

# CROSSROADS

VOL. 75, No. 5

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

MAY 2016

## WORSHIP IN THE SANCTUARY – 10:30 A.M.

- May 1 Sixth Sunday of Easter**  
*"The Great Commission"* - Matthew 28: 16-20  
*Holy Communion, Deacons Fund, and Food Trunk Offering*
- May 8 Seventh Sunday of Easter – Mother's Day**  
*"The God Who Gave You Birth"* - Deut.32: 10-18
- May 15 Pentecost Sunday**  
*"What Does Heaven Look Like"* - Acts 2: 1-21
- May 22 Trinity Sunday**  
*"Sacred Dance"* - John 16:12-15
- May 29 Ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time - Memorial Day**  
*"Nothing Can Separate Us"* - Romans 8:31-39

\*\*\*\*\*

### 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 PASTOR'S DESK

Happy May, FCC! May will wrap up the Easter Season and our sermon series, "Jesus in Transition." Remember, every transition begins with an ending, continues through the "neutral zone," and ends with a new beginning. The important thing about endings is that we acknowledge the loss that accompanies them and find ways to grieve productively. Once we have done that, it's time to "let it go." Hanging on to past hurts, dreams, disappointments, and successes only make the neutral zone more difficult. The neutral zone is an "in between" time of experimentation, trial-and-error, visions, creativity, and setting the stage for the new beginning. The tendency in the neutral zone is to either try to go back to the old way of doing things, which is impossible, or to speed through to something that feels more "settled." Either way short circuits the transition process and leads to less than optimal outcomes. Our transition period at FCC is three years, which is neither too long nor too short, in my opinion. So that's great news! Now is a great time to re-engage with FCC in new ways and to invite others to do so as well. You won't want to miss a week of worship during this grand new adventure.

See you in church!

*Pastor Todd*

\*\*\*

## TRUSTEE'S



### CORNER

The Trustees are happy this month to report that for the first time in a year, no major new initiatives were introduced at the congregational meeting! Of course, after the year of change we just came through, there is plenty of old business, so here is an update for those of you who missed the recent meeting:

Copperline Partners have not yet completed their building design, so no drawings were sent to the Zoning Board in March or April as originally projected. This is likely to delay any demolition at 1 Walton Place well past September, so that means we have this whole summer in the McGown Chapel!

Northfield Cemetery is looking very neat, thanks to the efforts of the "Friends of Northfield" led by Andrew Melillo, with whom we are beginning the paperwork to get Northfield on the state register of historic places.

An offer from the current renters has been accepted on the old parsonage! Of course it is not final until the ink is dry, but we hope that the sale will be complete in the next few months.

The Stamford Counseling Center has moved out of our old Fellowship Hall. After 13 years of shared space and ministry, the SCC is heading north to their new home.

First Congregational Church is hiring! We are looking for a part time Office/Communications Manager, to work Sundays through Thursdays . The full position is available on Indeed.com, so please direct potential candidates to search that site so they can apply:



what:	where:
<input type="text" value="church communications"/>	<input type="text" value="Stamford, CT"/>
<small>job title, keywords or company</small>	<small>city, state, or zip</small>
<input type="button" value="Find Jobs"/>	

Yours in Christ's service,

David Vintinner on behalf of the FCC-S Trustees

## BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP



On May 2, we will discuss The Aviator's Wife by Melanie Benjamin and Gift from the Sea by Anne Morrow Lindbergh. The first book is a vividly imagined novel of the complicated marriage between Charles Lindbergh and Anne Morrow which reveals both its dizzying heights and its devastating lows. The second book is a beloved classic in which the author draws inspiration from shells on the beach to reflect on life.

The next book will be Ordinary Light by Tracy K. Smith. This is a quietly potent memoir by a Pulitzer prize winning poet that explores coming-of-age and the meaning of home against a complex backdrop of race, faith, and the unbreakable bond between a mother and daughter. Date to be announced.

We meet in the church parlor at 7:00 p.m. All books are available in the church library.

*See Kathie Laug if you have any questions.*

\*\*\*

## WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP



Save the date! Saturday, June 4, 2016, 6:30 pm, The Women's Fellowship of The First Congregational Church of Stamford Invites everyone to Spring into Summer at the All Church Annual Spring Banquet.

Reservations are requested, but not necessary. Tickets are \$6.50 for adults and \$4.00 for children under 12.

See Linda Peters ([203.536.9758](tel:203.536.9758)) or call the church office ([203.323.0200](tel:203.323.0200)) for further information.

\*\*\*

## COUNCIL



## CORNER

Prudential Council met on April 13th. We were happy to have Pastor Todd join us for our first meeting since his arrival at FCC.

We reflected as a group on the last section of the Vision Statement, "Nurtures spiritual growth in ways that speak to a changing world". Two ways we live this out are through our missions in the community, and the rainbow flag, which has generated a lot of conversations about the role of the church and religion in today's world.

Pastor Todd reviewed with us the information on membership and finances that we have reported to the UCC over the last 10 years. We had a net increase of 44 members during the interim period with Pastors Jane Ann Groom and Susan Gibson. That type of growth is unusual for an interim period. However, it hasn't translated to a large increase in usual Sunday morning attendance, possibly because people in general attend church less frequently today than they used to, so we need more members just to sustain the same level of weekly involvement, and more opportunities to engage with the church throughout the week.

Thanks to Anne Firmender's idea from a workshop she attended at the UCC's SuperSaturday conference in March, we will be working on a volunteer resources assessment that will help us learn what talents and interests people in the congregation would like to share with our church.

We spent a lot of time reviewing the Vision Task Force's goals and some concrete steps we have identified with Pastor Todd to start making those goals become a reality. One of the first steps we'll be focusing on is becoming an invitational church that creates opportunities to pull people into the life of our church and where current members feel more equipped to be a part of that process. This work will include looking critically at everything we do to identify invisible cultural barriers and assumptions that may make it hard for people to connect to our community.

It also includes creating more times and spaces for members of our church family to spend time together outside of worship, having fun, getting to know each other, praying, reading and building up the ties that make us stronger. Please stay tuned as we fill in the details on this exciting work.

Respectfully Submitted,  
***Rob Godzeno, Moderator***  
***Anne Firmender, Clerk***

\*\*\*

*(continued next column)*

THRIFT SHOP NEWS



We continue to be amazed at the generosity of the community and are very grateful for their support. With this support and the support of our loyal customers we were able this month to make the following contributions:

- \$1,000 – refugee resettlement
- \$600 – Pilgrim Towers
- \$500 – Silver Lake Conference Center (UCC) Campership Scholarship Program
- \$500 – Americares to aid earthquake victims in Ecuador

In the Thrift Shop volunteers are very busy changing over to spring and summer clothes. However, a few winter items are still available at half price.

Our faithful ARI volunteers continue to come on Thursday afternoons to help fold and straighten the rooms. Thank you, thank you to these young people.

As always we thank all who support us.

The Thrift Shop Committee

*Candice Bryan, Helga Downing, Anne Firmender, Jan Fuechsel, Kathie Laug, Elfriede Mallin, Jean Meyer, Linda Peters, Pam Riley*

Thrift Shop Hours

**Thursdays 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of the month 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.**

\*\*\*

**MAY**

**BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES**

- 3 Warren Richardson
- 5 Rosemene Francique
- 7 Linda Peters
- 10 Arline Clayburn, Wilma Ramazzini
- 14 Lori Constantine, Elaine Pope-Joffrion
- 15 Terry Ngo
- 18 Priscilla and John Jelliffe, anniversary  
Sherry and Matthew West, anniversary
- 23 Kathy West
- 25 Michelle Chase
- 29 Jeremy Jelliffe
- 30 EJ Richardson, Jeffrey Telesco
- 31 Amy Elizabeth Ayres, Nancy Gleason

\*\*\*



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

**Origin of the word Concern: con-cernere, to sift; mix, as in a sieve.**

The word “concern” is one we use often, especially when we think about mission and reaching out to others. We have “concern” for others. You might say that this is at the heart of everything we do at FCC, whether that is putting a person’s name on the prayer list, calling someone we haven’t seen at church for a while, preparing a meal for the hungry of Stamford or finding a home for a refugee family from Syria. There is so much that we do out of “concern” and it’s a good thing.

But if we look at the real meaning of “concern” we might be surprised at what it involves. The dictionary says that “concern” means to sift together ‘as in a sieve’. Concern is not one directional, i.e. we do something for someone, making a difference in their lives. When sifting together is involved, it means everyone is changed. Our lives, both the giver and the recipient of concern, sift together and we are both changed. Concern is two-directional and no one is ever the same.

In these past few months FCC has been the meeting space of concern for refugees fleeing their home in search of safety and peace. Concerned people from all over Stamford and Westchester, from synagogues, churches, and mosques, believers and non-believers have met to put their concern in action. Together they have found a home, schools, health providers, food, furniture and flowers for a family of 2 parents and 4 children who have been living in a refugee camp in Jordan.

From the outside, it might look like the “concern” of the SIRS group has been one directional...but it hasn’t been. The miracle of “sifting together” has already happened within the SIRS community itself. Strangers have become friends, crossing all kinds of boundaries. There is a tangible joy in generosity in this group. Everyone has been changed. And they are changing others’ lives beyond the SIRS group as volunteers are constantly joining the effort with offers of assistance.

And this sifting of lives together will continue with the arrival of our Syrian family. Like flour shaken, our lives will sift together. No one will ever be the same.

Concern is at the heart of everything we do at FCC. May it always be two-directional. May we always be mixing together.

*(continued on left bottom column)*

And, finally, on May 7, 2016, you are invited to join the Mission Board in a morning of reflection on what it means to welcome the stranger. 8:30AM to 12 NOON. More info will be available soon.

Anne Firmender, Anne Mochulsky, Corrine Taylor, Jean Meyer, Maureen Matthews, Warren Richardson, Katie McAllister

### MISSION TRIP 2016



Join the 2016 journey to the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe Reservation. Talk to Jean Meyer or John Jelliffe if you would like to learn more about this trip.

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

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

**This month the following items would be especially helpful:**

- Cereal and easy-open cans of soup and tuna

**Please bring donations on Sunday, May 8. Downtown EATS this month is May 14. Collections will be ongoing on the first Sunday of each month.**

**Thank you for your continued generosity!**



### CALLING ALL CHEFS!

Many thanks to Lynne Koellner, Kathy West and Elfriede Mallin, who prepared a wonderful meal for New Covenant House in April.

*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 volunteer 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.*

# SIRS

Stamford Interfaith Refugee Settlement



Be part of this interfaith effort, working with IRIS, Integrated Refugee and Immigrant Services, to re-settle a refugee family into the Stamford Community.

\*\*\*

Contact SIRS at [fcstamford.org](http://fcstamford.org) or call 203-323-0200

\*\*\*

Inspirica   
from homeless to home

formerly St. Luke's LifeWorks

A note from the caring, diligent workers of Inspirica:

Thank you to the parishioners of First Congregational Church of Stamford for investing in the lives of homeless men, woman and children.

On behalf of those we serve, we greatly appreciate your generous gift of \$500 to Inspirica, Inc. Your gift will support the critical programs and services needed to break the cycle of homelessness and move hundreds more from the streets to health, jobs, homes – and dignity!

We treasure our faith partnership and your support. Together, we make a difference.

With great appreciation,

Lisa Stuart  
Chief Development Officer

