



September/October 2011
Volume 53, Issue 1

At First...

THE NEWSLETTER OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF HARTFORD

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First Presbyterian Church
136 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, Connecticut 06106

Is Your
Pledge
Up to Date?

CHURCH CALENDAR

- ✠ September 2- 4: **More Light Presbyterians Convention**, Rochester, NY.
- ✠ Wednesday, September 7: **Choir Rehearsals** begin at 7:30 PM.
- ✠ Sunday, September 11: **Special 9/11 Anniversary service, Church School begins, Church Picnic; Hope Out Loud**, Church of the Good Shepherd.
- ✠ Saturday, September 17: **Hartford Pride**, Bushnell Park.
- ✠ Sunday September 25 **Adult Forum Brainstorming Session** in the pastor's study following Worship. Come, and bring: ideas, suggestions, hopes, questions and a calendar (so we can choose dates for the Forums).
- ✠ Sunday, October 2: **Meal & Movie** at noon (after church).
- ✠ Saturday, October 8 from 10:00 AM – 12:00 noon: Presbyterian Promise Board meeting with a luncheon afterward. All are invited.

First Thoughts...

- by Martha Highsmith

One of us arrived home from vacation to find that a small tree in the yard had died during the intense hot spell of July. Its leaves were brown and crispy, nothing green at all. It looked completely dead, ready to get the axe. But several days of steady watering and a couple of good rain showers later, tiny new leaves began to sprout next to the dead brown ones. With more watering, the green shoots have grown larger and greener. Now that tree is a mixture of old leaves and new, brown and green, but it is not dead yet!



This might be a little parable for all of us. Where it seems that energy or membership or money has dried up, maybe all that is needed is some steady attention and care. Not every tree will survive a scorching heat wave; not every church will survive the profound cultural changes of the last fifty years. But we are not dead yet! The three of us see signs of life sprouting up all around: spirited participation in worship, deep fellowship around shared meals, loving care for those who are sick, generous gifts in the offering plates, attention to spiritual development, exciting plans for education, and new ideas for mission and outreach.

When things seem to be drying up, sometimes we have to tote the bucket ourselves. Other times, what we need just falls from the heavens and all we have to do is soak it up. Even then, though, it is a good idea to have a rain barrel handy! And remember this (paraphrasing 1 Corinthians 3:6, 8-9): Our founders planted, we are watering, but it is God who gives the growth. Those who plant and those who water have a common purpose: We are all serving God, working together.

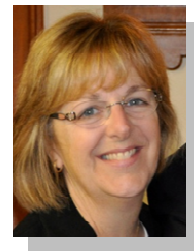
We hope you will tote a bucket where it is needed. We hope you will soak up the blessings that are showered upon us. We hope you will be part of the new life emerging in our midst!



Martha



Tom



Jinny

Pastor's Office Hours... for Rev. Jinny Smanik are at FPC on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of the month from 10:00 AM to 12:30 PM.

First Person(al)s... Prayers and Remembrances for:

- † **The family and friends of Ruth Moir...**
- † **The family and friends of Gretchen Fuchs...**
- † **Ernest Brodeur...**
- † **Jane Carroll...**
- † **Helen George...**
- † **Bob Hager...**
- † **Kristin Moir Harvey...**
- † **Pam Hauberger...**
- † **Anita & R. Sherwood Marchant...**
- † **Lois Maxwell...**
- † Melinda Boyar, the Murray's daughter...
- † Dottie Brash...
- † Jerry, Rachel Butler's husband...
- † the family and friends of the late Louise Carlson who as a friend of June O'Neil...
- † Will Devereaux, grandson of Alan and Jane Murray...
- † George Highsmith, father of Rev. Martha Highsmith...
- † Diana Jordan, client of Keith Rhoden, Jr...
- † Collin Robertson, Pauline Robertson's brother-in-law...
- † those hurt by disaster, both natural and man-made...
- † the City of Hartford...
- † and the ministry and mission of First Presbyterian Church.

Thank You... Pauline Robertson wishes to thank all of you for the calls, prayers and cards expressing sympathy on the passing of her sister-in-law Hyacinth Sharoubim. Thanks also for the prayers and concerns regarding her health issues. Your kindness was greatly appreciated.

Let us know... if you've had a recent special event or other cause for celebration in your life that you wouldn't mind sharing, a loss or other circumstance for which you'd appreciate prayers—your church family is interested and concerned. Just e-mail **Keith Rhoden, Jr.** at keithr118@yahoo.com. You may also mail or drop off a note to the church office or send an e-mail (addresses are on the last page of newsletter).

New Addresses....

Ruth Bergman & Ben Klein moved to 473 Prospect Ave., 3rd floor, Hartford, 06105; Dottie Brash to 1 Chatfield Dr., Apt. 211, West Hartford, 06110 and **R. Sherwood & Anita Marchant** have moved to 45 Stratton Forest Way, Simsbury, CT. 06070.

If you have access to the Internet...

www.firstpreshartford.org is your church gateway to helpful resources: color pictures of recent church events and activities and much more. While there, you may also want to click on the links to the Presbytery of Southern New England and the General Assembly to find out what's happening in the larger church to which we're connected.

In Memoriam **Gretchen Fuchs**

Feb. 13, 1935- Aug. 13, 2011
United with this Church 2002

In Memoriam **Ruth Moir**

Dec. 15, 1913- Aug. 22, 2011
United with this Church 1943

As this newsletter goes to print, a service for Ruth Moir will be held at First Presbyterian Church on Saturday, August 27 at 2:00 PM.

More First Person(al)s...
on next page...



More First Person(al)s...

Grace and Ernie Brodeur's granddaughter, Elyse Brodeur, was married July 8, 2011 to Dan Manyak of Harwinton. The ceremony took place at the Aqua Turf in Southington. Elyse is the daughter of **Richard and Joan Brodeur** of Southington. Her sister, Jayna, was Maid of Honor.



Richard and Elyse

Elyse and Dan Manyak

Ernie and Grace



Thank You...

As summer winds down and I prepare for the return of the choir, I would like to acknowledge and thank those members who provided music for us during the summer months. Appreciation goes to **Ian Tamburini**- clarinet; **Bill Cooke**, **Carolyn Blick**, **Ben Klein**-vocal; **Ruth Bergman**, vocal and violin; **Holly Billings**-piano; and Alex Parks- guitar and vocal. Thanks also to the guests who enhance our worship with their musical talents: Wayne Dixon- piano and vocal, Ralph Harris- substitute organist and jazz pianist, and Yun Yang Lin- cello.

-by Music Director Dianne Ney (pictured at left).



Please note that choir rehearsals begin Wednesday, September 7, at 7:30 PM in Hodge Hall. As always, I encourage new additions to the choir. Call or see me if you are interested in being part of our music ministry.

Pastoral Contact Liaison...

Shirley Garren (pictured at right) is our liaison to our on-call pastors. For pastoral care concerns when the church office is closed please call her at home.



Mission Matters....

-by Holly Billings

Summer means barbeque at our monthly Community Meal at Christ Church Cathedral. For the summer on the 4th Tuesday, we provide barbeque chicken, hot dogs, tossed salad, baked beans, corn on the cob starting in July, watermelon and soda. As you can see by the menu it takes many hands to help prepare and serve the meal. In June we had the added feature of the stoves not working at Christ Church, which meant we had to split up the volunteers to have some (George, Mindy, Keith) cook the food at First Presbyterian and drive it over while the remainder (Christine, Mimi, Dianne, Holly, Brian, Carolyn) prepare the cold food items at Christ Church. Our process worked seamlessly and we served 95 people. We had the stoves back for July, but then we shucked 100 ears of corn in the rain.



Can you tell it's never a dull moment at the Community Meal? If you are interested in joining the fun and service, just see Holly (L) or Keith (R). We meet at First Presbyterian around 4:50 to load up the food then caravan over to Christ Church Cathedral. Meal is served at 6:00 and we are finished by 7:00, including clean-up.



A big thank you to everyone who has helped with the summer meals: **Carolyn Perkins**, Ray & **Flora Perleoni**, **Pauline Robertson**, Keith Rhoden, Jr., **Holly Billings** and Mimi Nelson, **Margo Darko**, **Sherry Marchant**, **George Blick**, Bob & **Alice Evans** , **Ernie and Grace Brodeur**, Kyle Bedini, Christine Frederick, Brian Brouillard, **Shirley Dudley** , **Susan Labins**, **Anita (Marchant)**, **the McNeills**, **Mindy and Dianne Ney** , Mindy's friend Annie, and Cathy, Jonathan and Benjamin McCarthy-Weaver. Finally, thanks to Ferrari Farms in South Glastonbury for donating the corn.



These photos show FPC members helping at a previous Community Meal.

Looking Forward, Looking Back...

—by Jinny Smanik

We begin our fall season of education and other programs on September 11. Church school will resume and the choir will return in fine form from a summer break. All three pastors will be present in worship, sharing the sermon and service. After church, we will gather for a picnic cookout. This year Jasen Lambright has agreed to help cook! Everyone is encouraged to bring a salad, side-dish or dessert to share (please sign-up or call the church office to help us plan). The Parish Education and Parish Life Committees are providing the main course and beverages.



The church school classes will meet from 11:00 – 11:45:

- ✠ Pilgrims grades K-6 (ages 5 – 11) led by Jane Murray and Corinna Tamburini
- ✠ Seekers grades 7-12 (youth) led by Christine & Jasen Lambright

As we look forward to fall, we will also look back and remember all those who died ten years ago in New York, Pennsylvania and Washington, D.C. We will have a chance to commemorate that anniversary, to reflect on how our world has changed, and to consider how we as Christians are called to acts of healing and reconciliation.

Please join us for this special Sunday (and all the other Sundays, equally special, that follow).

Treasurer Highlights...

- ✠ We have still been able to pay our bills and not withdraw any interest from the Alton Endowment or the Wright Foundation through July 2011 – that is wonderful news.
- ✠ Pledged Offering lags behind – 50% of 2011 Budget received while 58.3% of the year has passed – but July was the first month that our Pledged Offering was ahead of what we expected.
- ✠ Above expected Unpledged Offering (\$22,625) and Facility Usage (\$9,305) have helped offset lower than expected Pledged Offering and \$0 from Alton Endowment and Wright Foundation.
- ✠ Through July 2011, our revenue is \$83,526.13 while our expenses total \$91,469.1 for a Net Loss of (\$7,942.97). Because we had money in the bank at the end of last year, we can cover the Net Loss.
- ✠ Through July 2011, 60% of our expenses are salary related – ministers, choir director, secretary, sexton, soloists, child care givers; building and office operations, including insurance/security is 29% of our expenses. That leaves 11% for our committees and mission to utilize for the life of the church, worship, education and outreach.



Why do we...

...have the Children's Message so late in the worship service?

When this community baptizes a child, each member present promises to help raise that child in the faith. One of the ways we keep this baptismal promise is by welcoming the children to worship with us each Sunday. Christian educators like John Westerhoff point out that children learn by imitating the words and actions of the people around them. Children become people of faith by practicing faith, taking part in the faith life of the community.

Worship is the central act of the gathered community of God, a community that our *Book of Order* reminds us includes everyone. Our children learn to worship by worshipping. They are formed as people of faith and come to see their gifts as members of the body of Christ when they have the opportunity to praise God side by side with the adults in the worshipping community.

Church educators agree that children learn to value and understand corporate worship only when they are encouraged to be part of worship on a regular basis. By observing parents and others at worship, children learn the words, attitudes, postures and feelings of the community. Worship is the great ritual of

our faith, and as such is powerful in shaping our lives.

Our children are an essential part of the whole people of God at First Presbyterian Church. We want them to know that they belong here. By including them in a significant portion of the worship service each Sunday morning, we let them know that they are a valued part of this community. By encouraging the children to stay in the worship service long enough to hear the scriptures read and to hear a brief interpretation of the scriptures: a "child sized" sermon in the form of the Children's Message, we are living into our promise to nurture children in the faith.

We are all blessed by spending time together in worship. When our children are present with us, adults are given the opportunity to experience the spontaneity and enthusiasm of a child, children are affirmed as important members of the body of Christ in this place and are shaped as faithful Christians through the practices of this community.



Why do we...

....read so much scripture in worship?

Churches in many denominations follow a set pattern of scripture readings known as the Revised Common Lectionary. These readings follow a three-year cycle that covers the major themes of the Bible. Each week, the lectionary includes four scriptures: a reading from the Hebrew scripture (except following Easter, when the first lesson is from the Book of Acts); a psalm or similar reading that is often a commentary on the first lesson; a reading from one of the Epistles or letters; and a Gospel reading. We are currently in Year A, which focuses on Matthew. Year B has readings from Mark; Year C, from Luke. Readings from John appear throughout the three years.

Your pastors have chosen to follow the lectionary for worship and preaching. We will not include every scripture in the sermon, but all of them will be part of the worship service. The psalm is often incorporated into the Call to Worship; sometimes portions of the epistle reading are included in the Call to Confession or the Prayer of Confession; themes from the readings may be echoed in the prayers of the people and in the hymns.

More on next page...



By including all the readings, over three years we get a fuller sense of the whole sweep of the Bible. In addition, there are devotional resources that follow the lectionary with daily or weekly reflections.

But the real reason we read so much scripture is because we are people of the Word, God's creative, creating Word. In the beginning, God spoke the world –and us – into being. In Jesus, the Word became flesh and lived among us. As the Body of Christ, we embody the Word in the world. God is speaking through us, and that Word has the power to change everything. We read the Bible to remind us of that, to teach us the ways of the eternal Word, and to encourage us in our own faith. So when you hear one of the readers in worship say, "This is the Word of God for the people of God," let your response come from the bottom of your heart: "Thanks be to God!"



Connections and Open Doors...

- by Shirley Dudley

Eight people from First Presbyterian Church were welcomed warmly at the summer Tuesday night barbecue held by Providence Presbyterian Church (Providence, Rhode Island) on

their front lawn on August 16. We shared the good free food in folding chairs and on blankets with church members, neighbors and some passersby. People were chatting in little clusters, kids were running around the stone building, hamburgers were cooking on the grill, and traffic was continuous on the street.

The weather was pleasant and the feeling one received was that this church was alive and well and open to new possibilities. The co-pastors, Chris Foster and David Watermulder, and parish associate, Jinny Smanik, (sound familiar?) introduced us and showed us around.

Our group consisted of Rosalyn Parks, Ed Carty, Joan Grant and me in my car and Ben Klein, Chris Lambright, Butch and Alex Parks in Ben's car. My trip was made enjoyable with Ed providing the continuous humor, while Rosalyn led us in some inspirational singing (she is good, so music director Dianne take note) for the hour and a half ride each way.

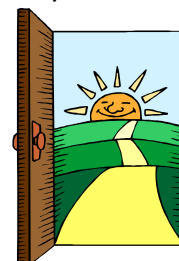
In our conversations with the Providence folks, we could sense their enthusiasm for what was happening in their church. They spoke of house meetings that have been going on for four years built around a Bible theme, 65 kids of all ages in their Sunday School, 14 new babies, a possible new emphasis related to education

in their community, blended worship with a Ghanaian choir once a month, a religious band once a month, and a screen just for the hymns. We toured the compact building that is maintained through a hidden cell tower that nets them \$21,000 per year.

Recently they celebrated their 25th anniversary of being a merged church (two smaller churches had come together and started over as Providence) by making a timeline complete with pictures of people active as the years have gone by. On the bottom of the poster were the names of people at the time they became members, many more names in recent years. Pastor Chris said that in the nine years that she has been there, they have gone from 60 members to 140! Very impressive.

All of us agreed that we could definitely work well together. Nothing was decided as far as a mission project was concerned but ideas were floated, including work to repair tornado damage in Springfield and a joint youth mission enterprise in Hartford.

We definitely received energy from this visit and opened the door to new relationships and new opportunities for ministry. We plan to pursue our new connection.



Sunday Sermons...

CD's for listening and printed versions of most sermons are available. The church keeps archives of past sermons. Just call or e-mail the office and if a sermon is available we will send you a copy. Please note that sermons given in Johnstone Hall are not recorded due to technical restraints but most are available in print. The church website also has past written sermons (<http://www.firstpreshartford.org/Sermons-2011.htm>) and the most recent sermon recording (mp3) online, as well as (pdf) copies of the Sunday bulletins.



Church Structure... The governing bodies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) are: sessions, presbyteries, synods and the General Assembly. **The session** governs a particular congregation. It is made up of elders elected by the congregation, plus all the installed pastors on the staff, including pastors, co-pastors, and associate pastors. **The presbytery** is the governing body that has jurisdiction over the sessions of all Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) congregations within its bounds and all its minister members within a certain district. **The synod** is the governing body that has oversight of the life and mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) within a specific geographic region that includes at least three presbyteries. It must meet at least once every two years. It can establish a council to take care of things that arise between meetings. **The General Assembly (GA)** is made up of equal numbers of ministers and elders elected by the presbyteries, and a number of Advisory Delegates- such as Youth, Theological Seminary, Ecumenical, and Missionary -who have voice but not vote on the floor of the Assembly. The GA meets every two years.

Farewell...

FPC member Gretchen Fuchs passed away suddenly on August 13, after a period of declining health. Carlos Lantis, a dear and long-time friend of hers from Newburgh, New York, participated in the memorial service at First Presbyterian Church on August 18. The following is excerpted from his comments.

Busy with their jobs and families, those who knew Gretchen (at her former church, Calvary Presbyterian Church, Newburgh, NY) sent their prayers and shared their appreciation that Gretchen had "hugged" them with her all-encompassing embrace. When you were hugged by Gretchen you knew you were loved!

My dear friend and I shared a special bond from the beginning – a sympathetic sense of humor, both living in bodies we would not have chosen. We were delighted that Jesus promised us new bodies! Jesus also said he was going to prepare a place for us with "many rooms". It gave us hope and comfort to realize that God knows how we are made and knows what we do with what we're given.

Gretchen's parting words were ... *"I'll go prepare a place for you ... 'See you in heaven ... I'll be okay."*



Around the Presbytery...



“We R Group Hug” is a Rhode Island-based nonprofit

organization committed to providing wholesome, nutritious food to people and families affected by HIV/AIDS. The organization has received citations from Congressmen and been honored as Philanthropist of the Year by an AIDS care association in Rhode Island.

Through a holistic wellness approach, with a particular emphasis on the well-being of children, the organization offers a cash register free grocery store for clients, caregivers, and moms to self-shop from a variety of fresh produce, meats, protein beverages and juices, as well as healthy kid-friendly food.



It also has a backpack program that provides a

‘nutritional security blanket’ for children with an ill family member. Backpacks are filled with nutritious, easy-to-eat, safe, and readily available food for a child who might otherwise go without, such as during a weekend when a parent suddenly becomes bed-ridden and there is no one to care for the child. This so-called “Monkey See...Monkey Do...Backpack Program” not only provides food, it helps teach children good food choices by example and lets them know there are people in the wider world who care.

The mobile pantry brings food to clients through case managers, and to group homes and nurseries. We R Group Hug provides staples that make for healthy meals the whole family can enjoy together. Also included are items such as a box of cookies or snacks for the kids to enjoy.

We R Group Hug seeks to eliminate for children and families the uncertainty of whether or not they will eat and the detrimental impact that uncertainty has on the physical and mental well-being of this particularly vulnerable population.

Children are the future and how they are shaped affects that future. If you'd like to learn more please visit WeRGroupHug.org or write to them: We R Group Hug, 3

Hilltop Court, Greenville, RI 02828.



Ed. note: We will, on occasion, feature a non-profit within the Presbytery of Southern New England (to which we belong) as a way of highlighting what is going on “Around the Presbytery.”

Healthy eating contributes to overall healthy growth and development.

Early intervention in the form of healthy eating helps prevent many diseases, some of which used to be found only in adults:

- atherosclerosis
- osteoporosis
- Type II diabetes (formerly known as adult onset diabetes)
- overweight and obesity
- high blood pressure
- high cholesterol
- asthma
- joint problems
- overall poor health

Article by Ruth Van Anden and the above facts are excerpts taken from the website <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/nutrition/facts.htm> and from “We RGroupHug.org”

Thanking Those in Service...

Ushers:

Michael Asare, Ernest & Grace Brodeur, Robin Herrera, June O'Neil, Keith Rhoden Jr., Clifford Riley, Pauline Robertson, Julius & Shirley Aboagye, Tom McNeill and Akousa Ware.

Liturgists:

Ruth Bergman, Holly Billings, Enoch Darko, Alice Evans, Keith Rhoden, Jr.

Communion Stewards:

Holly Billings and June O'Neil

Flowers:

The Labins Family, Holly Billings and Mimi Nelson, the Tamburini Family.

Coffee Hour Hosts:

Jenilee & Adu Amankwah, Holly Billings and Mimi Nelson, Joan Grant, Grace & Ernie Brodeur, Alice & Bob Evans, Parish Life and Rosalyn Parks.

More Thanks:

to Jane Murray, Ed Carty, Pauline Robertson, Jean Nesbitt, Caroline Perkins, Yaa & Frank Sykes, Alice Evans and so many others who set up, baked goodies, brought flowers, and coordinated to put together the reception after the memorial service for Gretchen Fuchs.

First Presbyterian Church **e-newsletter** is an e-mail sent out weekly with notices of meetings and cancellations that affect you, alerts on births, deaths, hospitalizations and other prayer concerns. You may sign up for it by calling the church office, signing up at the church website or sending an e-mail to the church office.



Special Thanks...

to George & Carolyn Blick for their 12 years of faithful dedication to the youth of First Presbyterian Church.

Now that the joys of day are done,

I thank Thee, Lord, for all Thy care, and ask that through this coming night Thy love will keep me.

Hear my prayer. If any sick, or suffering, be, Dear Saviour, draw them close to Thee. Amen.

(This "Evening Prayer" is from *Prayer for Little Voices* by Elisabeth Robinson Scovil)

First Presbyterian Church... An Inviting Church Drawing Diverse People in Worship and Service

Co-Pastors
Rev. Martha Highsmith
Rev. Virginia Smanik
Rev. Tom Speers

Director of Music
Dianne Ney

Office Manager
Ruth Van Anden

Sexton
John Du Pont

Web Site
www.firstpreshartford.org



E-mail: fpchartfordct@sbcglobal.net

Sunday Services 10:30 AM
Holy Communion 1st Sunday of
Month

Church School 11:00 AM
Grades K-12

Child Care Available

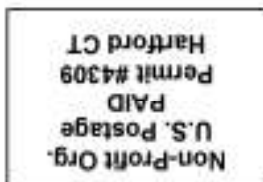
Office Hours
Monday – Friday
9:00 AM – Noon & 1:00 – 3:00 PM

Call anytime to leave a message:
Telephone: 860.246.2224

“Christians are not called to sit on the judge’s bench but on the witness stand.”
-Syngman Rhee, Past Moderator of the General Assembly

GOD LOVES YOU – PASS IT ON!

Time Sensitive Material - Do Not Delay



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
136 CAPITOL AVENUE
HARTFORD CT 06106
Return Service Requested