

# CROSSROADS

VOL. 71, No. 6

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH (UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST), STAMFORD, CONNECTICUT

JUNE 2015

## WORSHIP IN THE CHAPEL—10:30 A.M.

- July 5**      **Sixth Sunday after Pentecost**  
*Holy Communion, Deacons Fund  
and Food Trunk Offering*
- July 12**     **Seventh Sunday after Pentecost**
- July 19**     **Eighth Sunday after Pentecost**
- July 26**     **Ninth Sunday after Pentecost**

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*First Congregational Church will host  
a Blood Drive in sponsorship with  
New York Blood Center, on July 28,  
From 2:30 to 7:30 p.m. All donors will  
receive two free Mets Tickets!!  
Talk to Anne Mochulsky  
for more information.*

## SUNDAY FLOWER MEMORIALS



To donate flowers for our Sunday worship service, contact the church office for more information or to request a form. The cost for a bouquet to decorate the chancel is \$60. Checks should be made payable to FCC Stamford with "Flowers" in the memo section and may be mailed to the church or placed in the offering plate on Sunday. Please contact the office for open dates.

## FROM THE INTERIM PASTOR'S DESK

JULY 2015

~

*"He's (God) once more given us grace. But it is up to us now to make the most of it, to receive it with gratitude, and to prove ourselves worthy of this gift."  
President Obama in his eulogy for Rev. Clementa Pinckney*

I have had a difficult time conceiving the forgiveness expressed by the Emmanuel AME victims' families. The news coverage also indicates that many of us don't quite get it. I realized this week that I had expected anger, revenge, and hopelessness. And yet that is not what any of us found. Instead we found hope, grace, and promise.

As I read of the victims and their lives, I learned of people who lived and loved and committed to making this a world where God's grace can flourish. These were people who advocated for the poor and the forgotten, who believed deeply in and worked to realize God's promise of a world where we all live together in peace.

The Emmanuel AME community's offering of forgiveness demonstrates trust and hope in God's promise of a just and peaceful world, and a commitment to being a part of building this world. Forgiveness is the first step. Now begins the work of reconciliation—of mending and healing our broken community.

Through their witness of God's grace, hope, and promise, Emmanuel AME opens a path for all of us to walk forward to that world where we all live together in peace. Grace and forgiveness, while rarely earned, makes a claim on our lives—changes us—emboldens us to make a difference, to make it possible for God's grace to flourish everywhere.

May we not forget this tragedy and the grace and hope witnessed to. May we now get to the work of building a world where God's grace flourishes.

*"What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?"*

*Micah 6:8b*

*Susan*

## SUMMER 2015 HOSPITALITY



For the months of July and August only three goodies are needed! No coffee or tea is made, so milk is not necessary. Church provides cold cups and napkins. With the drinks, one half gallon of iced tea and two half gallons of juice is required. You can leave them in their containers so people will know what flavor they are drinking. Then – it will take about one half hour to wash, dry and put away the dishes used.

***Volunteers Needed for Hospitality!!  
It is greatly appreciated!!***

### LECTIONARY READINGS

**July 5:** 2 Sam 5:1-5, 9-10; Ps 48 or Ezek 2:1-5;  
Ps 123; 2 Cor 12:2-10

**July 12:** 2 Sam 6:1-5, 12b-19; Ps 24 or  
Amos 7:7-15; Ps 85:8-13; Eph 1:3-14;  
Mark 6:14-29

**July 19:** 2 Sam 7:1-14a; Ps 89:20-37 or  
Jer 23:1-6; Ps 23; Eph 2:11-22;  
Mark 6:30-34, 53-56

**July 26:** 2 Sam 11:1-15; Ps 14 or  
2 Kings 4:42-44; Ps 145:10-18; Eph 3:14-21;  
John 6:1-21

### DO YOU HAVE QUESTIONS OR IDEAS FOR FCC?

The Prudential Council is a group of church members that meets on the second Wednesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. to make important decisions about our church. The next meeting is July 8th.

All members are welcome to join us to learn about what's happening at FCC and let us know your questions/thoughts/ideas for FCC.

If you have feedback, but can't make the meeting, please feel free to get in touch with anyone who is on Prudential: **Wendy Avirgan, Steve Ayres, Lisa Bauerle, Peter Birch, Anne Firmender, Susan Gibson, Bob Godzeno, Rob Godzeno, Jean Meyer, Linda Peters, Pam Shadford, and David Vintinner.**

### *Congratulations!*

*Jessica Washiewicz,  
granddaughter of June Washiewicz,  
made the Honor Roll  
at the University Bridgeport!*

### JULY BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

- 1 Faith Quinlan Vintinner
- 3 Susan and Vincent De Simone, anniversary
- 5 Charlotte Smith
- 8 Shaun Strickland
- 11 John Michael Jelliffe
- 13 Emily Humbert
- 14 Virginia Peters
- 15 Robert Phillips
- 16 Amalia Garzon
- 20 Candice and Joe Bryan, anniversary
- 21 Barbara Arata
- 22 Dudley Jenkins, Tephilla Ponnuthurai
- 25 Cindy Richardson
- 28 Percilla Kirklewski and Kathryn Sawabini
- 30 Cecily Christian

**Our Thrift Shop will be closed  
for the months of July and August.**



**We will reopen for business on Thursday,  
September 10. Please withhold all donations until  
August. Many thanks for your continued support.**

***Kathie Laug, Pam Riley, Elfriede Mallin,  
Helga Downing, Candice Bryan, Jean Meyer.***

## COUNCIL



## CORNER

Prudential Council remains busy with the building proposal under consideration by the congregation. Please continue to attend the listening sessions after church each Sunday, as well as special all-church meetings after church on Sunday, June 28 and Sunday July 26 to recap what we have learned through the process. We will hold a congregational meeting on August 9th to vote on the proposal.

We've also been hard at work to start implementing goals proposed by the vision task force and adopted by Prudential. Our first priorities include "re-doing welcome at FCC" and starting small groups with an educational and spiritual growth focus. The Deacons and C.E. boards are closely involved with our work on these two goals, and we thank them for their support.

July 11 is the Fifth Annual Interfaith Iftar Service being held at FCC. Please contact Maureen Matthews if you are willing to help with prep and clean-up.

July 8 at 7:00 p.m. is the next Prudential meeting. All members are welcome to join us.

*Anne Firmender, Clerk*



### *Pride and Prejudice*



A musical by John Taylor Thomas (FCC baritone soloist)

Based on the novel by Jane Austen

Featuring Frances McGovern as Mrs. Lucas

Theater for the New City

155 1st Avenue

NY, NY 10003

[theaterforthenewcity.net](http://theaterforthenewcity.net)

July 9, 10, 11 @ 8:00 p.m.

July 12 @ 3:00 p.m.

Tickets \$18.00

## SECOND SUNDAY WALK



The July 12 walk will be around downtown Stamford to tour the *Dinosaurs Alive!* Sculpture Exhibit led by Karen Davis.

The August 9 walk will combine the new Cos Cob Park and the paths through Bruce Park in Greenwich led by Kathie Laug.

All walks meet in the church parking lot at noon. Dress for the weather and bring water. See Kathie Laug if you have questions. ***See Kathie Laug if you have any questions.***

## BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP



The next book will be *The Orphan Train* by Christina Baker Kline. This novel is based on fact; in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century orphans from eastern cities were routinely taken west by train and given to anyone who would have them. Some found good homes but many did not. The book juxtaposes two lives -- that of Molly, a foster child of the current generation and Vivian, an elderly woman who rode the orphan train as a child. We will meet Monday, July 13.

After that we will read *Winterdance: The Fine Madness of Running the Iditarod* by Gary Paulson. It is a fascinating and entertaining depiction of how one man lives out his dream of running in the Iditarod - the annual 1,000+ mile sled-dog race between Anchorage and Nome. Date to be determined.

We meet in the church parlor at 7:00 p.m. All books are available in the church library. We are looking for suggestions for future books. ***See Kathie Laug or Pam Shadford*** if you have questions or books to suggest.

**REMINDER!**  
**JULY 5 THROUGH**  
**SEPTEMBER 6**  
**WE BEGIN WORSHIP**  
**AT 10:30 A.M.**  
**IN OUR CHAPEL.**



*Serving Another in Love Together  
with  
Love Inspiring Great Hope Today*

*The **Welcome Table** assists partner communities to :  
Understand the importance of listening, storytelling and  
relationship building as prerequisites  
to producing real and measurable change*

*Understand the consequences of the systems we have  
inherited, in order to develop, together,  
community-specific initiatives to redress inequities.*

(from the William Winter Institute for Racial Reconciliation)

Given the recent murders in South Carolina of 9 African-American church members, it seems appropriate to reflect on how we do mission in a way that addresses hate, racism, racial reconciliation, and justice. The quote from the Welcome Table challenges us to go beyond “doing for” others. Instead we are invited to “be with” others. We are asked to listen, share stories, and build relationships. This is where hearts are changed and minds opened to the beauty and dignity of the ‘other’.

When the volunteers at Downtown EATS sit down with the guests to share a meal, they are listening, sharing stories, and building relationships.

The volunteers who are going to South Dakota to spend time with the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe have listening, storytelling and relationship building as their mission.

We all can create the Welcome Table wherever we live and work and play. How can FCC create more opportunities to be a Welcome Table in Stamford...and beyond?

*Anne Mochulsky, Tephilla Ponnuthurai,  
Katie McAllister, Anne Firmender, Warren Richardson,  
Maureen Matthews, Rev. Susan Gibson, and Jean Meyer*

**CALLING ALL CHEFS!**

Many thanks to Jill Shepherd and her helpers who worked so well in preparing a wonderful meal for New Covenant House in June. ***This is a much appreciated service!***



Are you are interested in helping to prepare and serve a meal? We are always looking for members of our church who would be willing to help in either the capacity of chef or helper.



***If you are one of those people, please come and see me, Helga Downing, or call me at 203-359-0494.***

~

**Be part of our church's mission, support Downtown EATS by:**

- Volunteering to help on the 2nd Saturday each month (10 a.m.-1:00p.m.)
- Donating non-perishable food and toiletries

**Our pantry supplies are low!**  
Donations needed and appreciated!  
*This month the following items would be especially helpful:*

- Easy-open cans of tuna fish and meals, small boxes of cereal.
- All small toiletries, tooth brushes & paste, razors

**Please bring donations on Sunday, July 5. Downtown EATS this month is July 11.**

**Collections will be ongoing on the first Sunday of each month.**

**Thank you for your continued generosity!**

**NORTHFIELD CEMETERY  
CLEAN-UP, CARE AND RESTORATION**

Andrew Melillo with a crew of five will be working at the cemetery on Saturday's from 9:00 to 1:00 on July 18, July 25, and August 15.

If you are interested and able to help, he would appreciate your participation! He will be mowing, weed whacking, trying to rid the stone walls of poison ivy and continuing to uncover stones.

He has made a schedule of days he will be working at the cemetery through December 2015. Thanks to his work, many felled stones will be restored and FCC will not have to cover the maintenance cost for the cemetery this year.

*Jean Meyer*

***Rebuilding Your Home: A Prayer for Charleston***

(c) Rabbi Menachem, Creditor

Dear God,

A church was built  
by former slaves  
who would have revolted  
hundreds of years ago today,  
their liberation thwarted  
by those with power.

Today bullets tore through  
Your House, Your Images,  
ravaging the nobility  
of lives reclaimed.

Violence is not Your Way, Dear God.  
And one of Your Servants,  
nine of Your Images  
are needlessly gone.

In anguish,  
we protest in Your Holy Name,  
remembering the command to choose life  
is not a given in Your broken world  
but rather a demand  
upon us all.

Today we cry again  
for "Mother Emanuel,"  
(Mother-God-is-with-Us),  
one of Your many homes  
in Charleston.

Tonight we sing louder than weapons:  
Those who sow in tears,  
will reap, will reap in joy.

God, give us the endurance  
to end the insanity  
ripping through thousands of bodies  
and millions of souls.

May we merit to see You  
in each other's eyes  
and sanctify Your Name  
by standing together  
by rising up again,  
this time rebuilding Your Home  
by saving each other's.

*Amen*

## **Discernment around the FCC Building Proposal Continues**

On June 28<sup>th</sup>, many of us gathered in the parlor to grapple with the many issues raised by the development proposal from Copperline Partners. The people most active with the recent “listening sessions” summarized what they had heard over the past month: Trustee David Vintinner reported on the terms of the initial offer, which was just finalized on June 26<sup>th</sup>. On behalf of Stewardship, Steve Ayres spoke about the congregation’s past meeting houses and recent finances. From Christian Education, Lisa Bauerle summarized the perspectives she’s gathered about how our building works and doesn’t work for us. Moderator Robert Godzeno then led a conversation around discernment. Copies of the hand-outs are available in the church office.

Many questions were asked, and not all of them answered. Among the unanswered questions: “Do we need to do this?” “Do we want to do this?” “If we undertake renovations, how much do we want to do and how much will it cost?” “What is our unique calling as a church in 2015 in Stamford, and how could a construction project help us realize that calling?” “What does it mean to our mission and future if we say no to this?”

In the weeks ahead, open listening sessions will continue after worship (July 12<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and August 2<sup>nd</sup>), Prudential will meet July 8<sup>th</sup>, Trustees will meet July 21<sup>st</sup>, and another informational gathering (hopefully with drawings and cost estimates) will happen on July 26<sup>th</sup>. We expect a congregational vote on August 9<sup>th</sup> to either empower a group to finalize legal documents and begin the road toward renovations, or to bring the current opportunity to a close.

Through this period of discernment, as you talk to the friends and members of our congregation, please remember: we all long together for the Spirit of Christ to be made real when we gather here to worship and do missions. We each hold different pieces of the vision of our shared future, and we need to listen to each other’s hopes, faiths, and fears as we choose which road to travel. Anything is possible for us, in faith, just not everything at once. Whatever our decision in a few weeks, our friends and neighbors will know we are Christians by the love we express as we make our choice.

On behalf of the Trustees,

*David Vintinner*

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Stamford, CT 06901



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**Keep us informed!**

**If you are ill or hospitalized or have any concerns, please call the church office or let any of the Deacons know.**

**We would like to include you in our prayers and visit you!**