

The Congregational Ranger

Newsletter of The Fellowship of Connecticut Congregational Christian Churches

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Happy New Year

Please make it one of your new year resolutions to check the Fellowship web site (www.ctfellowship.com) often to discover the activities of member churches such as yours. And do not hesitate to contact Linda at the office whenever you have an event we can publicize for you. Linda will add your event to the "Fellowship Activities & Events" page as well as to the calendars. That calendar also includes dates of committee meetings, standing meetings, the Retreat House calendar, National Association meetings and other events of the Fellowship.

We will continue to work on the web site and appreciate your suggestions and recommendations to make this *the* place to check for all Connecticut Fellowship events and activities.

A note to churches in this web site age: make sure you have an address for those of us dependent on our GPS to find you, as well as the current service times. I have visited over a dozen of your churches this past year and I know that if people can find you, they will return. I have been impressed with the messages and music I have heard and most of all by the friendliness and graciousness of the congregation. Surely the presence of the Lord has been in your Place.

Barbara Erlendson

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~ From the Executive Secretary ~

Dear Member Churches:

As I begin my second year as your Executive Secretary, I am so grateful for the opportunities I have had to become acquainted with you and to deepen my Congregational roots.

I have been in so many Congregational churches this past year. I have worshipped with you in Barkhamsted, Stony Creek, Goshen, Middletown, Westchester, Mohegan, Stafford Springs, the Berkshires, Florence, Ponckhockie, and Newbury.

I have observed milestone events in the life of the church at Pilgrim, New Jersey, Ponckhockie, NY, the Berkshires, Mass, West Hartland, CT, Jewett City, CT, Brooklyn, NY and Florence, Mass.

I have been steeped in the history of our tradition in Boston at the Polity Class and participated in our future pastors' path towards our tradition in Olivet, Michigan.

Through it all I am grateful to be part of the Pilgrim People of our Fellowship and greater Congregational Heritage. We gather as an association to support each other and bring counsel and advice as and when requested, we provide a safe harbor between independent, isolated churches and a hierarchal organization. We pray for each other in times of sorrow and adversity (including tornadoes, hurricanes and early snow storms). We celebrate with each other the installations, ordinations and anniversaries of our pastors and churches. We are here to give and to receive. We are here to laugh and mourn with each other.

As we begin a new year, may you find much joy and fulfillment in your Walk with God and your Journey in Faith. Thank you so much for allowing me, on occasion, to share that route with you.

Barbara

COMMITTEE

NOTES



Nominating Committee

Although our Fellowship year does not follow the calendar year, it's still time to be thinking about nominations for next year

If you are currently serving in a position or committee, you will be approached soon about continuing in your role. If you are interested in serving in another capacity, please prayerfully consider accepting this responsibility.

Our Budget and Investments Committee meets once a month and other committees meet as called. The Executive Board meets every other month on a Thursday afternoon in Hartford. Please send a delegate from your church to be your voice and your vote for those meetings.

We are as strong as our volunteers, so please consider adding your voice to the present and the future of the Fellowship. We serve to serve others.

Norm Erlendson
Nominating Committee Chair

Fellowship House

Submitted by Marjorie Carmody



June, 1969—with monies given/loaned by Miss Hilda Camp and the United Congregational Church of Norwich, the property now known as the Fellowship House was purchased on Fishers Island.

Forty-one years later. How many Fellowship members remember this 1969 purchase? It would be interesting to know how many young people attended Youth Camp in all those years and how many church members retreated at this old former Headquarters of Harbor Defenses of Long Island Sound—many more than one realizes—not to be forgotten how many volunteer hours on work at the House.

As with wine that gets better with age, so does our Fellowship House with improvements every year. We usually bring up the water and open the House for use by the end of March. You can make reservations anytime and there is time for all. We would really like to see more church groups take advantage of House use. The only reservation so far is for a Confirmation Class.

If you have any questions, call the Fellowship office (860-527-7001) or Marjorie Carmody (203-775-2422)

The Executive Committee meeting schedule for the remainder of the current fiscal year is: January 12, 2012 March 8, 2012
April 12, 2012

The meetings are held at
South Congregational Church
277 Main St ,
Hartford, CT at 4:00 pm

The meetings are open to all Fellowship members and we encourage all who are able to attend, whether a voting member of the committee or not.

2011 Fall Meeting

By Rev. Wayne Jacobson, Recording Secretary

On a beautiful fall day, last October 16th, over 70 people from at least 25 churches gathered in faith, fellowship, and the Congregational Way at the Westchester Congregational Church in Colchester, CT. Representatives from two guest churches were also present. At the hour-long registration and missionary tea, people talked informally and shared things about their churches. Clergy interacted with one another, the NACCC representative, and folk. There was a lavish array of home-baked goodies. The roll call of churches present was led by Barbara Erlendson, the Executive Secretary. Moderator Paul Ricard read an official citation honoring the Rev. Dr. Bruce Wood for 60 years of ministry upon his recent retirement, as a college chaplain, pastor, supply preacher, and promoter of the Congregational Way. Karl Ostberg opened and closed the meeting with prayer.

John Carson of the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches (NACCC) spoke of missions and the NACCC restructuring proposals.

Worship was led in the old Puritan way by Michael Hall, dressed in Puritan clothing and speaking as if he were Governor William Bradford of Plimouth Colony. He spoke in an accented, humble, and sincere voice; he wandered round the meetinghouse. He vividly reminded the group of its Puritan heritage: Word, Spirit, Calvinism, Bible teaching, Sabbath observance, Long 7-hour church services, Simplicity of worship, and Church structure. Music was from the Psalms, without accompaniment and with some "cantering". Creatively, theatrically, accurately, and inspirationally, we were reminded of our heritage and roots. There was a powerful sense of worship.

The meeting concluded with an outstanding dinner.

The next meeting of the Fellowship will be held on Sunday, May 20, 2012 at a yet-to-be-decided church. This gathering includes the annual business meeting.

From Our Moderator

What a feeling! As moderator, it was exhilarating to see everyone at our Fall meeting. With over 20 of our churches present, it was our largest gathering in quite some time! We had a quorum! We didn't NEED a quorum at that meeting, but that's not the point, WE HAD ONE!

So I wanted to invite you ALL back (plus, hopefully more) for our Spring business meeting to be held on May 20 (host church still being determined). A significant item on the agenda will be the long overdue updating of the Fellowship by-laws, which will require a quorum of the member churches to be present. There will be other items of business on the agenda, which will be sent out along with a copy of the by-law revisions. While this is a business meeting, all our time won't be spent on business. As always, there will be plenty of time for fellowship, worship, and, of course, FOOD! I do hope to see you all there!

Also, if your church was NOT one of the ones present at the Spring meeting, I want to issue a special invitation to you. We miss you when you're aren't able to attend. We appreciate your affiliation with us and hope you will reconsider more active participation in the Fellowship in the future. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your membership with us, I would STRONGLY encourage you to consider inviting our Executive Secretary, Barbara Erlendson to talk to you about the Fellowship.

She can be reached at barbaraerlendson@gmail.com or through the Fellowship office (860) 527-7001.

Reverend Paul Ricard,
Moderator
Connecticut Fellowship

Seminar on Abuse Issues

*Rev. Bobbie Chapman
Pastor, Founders Congregational Church*

On Wednesday, February 1, a seminar will be held for clergy and church staff (both paid and volunteer) on abuse issues within and affecting the church.

Recent events of clergy abuse have prompted the Fellowship to offer this seminar which will look at how such issues should be addressed, what legal, ethical and moral responsibilities clergy and church staff have as well as ways to address such issues.

The seminar will be lead by Rev. Bobbie Chapman who has more than 30 years of professional experience addressing such issues as child abuse of all kinds and adult abuse issues.

As well as providing information and education, the seminar will include an open and frank discussion of best practice issues on how clergy and church staff should address these matters.

The seminar will be held at Third Congregational Church, 94 Miner St, Middletown, CT from 1:00—3:00 P.M., with a snow date of February 7. Bobbie is also willing to speak with any clergy and/or church laity on these issues at their convenience.

Studying Divinity at St Mary's College

By Averill Blackburn

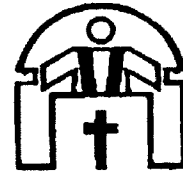
There's something ironic studying Divinity at St Mary's College in St Andrews, Scotland. A college originally founded to fight off the Protestant hordes and named for the Mother of Jesus, the college is now a beacon of reformed theological study. I often joke that it's the strangest mix of Christians I've ever seen in one place. While being an approved place of instruction for Church of Scotland (Presbyterian) candidates, it also has its fair share of Church of England candidates (who refuse the term "Scottish Episcopalian" as they're all English anyway), a spattering of Catholics who somehow ended up there, and then what I call the "C.U. crowd". The Christian Union is a mix of Free Churchers and Vineyard attendees. The Free Church historically split off from the Church of Scotland and now is an Evangelical Bible-oriented tradition that sings Psalms and modern Faith worship music during services; Vineyard is a Pentacostal movement across the United Kingdom. In other words, they are those who want to save you by having you accept Jesus into your heart and those who think you cannot be saved until the Holy Spirit descends upon you. Out of all this, I find myself the lone Congregationalist, and in theological debates, usually take it upon myself to trumpet the importance of God the Father as he seems to be marginalized or forgotten half of the time by students.

St Mary's itself has the distinction of being separate but a part from the University. All students wear academic gowns, at least traditionally, and they are toted out for formal occasions, examinations depending on the person, and for Sunday

morning worship. The Medical school, which traditionally wore blue, was absorbed into the Undergraduate college of St Salvator's. All Undergraduates wear flaming red gowns that are nice and warm during early morning fire drills but were designed to distinguish students in taverns and other places of ill repute during the 1500s. St Mary's students, though, whether undergraduate or postgraduate, wear a black preacher-like gown with a purple cross of St Andrews on the front. While not as warm as the red gowns, traffic according to town law must stop for one black gown while it takes three people in red gowns to achieve the same result. Our black gowns and purple college scarves are also easy to pick out in a crowd.

In a town where Church shopping can take an entire term given the number of active congregations and despite being so small has both the ruins of a medieval castle and cathedral, St Andrews is truly singular and magical. The small town consists of three main streets, designed for pilgrims in the Middle Ages to get to the cathedral and then leave again without causing a pedestrian traffic jam. On the street outside of St Salvator's chapel is a mark (a PH) in the coble stone where a Protestant was martyred and, if you accidentally walk over the symbol, you have to take a dip in the North Sea or risk failing your examinations. Almost everyone does during the "May dip" even though we avoid the mark assiduously, for St Andrews is nothing if not a place of traditions and history that has somehow been preserved into the twenty-first century.

**PASTORS
AND
PULPITS**



Introducing

Pastor Nancy Lois has been called as an interim minister to Berkshire Community Church in Richmond, Massachusetts. Nancy started on August 1, 2011. This is her first call, and she is grateful to be serving a caring Christian community. She received her M.Div. from Andover Newton Theological School in May of 2011. As part of her seminary training, she completed a year of field education at First Church in Windsor, Connecticut and a unit of Clinical Pastoral Education at Baystate Medical Center.

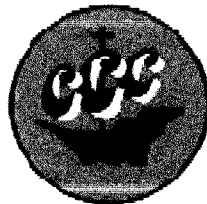
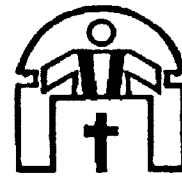
She lives in Westfield, Massachusetts where she has been a member of the First Congregational Church of Westfield for 14 years. Over the years as a lay leader, she served on various committees, taught Sunday School, and occasionally led worship and preached. Her son, Frank, who is a senior at Westfield High School lives with her. Her daughter, Kate, who is a senior at UMass Amherst, is studying mechanical engineering.

As a bi-vocational minister, Nancy also works as the interim Head of Technical Services at Mount Holyoke College in South Hadley, Massachusetts. She oversees the purchasing of books and electronic resources, cataloging and interlibrary loan with a staff of five people.

Nancy grew up in northern New Jersey where she attended a Reformed Church with her family. In addition to her divinity degree, she has received a bachelor's degree from Mount Holyoke College and a Master of Library Science degree from Rutgers University. She enjoys walking, conversation, reading, good food and nature (especially the woods and the beach). If she had more leisure time, she'd spend it swimming, snowshoeing, kayaking and canoeing.

Nancy is grateful that God is using her to lead worship and preach every week, as she so enjoys the process of planning worship and doing sermon prep. She loves the Berkshire Community Church and looks forward to more opportunities for meaningful and fruitful work with the church in the New Year.

**PASTORS
AND
PULPITS**



Be it Known, that the
The Fellowship of Connecticut Congregational Churches
Hereby extends its Congratulations to
The Reverend Dr. Bruce H. Wood

October 23, 2011

We are proud today to congratulate Reverend Wood on the occasion of his retirement having served 60 years in Christian Ministry. Holding to the precepts of the Congregational Way, he has continued to seek educational opportunities upholding his call to serve as a pastor and teacher. Receiving his doctoral degree in 1968, Rev Wood has extended his pastoral work as a professor at Southern Connecticut State University and as a pastor at several Congregational Churches of our Fellowship.

We thank The Reverend Dr. Bruce H. Wood for his devotion and commitment to Christian Ministry exhibited through strong leadership, thought provoking sermons, Biblical teaching, and compassionate pastoral care.

Barbara Erlendson, Executive Secretary

The Rev. Paul Ricard, Moderator

Happy New Year

Here are some tips to maintain your health in 2012 —

- ◆ **Don't skip meals:** It is important to eat 3 balanced meals every day, starting with a good breakfast. This will lessen your craving for sugary snacks mid-morning.
- ◆ **Ditch the extreme diets.** These diets are restrictive of some foods, which make them difficult to follow long term. Instead, opt for a balanced diet of veggies, fruit, whole grain and limiting sugar, fats, salt and processed foods.
- ◆ **Vitamins are important.** As we grow older, our bodies are less able to process the vitamins and minerals in our food. One good multivitamin may be all you need to improve your health. Talk to your health care provider before taking specific supplements, as some can have adverse effects in high doses.
- ◆ **Instead of "watching" your weight** – watch your waistline. New research has shown waist circumference is a more important number to watch. Fat accumulating around the waist leads to many health risk factors: high blood pressure, diabetes, high cholesterol. Your waist measurement should be half your height. This is less than 32 inches for women and 35 inches for men.
- ◆ **Go for a walk** We need to take about 10,000 steps every day. Walking strengthens your core muscles, gives you endurance and blasts fat cells. Walking outside also gives you natural vitamin D.
- ◆ **Learn to relax.** Turn off the cell phone, TV, radio. Just sit and be quiet; listen to the sound of silence. Take in some deep breaths, letting go of the days tensions.
- ◆ **Get enough sleep.** Most of us need 7 to 8 hours of sleep a night to recharge our bodies. Lack of sleep can cause problems with decision making and judgment.
- ◆ **Help someone else.** Sharing your time and talents with others will bring you tremendous rewards.
- ◆ **Be fearless.** Challenge yourself to make changes. Give up old burdens that weighed you down for years. Forgive others for perceived hurts.

Making New Year's resolutions are not short races, but a marathon. Be persistent and keep going.

Blessings for a healthy New Year,
From the Parish Nurse, Florence Congregational Church

From Founders Congregational Church ~~~~

Founders Church continues to have monthly community meals where the community is invited to come and share a meal and fellowship, free of charge. They are held the last Friday of the month, when some folks are short on money and facing a weekend. It is an effort to emulate the early church where the people shared what they had around a table and built community.

Founders Church will have a program in early January when a tape of "The Last Lecture" by Randy Pausch will be played and discussed. It will begin a series of sessions on exploring the issues of end of life, i.e. living wills, funeral/burial options, wills, power of attorney, etc.

Ed. Note: Further details will be posted on the Fellowship's website, www.ctfellowship.com, as they become available.

Hanover Congregational Church Auction, A Brief History

Forty-two years ago at a church guild meeting we were deciding how to raise funds for the church. Funds were to be used to help defray the church's heating cost, to raise money for youth activities (bowling in our parish house), Christmas parties and Halloween parties. Bill Benson brought up the idea of an auction and said he would chair it up, providing Louis Depres would be the co-chair.

So it began by soliciting things from members, along with area residents, and it went really well. The next year we were told that this cannot be done, since those who gave the previous year had nothing to donate again. We then decided to solicit different shops, such as banks and other businesses. For 42 years Bill continued to be chairman, along with Louie as co-chairman until his death. At that time Brad Benson took over as co-chairman, with Bill still as chair.

After 42 years, with a lot of hard work and fun, our annual auction still is a great success, with a full house at each and every auction. Hopefully this will continue.

Bill Benson

Note: Donations of auction items are accepted throughout the year, with pick-up by the church if necessary. Anyone wishing to donate should contact Bill (860-822-8351) or Brad (860-822-9977).

This year's auction will be held on February 18 at 6:00 pm

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WEB NEWS

Does your church have an upcoming or regularly scheduled event, open to the public, that you would like publicized? If you have checked out the Fellowship's new website (www.ctfellowship.com), you have probably seen the "Fellowship Activities & Events" page. This page is devoted to spreading the word about what's going on at *your* local church. Events are also noted on the "Calendar" page as well.

If you wish to have an event posted, please call the Fellowship office in Hartford at 860-527-7001 or send us an email (connfell@sbcglobal.net) with the basic information, plus the name and phone number of a contact person in case we have a question.

The posting will appear within 4 hours of our receipt of your call or email, within our regular office hours: Monday—Thursday, 9:00 am—3:00 pm.

Linda Johnson, Administrative Assistant, Connecticut Fellowship

The Fellowship of Connecticut 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 Connecticut Fellowship has grown to 43 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, 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, meetings and the annual Summer Youth Retreat, which is open to all members.

The Congregational Ranger, the newsletter of the Connecticut 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 Connecticut Fellowship
277 Main St, Hartford, CT 06106
860-527-7001
-OR- email to: connfell@sbcglobal.net

REMEMBER~~

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