopoulos
19th Thelma Nilson
20th Edward Beauchemin, Betty Hollis,
Carleton Lane, Lorrie Tennyson
22nd Hope Rennie,
25th Timothy Buckingham, Shirley Fenton,
Sara Williams, Earl Neill
26th Bob Stetson
29th Katherine Shaw
31st Rebecca Levy, Bob Knox

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

- 7th Steven & Sharon Levy
20th Michael & Tammy Brossi
27th Frederick & Elizabeth Cooke



Just a Closer Walk with Thee

I, am weak, but thou art strong:
Jesus, keep me from all wrong:
I'll be satisfied as long
as I walk, let me walk close to thee.

Through this world of toil and snares,
If I falter, Lord, who cares?
Who with me my burden shares?
None but thee, dear Lord, none but thee.

When my feeble life is o'er,
time for me will be no more;
guide me gently, safely o'er
to thy shore, dear Lord, to thy shore.

*Just a closer walk with thee,
Grant it, Jesus, is my plea,
daily walking close to thee:
let it be, dear Lord, let it be.*

Loving
Memory

of

Dolly Potter and Eleanor Libby



First Church in Marlborough
(Congregational)
United Church of Christ
37 High Street
Marlborough, MA 01752-2344
Address Service Requested

Senior Pastor
Rev. M. Elizabeth Waters
Pastor of New Opportunities
Rev. Sarah Hubbell

Worship Service
Sunday 10:00 AM
Sunday School and Nursery Care
All are Welcome!

Church Office Hours:
Tuesday - Friday
8:30 am - 1:30 pm
508-485-6297
has answering service
508-485-2969 rings through

Church e-mail and
web addresses:

office@firstchurchnet.com
crier@firstchurchnet.com
B_waters@firstchurchnet.com
<http://www.firstchurchnet.com>

Newsletter Editor:
Sandy Stetson

Newsletter Volunteers:
Amy Lapetina, Carol Mac Ewen,
Thelma Nilson, and Anita Stetson

CRIER DEADLINE:
15 April 2009

