



THE MESSENGER
of the
First Congregational Church
United Church of Christ

Vol. 63

January 2010

No. 5

Happy New Year!

As we enter into another year, it is a good time to reflect on where we have been and where we are going.

Certainly the most notable change in 2009 for our church was the arrival of the Reverend Kristen J. Kleiman as our senior pastor. Kristen came to us filled with love, energy and faith and she continues to bring us a welcoming attitude and a constant infusion of warmth and inspiration.

We started last year with a lovely new tradition introduced by Kristen – celebrating the start of the year with star gifts in our morning worship. I am looking forward to hearing how the gifts have influenced the lives of our church family members.

Over the past year the Church Council has spent a great deal of time learning some of the history of our church and considering how we want to be known in the future. We spent time on the history of the United Church of Christ as well as on the role our church played in the history of Bristol. It was very interesting to learn that we had such a presence in the early days of this town as a center of the community.

At the Annual Meeting we will spend a short time reviewing the few key points the Church Council envisioned, and seek your input as we brainstorm what the future could hold. Please plan to join us!

The most important part of any church is the people, and this is especially true in a Congregational Church. We have been and continue to be blessed with some extraordinary talent in this church. Each of you is important. Each member that has gone before us is important. Every single person that has ever shared their time with our community of faith has played a role in making us who we are.

Upcoming Events at the First Congregational Church

Star Gift Worship - The magi followed a star in the East. In 2009, we have followed our "Star Gifts" (paper stars with spiritual words on them like love, patience, unity, friendship) that we chose last January on Epiphany Sunday. This year, on January 3rd, during the 10am worship service, we will share stories about how we were led by our "star gifts" and we will pick new "star gifts" for 2010. Star Gift worship will be an intergenerational communion worship service.

FCC Youth Group is for youth in grades 6-12. We gather to play games, have discussions, and create a fun and supportive community for teens. Our first meeting of 2010 will be on January 3rd, 6:30-8pm. Our Winter lock-in will be Friday, January 8th, 7pm until Saturday, January 9th at 8am. We will be painting the Youth Room and making decisions about where our Xbox 360 and Wii should be installed.

The First Congregational Church UCC Annual Meeting will be on Sunday, January 24th following worship. In addition to approving the budget and constitutional amendments, FCC members will join together in visioning for the future of our church.

Craft & Art Gathering - Do you knit, quilt, sew, scrapbook, craft in any way? Do you sometimes need that little extra push to help you get out your art and work on it? Join us on Wednesday, January 13th, 7 – 8:30pm, in the library for company and inspiration as we work on our individual arts.

The Hot Cat Jazz Band will be bringing their New Orleans Style Dixieland sound to our morning worship service on Sunday, February 7, 2010. This lively group adds a vibrant spirit to any service they are leading and they "guarantee to have you dancing in the pews and aisles". You won't want to miss this service of lively, upbeat, spiritual music so mark your calendars today.

THE CALL TO THE ANNUAL MEETING

THE ANNUAL MEETING of the First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, Bristol, Connecticut, will be held in the Auditorium on Sunday, January 24, 2010, immediately following the Service of Worship, for the following purposes:

1. To honor our 50-year members.
2. To welcome new members.
3. To receive Annual Reports.
4. To elect Church Officers, Committee/Board Members.
5. To act upon the Current Expense and Benevolence Budgets for 2010 to be submitted by the Prudential and Outreach and Service Committees respectively.
6. To transact any other business that may properly come before this meeting.
7. To act upon the following five amendments to the Constitution:

Article VII

“The officers of the church shall be elected for a term of one year at the Annual Meeting of the church and shall serve until their successors are elected. The terms of the following officers shall be limited to three successive years: Moderator {the word ‘and’ is added} and Vice-Moderator (and Auditors). {the words ‘and Auditors’ are removed}. The terms of all other officers, with the exception of the Church School Superintendent and the Financial Secretary, shall be limited to six successive years...”

Article VIII

“1. The Church Council - The Church Council shall consist of the following officers of the church: Moderator, Vice Moderator, Clerk, Treasurer, minister or ministers, the Chairmen of the standing committees and boards of the church; the presidents of the following organizations: The Women’s Guild, a youth representative (to be elected annually by the Senior High Youth Fellowship from within its membership), the past Moderator (for a one-year term), and (six) {the word ‘six’ is removed and the word ‘three’ is added} three members elected at-large...”

“5. Christian Education Committee - The Christian Education Committee shall consist of (thirteen) {the word ‘thirteen’ is removed and the word ‘ten’ is added} ten members, (four) {the word ‘four’ is removed and the word ‘three’ is added} three to be elected each year and the Church School Superintendent to be elected annually...”

“8. Fellowship Committee - The Fellowship Committee shall consist of (nine) {the word ‘nine’ is removed and the word ‘seven’ is added} seven members, (three) {the word ‘three’ is removed and the word ‘two’ is added} two to be elected each year {the words ‘except three to be elected every third year’ are added} except three to be elect every third year...”

“11. Board of Delegates - The Board of Delegates shall consist of (six) {the word ‘six’ is removed and the word ‘four’ is added} four members, (two) {the word ‘two’ is removed and the word ‘one’ is added} one to be elected each year {the words ‘except two to be elected every third years’ are added} except two to be elected every third year...”

THE BIRTHDAY PROJECT

Beginning in January, the Outreach and Service Committee will begin providing a Birthday Box containing all the makings for a birthday celebration to a needy child in Bristol. If you would like to sponsor a box the cost is \$40 or for a month \$80. Donations of any amount are also greatly appreciated! Please send your check to the church office with "The Birthday Project" noted on the memo line.



You may also contribute supplies such as a birthday card, balloons, birthday themed paper goods such as paper cups, plates, napkins and flatware (all matching please). There will be a box in the hallway for the collection of these supplies. Many of these items may be found for a minimal cost at one of Bristol's dollar stores.

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LECTIONARY LESSONS FOR JANUARY

January 3 – Jeremiah 31:7-14, Psalm 147:12-20, Ephesians 1:3-14, John 1:(1-19)

January 10 – Isaiah 43:1-7, Psalm 29, Acts 8:14-17, Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

January 17 – Isaiah 62:1-5, Psalm 36:5-10, 1 Corinthians 12:1-11, John 2:1-11

January 24 – Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10, Psalm 19, 1 Corinthians 12:12-31a, Luke 4:14-21

January 31 – Jeremiah 1:4-10, Psalm 71:1-6, 1 Corinthians 13:1-13, Luke 4:21-30



*“No matter who you are, or where you are on life’s journey,
you are welcome here . . . God is still speaking,”*

OPEN AND AFFIRMING STATEMENT

We, the congregation of the First Congregational Church, UCC of Bristol, CT, welcome everyone. We affirm the dignity and worth of every person by declaring ourselves Open and Affirming. With God’s grace, we strive to include all persons without regard to race, ethnic or socio-economic background, sexual orientation, gender, marital status, physical or mental challenges, or age. We cherish the richness that this diversity brings to us, individually and as a congregation. Our acceptance of each other embodies our commitment to unity with God and each other in Christ. We welcome all to share in the life, leadership, fellowship, worship, sacraments, responsibilities and blessings of full participation in our congregation.