

# The Congregational Ranger

Newsletter of The Fellowship of Connecticut Congregational Christian Churches

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## THE RANGER, THE WEB PAGE & FACEBOOK

We aren't ready to twitter and text yet, but the *Ranger* is now available on our brand new Web Site. Please check out both at [www.ctfellowship.com](http://www.ctfellowship.com).

I hope you will find all the information you need and information you didn't even know you needed at this site. Please let us know if you have ideas or suggestions for the web site. We are always responsive to improvements, suggestions and just hearing from you.

This web page is all about you, the Fellowship. And the Fellowship is all about connecting, encouraging, informing and enjoying each other. We hope you find this page helpful in doing all those activities.

But wait—there's more: we are looking at creating a Facebook Page in the near future. Please stay tuned for further developments in that area.

*We cannot thank Corrine Sternberg enough for her assistance. Corrine helped Linda set up, organize, and create this wonderful web page and we were constantly amazed at her creativity and wisdom.*

## Mark Your Calendars: **October 16, 2011**

Our Fall Fellowship Meeting will be October 16th at **Westchester Congregational Church** in Colchester, CT. Please mark your calendars, arrange for car pooling and join us for a delightful afternoon at this lovely church in Eastern Connecticut.

Consider the drive from your home to the meeting as part of the occasion because the colors will be beautiful in this part of the state. Many people travel for thousands of miles to see the fall foliage you will be viewing on your way to a delightful afternoon

The meeting will start at 3 p.m. and the special guest speaker will be Michael Hall. Mr. Hall has appeared before us in the past on both the National and Local level. You may not have recognized him, however, since he speaks to us as Governor William Bradford or Deacon Samuel Fuller. In his authentic garb, drawing on his vast historical knowledge and presenting it all through the prism of his Congregational background, Mr. Hall brings our Congregational heritage to life. The setting for his presentation will be our traditional worship service, but Mr. Hall brings new meaning to the word traditional.

There will be a dinner following the presentation (\$10) and you know that wonderful cooking is also traditional and a part of the Congregational Way.

Please contact Reverend Karl Ostberg at Westchester Church—860-267-0480—or call our office if you have any questions.

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## ~ *From the Executive Secretary* ~

Dear Member Churches:

I was Paul Revere's neighbor during the week of July 24<sup>th</sup>. He, of course, was not aware of the fact, but I was delighted with my new residence on North Square in Boston at the Mariner's House. Not just because this was the heart of the most amazing Italian restaurants and cobblestone streets, but because I was spending the week with almost two dozen students and faculty all intent on learning about Congregationalism. This was the Fall Boston Polity and History Class. It was a week of intense study of our heritage for the Connecticut Fellowship Theology Students, Congregational pastors coming from other denominations and a few lay people.

We traced our history back to England and the Netherlands; we looked at the familiar Pilgrim story by visiting the Plimoth Plantation, Burial Hill, the Plymouth Museum and the Mayflower replica. We discussed Covenant Theology. We wondered about the ebb and flow of our tradition and again and again, we discussed what the polity of Congregationalism means, what it has cost us, what we have gained. We looked at our strengths, we looked at our flaws, and through it all, my identity as a member of the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches strengthened and deepened.

I also left that week with a realization of how valuable and cherished our regional association is. Do you know that in 1700 there wasn't a church in Connecticut that wasn't Congregational? Did you know that the Saybrook Platform of 1708 laid the groundwork for establishing regional associations such as ours? Did you know that our own Association's minutes of 1958 reflect verbal passion as the future of Congregationalism shifted yet again during a time of breaking and building?

One of the requirements for the CFTS students is a graduate level research paper on a topic of Congregationalism. So we spent a couple days at the Congregational Library on Beacon

Hill, which looked exactly like a Boston library should look. We were awed by original documents and books and felt the palpable presence of our history under the hush of the Reading Room.

The requirement of the students was an opportunity for me. I decided to also write a paper and my topic is the *History, Present and Future of Regional Associations*.

I am able to pursue the history, although our history is long and sometimes tortuous, and I am able to gather the stats of the present associations of the NA, but I would seek your help with the future. Please email me, call me, write to me, let me buy you a cup of coffee and tell me – what would make this Association more viable for you? What would you like us to be? How can we better serve you? Why would you give up a Sunday afternoon to come to one of our fall or spring meetings? Why would you fight the traffic to come to Hartford at 4 p.m. every other month to be part of our Executive Committee? What is in your heart that wants this Association to be healthy, helpful and meaningful in our future?

As for the end of my week in Boston, saying goodbye I had feelings similar to those I had leaving church camps of my youth or family camps of my earlier life (without the smell of campfire smoke in my hair and mosquito bites): new friends, new awareness, new resolve, and new challenges. It was truly a week spent in the Congregational Way.

Please call me at 860 759 0847 or email me at [barbaraerlendson@gmail.com](mailto:barbaraerlendson@gmail.com) with your ideas, input, insights, information or just to meet for coffee. Thanks.

*Barbara*

# COMMITTEE

## NOTES



### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING SCHEDULE

The Executive Committee of the Connecticut Fellowship (aka Board of Trustees of the Ecclesiastical Society) is comprised of delegates elected or appointed by the member churches to represent the interests of their churches and to conduct the business of the Fellowship between semi-annual meetings. Each member church has one vote on this committee.

The Committee meets six times per year, generally on the 2nd Thursday of the month, at:

South Congregational Church,  
277 Main St, Hartford, CT at 4:00 pm

The tentative schedule of meetings remaining in the current fiscal year is:

- |               |                |
|---------------|----------------|
| Sept. 8, 2011 | March 8, 2012  |
| Nov. 10, 2011 | April 12, 2012 |
| Jan. 12, 2012 |                |

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.

## FISHERS ISLAND

### Work Party at Fishers Island Fellowship House

Would you like to spend a weekend on lovely Fishers Island this fall? Do we have an opportunity for you! Please come for the weekend, two days or even one, prepared to close our historic Retreat House down for the season. You will need to:

- a. Bring a sleeping bag, towels & shampoo
- b. Bring snacks and soda to share
- c. Check the ferry schedule out of New London (passenger only fare—\$25)
- d. RSVP to Marj Carmody at 203-775-2422 or Jann Carmody-Tanner at jannct7@yahoo.com.

It is imperative to RSVP as soon as possible because meals are being planned and a head count will be needed.

Also, if your church would like to undertake a project as a group, it is possible to have your own work party on another weekend or during the week. Again, contact Marj or Jann to arrange a date.

*And finally, the Retreat House is YOUR house! If you are a member of our Fellowship, this historic retreat center is available to you during the season for the low price of \$10 a day per person. You can't find a camping spot for that price. Send your whole church, a youth group outing, women's retreat, men's retreat, confirmation class retreat, Deacon's retreat, etc.*

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RESERVATIONS REQUIRED:

MARJORIE CARMODY

203-775-2422



## Preston City Congregational Church

### *'Irene' and Encouragement*

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**Power Off?**

**Worship On!**

That was the sign outside Preston City's Congregational Church the week between Hurricane Irene and Labor Day. Preston City was one of the areas that didn't get their power back very quickly and they decided they were going to have church the next week (September 4<sup>th</sup>) regardless.

The week before, there was no church service anywhere in the region because of Irene's actual appearance that day. So Sandy Dudek, the Director of Christian Education, had to table her children's sermon – a lesson on encouragement.

After Irene, encouragement was a timely topic and Sandy handed out goodie bags – m&m's, cheerios, marshmallows and other most decidedly encouraging items - not only to the children but to everyone in the congregation. Printed on the outside of each bag was one of two messages: "You can do all things through Christ" or "God is my refuge and my strength" Nourishment for the body; nourishment for the soul.

On her way home from church, Sandy also stopped when she saw the power trucks working hard on restoring power to still dark neighborhoods and gave them encouragement bags as well. "Someday you will realize the little things in life are really the big ones" was Sandy's motto.

Not only did Preston City hold services on the 4<sup>th</sup> of September, but three new members joined the congregation and lemonade and cake was held on the lawn to welcome them. Not to mention goodie bags.

We have been blessed to be a blessing.

## SUMMER YOUTH CAMP 2011—ANOTHER GREAT SUCCESS!!

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C.S.I.—Check-in at the dock this year involved each camper receiving a packet of C.S.I. essentials (pad, paper, magnifying glass, sunglasses and a personalized ‘C.S.I. Agent’ badge). Investigations began at the New London Dock and continued all session. How cool is that?

C. S.I. (Christ’s Special Investigators) was our theme this year and the youth learned plenty and had loads of fun. The core Bible verse of the summer was, “**So I turned my mind to understand, to *investigate* and to search out wisdom and the scheme of things.**” **Ecclesiastes 7:25a.** In the twice a day, hour long Bible study sessions the Pastors Irv Gammon and Lee Edwards and youth investigated and searched out various truths in the Bible, searched themselves for where their own faith is, and were involved in many stimulating discussions.

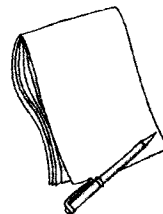
Of course, we love to provide fun and games that go with our themes, so the rest of the days were filled with fingerprinting technique, mug shots, gathering evidence for ever unfolding mysterious “crimes” around the Fellowship House and island. Use of microscopes, shoe prints, hairs all went into the mix until the culmination of the big crime on the last day of camp. We even had the State Police “arrest” some of our culprit counselors as part of the fun!

This isn’t to say we didn’t have time for the usual, much loved outdoor games, beach afternoons and trips to the center for Topper’s Ice Cream! I can assuredly say all had a wonderful time.

It’s with much contemplation and mixed feelings that after ten years, I’ve come to the decision to retire as Director of the Summer Youth Camp. Actually, it’s taken me three years to get to this point because I so dearly love each and every one of the kids that come to camp and it has truly been the greatest privilege and joy that God has given me. I’ve been working at the camp since the late ‘90s and believe strongly that the youth camp program is the most important work that the CT Fellowship does. Plans for continued leadership have been in the works for over a year now and although I’m sure there will be change, the quality of this program will continue.

In God’s Grace,

Karen Reich



# F R O M            O U R            C H U R C H E S

From the Florence Parish Nurse....

*Ways to Reduce Stress as Busy Fall Schedules Resume*

Reprinted, in part, from the *Parish Visitor*, Sept. 2011

**ENJOY A NATURAL HIGH:** *Go outside. New research shows that looking at nature eases pain & anxiety.*

**STRIDE AWAY FROM STRESS:** *A brisk 30 minute walk outside has been proven to lessen stress and lift spirits*

**GET A PET:** *Stroking an animal raises the levels of good hormones & watching fish swim in a tank soothes nerves & can lower blood pressure*

**USE THE POWER OF A PICTURE:** *Visually placing yourself in your favorite place can recapture positive feelings*

**WRITE OUT YOUR WORRIES:** *Writing about what worries you can take the load off your mind. Write without concern for grammar & spelling, then tear up and throw the pieces away.*

**BREAK FOR TEA:** *The tea brewing ritual itself is very relaxing & sipping a cup of hot tea reduces the levels of stress hormones*

**TRY A LITTLE COMEDY:** *A good belly laugh can lower blood pressure, increase your immune system, reduce pain & give you a brighter outlook.*

*Thank you, Diane, Florence Congregational Church*

## Fruit Loop

My church, Third Congregational Church of Middletown, is known for its Strawberry Festival, held the second Thursday of June. Homemade biscuits, fresh strawberries and whipped cream draw close to 2,000 people.

The Congregational Church at Stafford Springs has a summertime Peach Fest, which is equally delicious and popular.

Not to be missed is The Congregational Church of Salem's Annual Apple Festival, this year being held on the 29th of October.

Is your church known for a Fruit Festival? Let us know so we can offer dates, directions and details for a regional "Fruit Loop" around the area.

## An Anniversary Celebration

This fall the Florence Congregational Church is having a huge celebration.

The 150th Anniversary of the Florence Congregational Church is on October 9th. Two big events are planned.

Saturday evening, the 8th features a wonderful catered banquet at the Elks Club down the street from the church at the corner of Park and Spring Streets.



Sunday morning the 9th features a special worship service of music, prayer and proclamation of God's word. The Anniversary Celebration Team has sent out special invitations to former pastors and association leaders anticipating participation in our weekend-long celebration.

Rev. Dr. Tom Richard, Executive Secretary of the NACCC and his delightful bride plan to join us for both events. Barbara Erlendson, Executive Secretary of the Connecticut Fellowship and her handsome husband will also speak at these historic events. Additionally, Dr. Margaret Bendroth, Director of the Congregational Library at Beacon Street in Boston will deliver the Keynote Address on Saturday evening.

John Carson, from the NACCC office, will be speaking to us at the Fall Fellowship meeting. He will also be in our area a few days following the meeting and would be available to visit your church.

Are there boards or committees meeting October 17 and 18 that might benefit from John's expertise in a broad area of Congregational needs and issues?

Please contact Barbara Erlendson at [barbaraerlendson@gmail.com](mailto:barbaraerlendson@gmail.com) or call her at 860-759-0847.

We welcome our 3 newest members to the CT Fellowship Leadership Team. Rev. Wayne Jacobson, pastor at Church of Christ, Cong'l in Stony Creek, has agreed to serve as our Recording Secretary. Rev. Norm Erlendson of Third Church, Middletown will complete our Budget and Investments Committee. Kay Page Greaser has volunteered to serve on our Personnel Committee.

Introducing this year's committee chairs:

|                                  |                  |
|----------------------------------|------------------|
| Budget & Investments:            | Steve Blackburn  |
| Church Assistance & Development: | Stan White       |
| Fishers Island:                  | Marjorie Carmody |
| Personnel:                       | Kay Page Greaser |

***PASTORS  
AND  
PULPITS***



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*Introducing . . . .*

***Rev. Rae H. Munsell*** comes to Mohegan Congregational Church after almost 11 years as the Associate Pastor at First Church of Christ in Saybrook (Congregational) in Old Saybrook, CT, serving as their children's and family minister. A 2000 graduate of Andover Newton Theological School and ordained that year in the United Church of Christ, Rae first came to Mohegan Congregational as a student preacher in the late 1990s. It is a great joy for her to now be their pastor and to be a part of their close-knit community of faith. Prior to graduation, Rae also served as a student minister at North Stonington Congregational Church and at her home church, Niantic Community Church.

Rae is married to Mark Munsell, who has just recently retired after 25 years with the Town of Waterford. They are currently in the early stages of home construction in Waterford and look forward to being settled in before the snow falls. Mark's three children (19 to 24) are a source of much joy for them both.

Rae's other pleasures include reading, walking, writing, and planning the new house (her first ever!).



**PASTORS  
AND  
PULPITS**



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Hello,

Let me introduce myself to all of you. I am the **Rev. Carole Hamm**, and I am the new minister at the Ponckhockie Congregational Church in Kingston, N.Y. We may be small, but our faith is strong. I grew up in the Ponckhockie church and I was active in Sunday School, choir, and the youth group.

I decided to leave and go and worship at the First Congregational Church in Saugerties under Rev. Cecil McFarland and the Rev. Karl Ostberg, it was while I was there that I began to study for the ministry. Under the mentorship of Rev. Ostberg I completed the Lay Minister's Training Course provided by the NACCC.

After doing some soul searching and praying, my husband Brent and I decided to go back to the church of my youth, and they welcomed both of us with loving arms. In January of 2011 they asked me to be their Minister and I have been so blessed ever since. I am so blessed to have the love of my husband Brent and my family and I can never thank Karl and Louise Ostberg enough for all their love and support they have shown me during my training.

God has truly blessed me and while I am the minister at the church I am also employed by the Kingston City School District as a hall monitor at Kingston High School. If you need to reach me you can e-mail me at [cchamm@live.com](mailto:cchamm@live.com)

## A Prayer for Our Church

Kind and loving God,  
I pray for our church and its mission to spread your Word,  
In our community and in the world.  
For those who are growing up,  
That we may be their examples of justice, righteousness and love.  
For those facing welcome and unwelcome changes,  
That they may meet them with hope.  
For those who are weak of heart or body,  
That they may find strength in you and help from us.  
For those with burdens,  
That their load may be lightened by grace and our support.  
For those who are old and frail,  
That they may be sustained by faith and our care.  
For those who have joy in their lives,  
That they may thank you and share it with us.  
For the blessed that they may be a blessing,  
In the work of our church and for the sake of our world.  
In Christ's name, whose name we take too often for granted.

Amen.

*(Note: This prayer was written in 2008 for the Congregational Society of Classical Retreat Guides for use by our NACCC member churches. We hope that you will find it useful in your church's worship services whenever appropriate . They are being made available to all NACCC member churches through a generous donation from a Society member.*

## **FELLOWSHIP OFFICERS and COMMITTEES**

### **FISCAL YEAR 2011-2012**

Listed below are the Fellowship's Officers and Committee members for the current fiscal year, as voted by the Annual Meeting and the Executive Committee.

Please note that there are still several vacancies yet to be filled. Anyone interested in serving on a committee may contact the Fellowship Office for further information.

| <b>OFFICERS</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <b>STANDING COMMITTEES (Cont'd)</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>Moderator:</b> (also serves as member of the Personnel Committee)<br/>Rev. Paul Ricard</p> <p><b>Assistant Moderator:</b> (Also serves as convener of the Personnel Comm.)<br/>Kay Page Greaser</p> <p><b>2nd Asst. Moderator:</b> (Also serves as convener of the Nominating Comm.)<br/>Rev. Norm Erlendson</p> <p><b>Retiring Moderator:</b> (Also serves as member of the Personnel Comm.)<br/>Douglas Loux</p> <p><b>Executive Secretary:</b><br/>Barbara Erlendson</p> <p><b>Recording Secretary:</b><br/>Rev. Wayne Jacobson</p> <p><b>Asst. Recording Secretary:</b><br/>Karen Reich</p> <p><b>Fellowship Treasurer:</b><br/>Rev. Dr. Steven Blackburn</p> <p><b>Asst. Fellowship Treasurer:</b><br/>Rev. Adam Söderberg</p> <p><b>Ecclesiastical Society Treasurer:</b><br/>Douglas Loux</p> <p><b>Asst. Eccl. Society Treasurer:</b><br/>Rev. Irvan Gammon</p> <hr style="width: 30%; margin-left: 0;"/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>STANDING COMMITTEES</b></p> <p><b>Budget &amp; Investments:</b><br/>Rev. Dr. Steven Blackburn, Rev. Adam Söderberg, Douglas Loux, Rev. Irvan Gammon, Marjorie Carmody, Rev. Dr. K.J. Wildrick, Rev. Norm Erlendson</p> | <p><b>Church Assistance &amp; Development:</b><br/>Rev. Stan White, Russell Blakeslee, Rev. Lee Edwards, Maureen McCall, Cookie Stojak</p> <p><b>Fishers Island:</b><br/>Marjorie Carmody, Barbara Perry, Bryan Brandriff, Jann Carmody-Tanner, Harley Hill, Len &amp; Ruth Kozlowski, Rev. Bobbie Chapman, Rev. Stan White, Meghan Tanner, Karen Reich, Anna Gobar, Rev. Irvan Gammon, Rev. Norman Erlendson, Rev. Karl Ostberg, Barbara Erlendson</p> <p><b>Missions:</b><br/>Rev. David McGee, Rev. Lin McGee, Anne McAwley-LeDuc <b>2 Vacancies</b></p> <p><b>Nominating:</b><br/>Rev. Norm Erlendson, Karen Reich, Rev. Karl Ostberg, Leslie Cosgrove, Kay Page Greaser</p> <p><b>Pastoral Relations:</b><br/>Rev. Norm Erlendson, Rev. Charles Hall, Douglas Loux</p> <p><b>Personnel</b><br/>Rev. Paul Ricard, Douglas Loux, Russell Blakeslee, Rev. Dr. Steven Blackburn, Kay Page Greaser</p> <p><b>Religious Education</b><br/>Corrine Sternberg, Rev. Lin McGee, Rev. Norm Erlendson, <b>2 Vacancies</b></p> <p><b>Youth</b><br/>Rev. Lee Edwards, Karen Reich, Rev. David McGee, <b>2 Vacancies</b></p> <p><b>Congregational Women:</b><br/>Karen Reich</p> |

*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](mailto:connfell@sbcglobal.net)

**REMEMBER~~**

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