



The Congregational Ranger

Newsletter of The Fellowship of Northeast Congregational Christian Churches

Volume XLIX Issue 4

Winter 2013-14

SAVE THE DATE WATCH MAIL FOR MORE DETAILS A VISION EVENT

A Day of Visioning for the Northeast Fellowship

This event is an opportunity for clergy, church staff and all church members to come together to discover, rediscover, uncover all we have together to offer one another through fellowship.

We will be identifying and sharing the resources we have within our own churches that can move the Fellowship forward; we will be prioritizing what areas of training are most important to the churches in the Fellowship; we will be creating teams to carry ideas and dreams forward; we will be realizing the vitality and energy of the churches that constitute the Fellowship.

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Saturday, March 22, 2014
Third Congregational Church
94 Miner Street
Middletown, Ct.
860 632-0733

No Charge

Lunch Provided

Facilitated by Reverend Phil Jackson
Pastor, 1st Cong'l. Church of Yarmouth Port
Moderator, Massachusetts Association

Fall Gathering of the FNCCC

Results of Table Discussions—Dreams for Fellowship

Table leaders guided discussions at dinner around the topic of what would you like to see the Fellowship do for the local church in the future. Below are the responses.

- ◆ Training would be appreciated with workshops on roles in the local church such as treasurer and moderator.
- ◆ A repeat of the workshop offered by Reverend Chapman on issues of sexual misconduct in the church and how to protect our children in Sunday School could be offered again
- ◆ Identify all members and pastors with expertise in various areas such as conflict resolution and problem solving and compile this information to communicate the names and areas of expertise to the membership
- ◆ Establish a resource library - can books be exchanged among membership on areas of interest?
- ◆ Encourage churches to be open to the help of the Fellowship
- ◆ Training for Sunday School teachers
- ◆ Seminars on topics such as Membership and retention
- ◆ Workshops on avoiding burn-out
- ◆ Workshops on dealing with difficult people
- ◆ Seminars like Group
- ◆ How to parent seminars
- ◆ Men's and Women's Activities
- ◆ Organize a Fellowship-wide mission trip
- ◆ Organize a Fellowship-Wide trip to Israel
- ◆ Two day workshop on sermon preparation for lay leaders
- ◆ Seminars on how to bring people back to the church
- ◆ Workshops on conflict resolution
- ◆ Identify web sites as resources for local church issues
- ◆ Program idea exchange - Sunday school and VBS
- ◆ Discuss solutions to declining attendance and declining giving.

Churches want to grow their church family and volunteer base to prevent burn out. How do we get people back into the church? How do we get our churches open to our help? How do we educate parents to the importance of choosing church for their youth over social and sports activities? If we can attract the children, parents will follow.

Fall Gathering of the FNCCC

Results of Table Discussions—Dreams for Fellowship

Members want to participate in the executive board meetings and it was recommended that we re-open the discussion of the time and venue of the executive board meeting perhaps when more people are available for the discussion. Even having our last discussion on this topic at 5:30 excluded many people. We need to accommodate busy schedules with teleconferencing and skype. Perhaps regional hubs can be created at churches who have this technology and be a gathering spot for local churches.

Special interest retreats are desired - for youth, men, Sunday school teachers, couples etc. In the last two years quality workshops and retreats have been offered, but the attendance has been low.

Felt that the Berkshire retreat center would help churches build relationships with their youth and other youth in the Fellowship. It would be good to find ways of bringing more youth to the NAPF meetings. On a local level, have fellowship-planned events for our youth at a theme park or retreat center or concert (Soul Fest).

People responded regarding why they come to the fellowship meetings. The responses included fellowship, finding strength through diversity, getting ideas to bring home to the local church, encourage others as well as be encouraged and growth.

The topic of having a weekend meeting combining workshops and business held in a hotel had a positive response except there is concern regarding the costs.

Dreams for the Fellowship:

- ◆ The retreat center at Berkshire
- ◆ More involvement from the churches
- ◆ Fellowship reaching out in significant ways - ask what churches want and need
- ◆ To participate in retreats, youth events, workshops, etc at a Fellowship level
- ◆ Increase attendance at NAPF

An Anniversary and a Farewell

Westchester Congregational Church 285th Anniversary

Year 2013 marked the 285th anniversary of the organization of the Westchester Congregational Church, located in Colchester, Connecticut. On Sunday January 5, 2014 the congregation observed this mile stone with a welcoming Sunday at the morning worship service.

The Rev. Mr. Karl Ostberg greeted the congregation and delivered a brief history of congregationalism. Ms. Barbara Erlendson, Executive Secretary of the Fellowship of Northeast Congregational Christian Churches brought greetings to the congregation from the FNCCC

Nan Wasniewski, Church Historian, and descendant from one of the original signers of the WCC covenant, read a brief up date of the Church history. Following the service, the congregation shared refreshments, and an opportunity to visit with old and new friends.

Need for an organized church in the Westchester section of Colchester was dictated by the difficulty of traveling the miles from the Colchester Congregational Church in the day of travel by horse power, often in inclement weather, on roads little more than foot paths or old trails.

The 2nd Ecclesiastical Society of Colchester was organized by a grant from the Connecticut General Assembly in 1726. The covenant of the Westchester Congregational Church was signed by 16 men and women on December 17, 1728. The first of two meeting houses was raised in 1730. This building was destroyed by fire in 1847 and the present church was raised on February 22, 1748.

By: Nan Wasniewski, Church Historian
Westchester Congregational Church

A Letter to Bid Farewell

Dear Friends of the Fellowship

Retirement is almost here! I will be 69 years young this coming March and have decided it is time for me to swim out of the turbid "fish bowl" of ministry and enter the placid waters of retirement. I have been thinking about this for the past year or so, but Louise and I were not sure where we wanted to move. We have decided to more to Henrico, a lovely development in Richmond, Virginia.

I have enjoyed many years of association with the "Fellowship" and it has been some of the best years of my professional ministry. This organization has given me a lot of happiness and satisfaction in my career. I shall cherish this journey for the rest of my life.

I have to retire as I have realized that it is high time I spend quality time with my devoted wife.

I will always remain thankful to the Fellowship for the help and support I received during my ministries in Connecticut.

I wish to convey my regards and blessings to all the members of this organization. Wishing you God's best for the continued work and growth of the Northeast Fellowship of Congregational Christian Churches.

Karl Ostberg, AR (Almost Retired)

Summer Youth Camp – '14

July 6th – July 11th

Are you ready for some Summer? Well, it is only a few short months away, and guess what?...so is SUMMER YOUTH CAMP '14!!! We are so EXCITED about Summer Youth Camp '14. This year promises to be another amazing year. The Camp Staff is beginning to thaw out a little; the ideas & creativity are beginning to flow; and the energy is beginning to stir. SYC '14 is coming, and it will be here before you know it.

The theme this year is "DEEPER". We will explore God's Word and discover how we can go DEEPER in our Faith... DEEPER in our love for our Lord, for His Word, for our Worship, each other, and for our world. This theme will allow us to look at where each of us is in our journey of faith and see what we can do to go DEEPER. We will do this with incredible Praise Music (with Phil & the Band), inspiring Devotions, impacting messages from the Word, and inedible game time (just threw that one in...those who know...know what we are talking about).

Our Summer Youth Camp is at Singing Hills Campground. It is located just up Interstate 91 close to Plainfield, New Hampshire. Singing Hills has all the facilities we need to have an AWESOME Summer Camp. From a swimming pool, to a swimming pond with a water trampoline, to a hundred foot water slide...so there will be plenty of water activities. From outdoor volleyball, to basketball, to soccer, to ultimate Frisbee, to wiffle ball, to kickball, to Frisbee golf, to hiking trails, to a lot of open space for day and night outdoor games...so there will be plenty of outdoor activities (can't wait to see what Jim & Chris come up with this year). From game rooms filled with all kinds of games, to an amazing chapel for Praise, Worship, Bible Time, and Impact Games (oh boy!!!)...there will be plenty of indoor stuff to do like Super Creative Craft time (let's hear it for Mama K., Anna, & Suzanne...they are super crafty). From dorm like rooms (some with private bath and shower areas), to a large dining facility with great food...so we will eat, sleep, and be clean in style.

For those entering the 5th grade this fall to those who just graduated High School(Class of 2014), Summer Youth Camp '14 will be a 6 days and 5 nights experience of going DEEPER...in Faith, Life, Fellowship, and Love. It will begin on Sunday, July 6th and run through Friday afternoon, July 11th. The cost for this unbelievable experience is only \$225.00 per camper if they register before April 6th. After April 6th the cost is \$240.00 per camper. All you need to reserve a spot at camp is a \$50.00 non-refundable deposit. Medical Forms and remaining Camp Money need to be in by June 15th. Get this...YOU CAN SIGN UP NOW!!! So invite all your friends, and let's get DEEPER at Summer Youth Camp '14.

For all of us who are passionate about Summer Youth Camp...Staff, Campers, and Parents...We want to take a moment to thank the Northeast Fellowship for their unwavering commitment to Summer Youth Camp, not only this year, but for all the previous years. Your investment into the lives of young people is always worth it. Many lives have been impacted and will continue to be impacted. It is with this awareness of how important this ministry is to the lives of our youth and to the strengthening of the Northeast Fellowship that your 2014 Summer Youth Camp Staff is COMMITTED.

Pray with us for God to use us in such a way that we can inspire, impact and empower our youth to desire to go DEEPER. We recognize the awesome call to Camp Ministry, and we accept the challenge. Summer Youth Camp '14 is going to be a special time of Faith, Fellowship, and Fun. Let's go DEEPER at the Hills in 2014!

For more information, please contact:

Sr. High Camp Director	Pastor Lee Edwards	860-889-6503
Jr. High Camp Director	Pastor Irv Gammon	413-584-1325
Camp Administrator	Karen Edwards	860-889-6503

From Riverpoint Congregational Church —

Weathering Winter Storms —Automobile Safety

Winter storms are a part of living in New England and when they strike it often finds us unprepared for the possible dangers that come along with them. Here are just a few items that you should have in your vehicle that will help you should you become stranded during a storm:

- ◆ Flares
- ◆ Flashlight (keep in the glove box or inside the vehicle)
- ◆ Spare batteries
- ◆ Candles and a lighter or matches (keep them dry in a sealed plastic bag)
- ◆ Battery operated radio
- ◆ Bags of sand (one on each side of the trunk, near the wheel wells for rear drive vehicles. This will provide added traction while driving and the sand can be used around your tires if you become stuck.)
- ◆ A camping shovel
- ◆ At least one sleeping bag or blanket, preferably one that is down.
- ◆ Spare boots or galoshes
- ◆ Water
- ◆ Foodstuffs that can be eaten cold.
- ◆ A small First Aid kit
- ◆ A small tool kit, a jack that works and a spare tire in usable condition and jumper cables.

If you find yourself stranded in a snowstorm in your running vehicle it is imperative that you clear snow away from your exhaust pipe. Doing so will allow your exhaust (carbon monoxide) to safely vent away from the car, thus preventing build-up inside. Also, leave your window open a little to vent out possible leakage through your firewall. Carbon monoxide being colorless, odorless, tasteless, and initially non-irritating, is very difficult for people to detect. Here are a few poisoning symptoms to be aware of: dull headache, dizziness, weakness and nausea. If you should find yourself experiencing any of these symptoms you should exit the car for fresh air.

May everyone have uneventful driving experiences!

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RESOURCE FOR CONGREGATIONS

The Yale Divinity School Resource Center is available to churches and their congregations. Need new church school curriculum? Travel down to the Resource Center and get a hands-on look at curricula from almost every publisher out there. Want to show a video series? Create a special event for Lent or Advent? The Resource Center provides all that and more, including workshops on all manner of topics. Membership is \$94 per year for churches of up to 300 congregants. Want to know more? Visit www.library.Yale.edu/div/mrc and see all they offer and to download a membership form.

PASTORS AND PULPITS



Following the departure for official retirement in September of our beloved Rev. Charlie Hall, the First Congregational Church of Barkhamsted established a search committee in October which started meeting regularly in November.

The first priority for the Search Committee was to secure an interim pastor to start in early 2014. We received numerous unique and surprisingly qualified applicants with diverse backgrounds for this position. In early January we selected Rev. Susan Wyman to begin a six month interim position in Barkhamsted starting February of 2014. We received confirmation of her acceptance by January 15. Rev. Wyman is a solid, well-known and loved member of our community, so this temporary fill was a big relief to all involved with this country church.

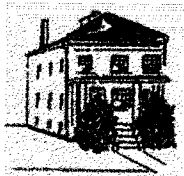
The search committee has also posted the settled minister position on the NACCC website. While we have not closed applications yet we have already received seven formal resumes and are excited about the prospect of filling the position in much less time than it has taken us in the past. We are now beginning the orderly process of reviewing the applications.

Submitted by Kay Page Greaser, on behalf of the Search Committee

INTRODUCING . . .

Hello! I am Kelly Forbush, the new interim pastor at 2nd Congregational Church of Jewett City. Prior to coming to 2nd Congregational Church, I served as a community minister at Judson Memorial Church, NYC (joint Baptist and United Church of Christ congregation) and at Broad Street Ministry, Philadelphia (Presbyterian new church start). Currently, I reside in New Haven with my partner and travel up to Jewett City on Sunday mornings. Since I am at 2nd Congregational Church less than quarter-time, I also work as a homemaker for an elderly couple in New Haven. Sadly, this job will prevent me from joining you for Thursday meetings. I intend to remain at 2nd Congregational Church until I am called to a full-time position in a congregation of the United Church of Christ, my home denomination. In the meantime, I am greatly enjoying the opportunity to be with a vibrant and fun congregation!

Kelly Jane Forbush, Pastoral Resident,
Broad Street Ministry, Yale Divinity School M.Div '12
Preparing for ordination in the United Church of Christ



I Love The Fellowship House

Submitted by Marjorie B. Carmody

I remember 1969 – the excitement, enthusiasm, opportunities and fellowship of working together on the house on Fishers Island. This is not just a building – some reason brings you here.

Perhaps you are unaware of Fellowship House, why we own it and what it offers to you and your church. We want you to take advantage of this property and enjoy what it offers. There is an excellent article on Fellowship House on our web site. We hope more churches will use this facility so we can maintain it.

Last, but not least – a few words on the volunteers who feel a desire to help so others can enjoy this place. Lenny and Ruth Kozlowski from Granby who are tireless workers. Harley Hill and Bryan Brandriff from Eastford who bring young strong bodies to help everywhere. One teenager from Warren learning from the guys how to shut down the house. And dear Jann from Newbury who got me involved when she was a teenager. We still feel the pull of the ocean and God's gifts at one house. Also, thank you to all groups visiting that do projects on their time.

“JOB DESCRIPTIONS”

Ever wonder what our officers and committees do?

OFFICERS:

The **MODERATOR** presides at all meetings of the Fellowship and Executive Committee.

The **ASSISTANT MODERATOR** presides at meetings in the absence of the Moderator and will become the next Moderator. He or she also convenes the Personnel Committee meetings as needed.

The **2ND ASSISTANT MODERATOR** convenes the Nominating Committee.

The **RECORDING SECRETARY** takes the minutes of the Fellowship and Executive Committee meetings.

The **ASSISTANT RECORDING SECRETARY** assumes the duties of the Secretary when needed.

The **TREASURER AND ASSISTANT TREASURER** of the Fellowship and of the Ecclesiastical Society work with the Financial Coordinator to manage the Fellowship funds.

COMMITTEES:

Each member church sends one voting delegate to the **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE** meeting. Members of churches are welcome to attend the meetings as well, without vote

The **BUDGET & INVESTMENTS COMMITTEE** oversees the Fellowship's day-to-day financial operations and invested funds.

The **CAD (CHURCH ASSISTANCE & DEVELOPMENT) COMMITTEE** handles requests for support, either for grants or loans, from member churches.

The **CHURCH SERVICES COMMITTEE** helps the church hosting the semi-annual meetings with programs. The committee also helps in distributing Religious Education and Missions information to the churches.

The **PASTORAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE** assists member churches in the pastoral search process and they are there to assist churches and clergy as needed.

The **PERSONNEL COMMITTEE** reviews performance, compensation and benefits of the paid staff.

The **YOUTH & FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE**: The Committee supervises the use of Fellowship House on Fishers Island and helps in setting up a summer youth program.

Have you ever been fearful of being a committee chair? No need – the Chair convenes and chairs the meeting, sets the agenda and votes in the event of a tie. All our decisions are made by committees in keeping with the Congregational Way.

OFFICERS & COMMITTEES

Fiscal Year 2013-2014

Listed below are the officers and committee members of the Fellowship and Ecclesiastical Society for the current fiscal year. If anyone wishes to contact the committees directly, please call or email the office in Hartford for contact information.

Moderator:

Rev. Norm Erendson

Assistant Moderator:

Rev. Karl Ostberg

2nd Asst. Moderator:

Rev. Kevin Smail

Retiring Moderator:

Kay Page Greaser

Executive Secretary:

Barbara Erendson

Recording Secretary:

Rev. Nancy Lois

Asst. Rec. Secretary:

Maureen McCall

Fellowship Treasurer:

Rev. Dr. Steven Blackburn

Asst. Fell. Treasurer:

Rev. Adam Söderberg

Eccl. Society Treasurer:

Douglas Loux

Asst. Eccl. Society Treasurer:

Rev. Irvn Gammon

Nominating Committee:

Rev. Bobbie Chapman, Kay Page Greaser, Rev. Karl Ostberg, Karen Reich, Wendell Ritchie

Pastoral Relations:

Rev. Norm Erendson, Rev. Paul Ricard, Wendell Ritchie

Personnel:

Rev. Dr. Steve Blackburn, Russell Blakeslee, Rev. Norm Erendson, Kay Page Greaser, Rev. Paul Ricard

Youth & Fellowship:

Bryan Brandriff, Marjorie Carmody, Jann Carmody-Tanner, Rev. Bobbie Chapman, Karen Edwards, Rev. Lee Edwards, Barbara Erendson, Rev. Norm Erendson, Rev. Irvn Gammon, Anna Gobar, Harley Hill, Douglas Loux, Karen Reich.

President, Congregational Women:

Karen Reich

Budget & Investments Committee:

Rev. Dr. Steven Blackburn, Marjorie Carmody, Rev. Norm Erendson, Rev. Irv Gammon, Douglas Loux, Rev. Adam Söderberg, Rev. Dr. Ken Wildrick.

Church Assistance & Development Committee:

Russell Blakeslee, Rev. Lee Edwards, Maureen McCall, Cookie Stojak, Rev. Stan White.

Church Services Committee:

Rev. Norm Erendson, Kay Page Greaser, Rev. Kevin Smail, Corrine Sternberg.

Ad Hoc Committees:Membership Committee:

Rev. Bobbie Chapman, Karen Reich

Berkshire Retreat Proposal:

Rev. Irvn Gammon, Kay Page Greaser, Kim Kennedy, Doug Loux, Rev. Kevin Smail

Rev. Nancy Lois-Liaison between church and committee

*The Fellowship of Connecticut Congregational Christian Churches, now known as the Fellowship of **Northeast** Congregational Christian Churches was formally organized in 1958 when, at its first annual meeting, the Constitution and By-Laws were adopted. The purpose of the Fellowship, as summarized by its first Moderator, Dr. Henry David Gray, is to "serve the churches and act as the agent of the churches in their cooperative work and witness of Christ."*

The membership of The Northeast Fellowship has grown to 42 churches from not only Connecticut, but also Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New York and New Jersey. Our members are old (1670) and new (2001), formal and informal, traditionalists and progressives.

Support of our member churches takes many forms, including financial assistance, pastoral placement services, youth activities, visioning seminars and bi-annual gatherings to conduct the Fellowship's business and to share news and information between member churches. The Fellowship-owned "Congregational Fellowship House" on Fishers Island, NY provides a unique location for church retreats and meetings and is open to all members.

The Congregational Ranger, the newsletter of the Northeast Fellowship, is published to foster communication among Fellowship churches, members, and friends. All members are invited to submit articles for publication. Please mail or call church-related news, happenings, events to:

The Northeast Fellowship
277 Main St, Hartford, CT 06106
860-527-7001

-OR- email to: connfell@sbcglobal.net

The *Ranger* may also be viewed on the Fellowship's website at
www.ctfellowship.com

REMEMBER~~

***Pray for our Fellowship, our churches, our
pastors and people***