



The Congregationalist

Volume 16 Issue 9

May 2016

The Newsletter of the First Congregational Church of Westfield, NJ

Senior Minister's Message Rev. Dr. Mark Boyea

Hi!

A few weeks ago, in one of the "Daily Devotionals" that are published on our denomination's website (ucc.org), Vince Amlin, the Associate Minister at our sister church in Gainesville, Florida, wrote about a small group gathering he attended with other members of that congregation.

During it, Amlin says that a woman asked the other participants the following question:

"What do you expect from me as a fellow church member?"

It is a critical question, perhaps the most important question that needs to be answered in terms of the spiritual vitality of a congregation. What *is* it that we expect; *should* expect; even have a *right* to expect from each other as fellow members of a faith community? Because we do in fact, have a right to expect things from each other. That is what it means to *be* a congregation, a spiritual community. That is what it means to be, in the language of the Bible and theology, in *covenant* with each other. A Christian congregation is meant to reflect the relationship between God and the people of Israel presented in the Bible. That relationship is one of covenant—mutual promise and obligation.

So what do we have a right to expect from each other?

To adapt a framework suggested by Eric Geiger, Senior Pastor at ClearView Baptist Church in Franklin, Tennessee, we have a right to expect that, depending upon the circumstances, and our particular gifts and resources, we will be each others':

- "Been There Person"
- "Join Me Person"
- "No Matter What Person"

As Geiger describes it, a "Been There Person" is somebody who can offer us input and insight, provide us wisdom and constructive feedback so we can grow in general or meet a particular challenge. A "Join Me Person" is someone who invites us along for a specific task or event, or even more importantly, for a longer journey of friendship, companionship, or caregiving. A "No Matter What Person" is somebody who will stick with us, stay by us in all our times of struggle and success.

As God's covenant promise to each of us is to be our "Been There", "Join Me" and "No Matter What" person, our part of that covenant is to be "Been There", "Join Me", and "No Matter What" people for each other. That is what we have a right to expect from each other.

As we continue this Easter season of new life and new possibility, I invite us each to consider how we might be one or more of those types of people for someone we have not been before.

Blessings,

Mark

WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Sunday, May 1

We share in the Sacrament of Communion, as well as recognize another year of our WaySharers ministry for developmentally challenged young adults. WaySharers founder Cynthia Mathis will offer a few thoughts this day.

Saturday, May 7 – "First Saturday"

Our monthly "First Saturday" worship takes place in the Sanctuary at 5:30pm. "First Saturday" is intended for those who find it difficult to be with us regularly on Sunday, or who desire a quieter, more contemplative worship experience on occasion.

Sunday, May 8

Join us as we celebrate Mother's Day and the Festival of the Christian Home.

Sunday, May 15

After Worship, please plan to stay for our annual All-Church Fair on the FCC parking lot and grounds. More on this event on p.4.

Sunday, May 22

We thank and recognize our Church School teachers for their indispensable contribution to our faith community through their dedication and efforts on behalf of our children and youth. In addition, our Church School children will perform their annual song under the direction of Joe Regan. This year, however, they will be joined by our new Youth Band.

Sunday, May 29

On this Memorial Day weekend, we will hold one of our periodic "Family Worship" Sundays, allowing our children the opportunity to learn about and participate in our full worship practice.

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What Do You See?

Rev. Joy Mounts, Associate Minister

In a recent watercolor class as part of an exercise, we were asked to put a blob of paint on a piece of paper and then let it dry. Then we were supposed to look at it, figure out what we saw and then draw it. Not surprisingly, everyone in the class saw something different even though our original paint blobs were surprisingly similar.

It all had to do with how our imaginations worked and how brave we were to allow ourselves the flexibility to just go for it and draw it. There were fish, birds, people and more. It was fun but a bit nerve wracking at first. Mine looked like a pond, a face, and finally, a puppy. There were so many choices; almost too many, until I allowed myself to both have fun with it, to focus, and not to be distracted by what those around me were doing.

Life can be like that. Sometimes we see too many choices around us - things we want to accomplish, places we want to go and changes we want to make. Life looks like a blob we cannot make heads or tails of and we don't know where to start. What will our lives look like if we do this, go here, change that? It is scary and we can feel frozen until we make a choice.

Other times we look and the choices seem limited and we wonder if we can see any path we want to take. Whether too many or limited, what we do next has to do with our imaginations, how brave we are and if we give ourselves permission to be bold and dive in. The future can look like a formless blob but we can give thanks in knowing that we do not hold the paintbrush alone. The Artist God is with us as we fill in here, paint there, shade this and erase that. Wonderful is that knowledge! Even when we are afraid to start, we know we are not alone.

So embrace the blobs in your life—the unformed possibilities, the new ventures, the who knows what they will turn out to be's. They may be the thing that brings a smile and the inspiration to try for even more! Best of all, God will be right there helping us to fill it all in. Happy painting! (And thanks to my teacher, FCC's own Laura Brown for the inspiration!)

Peace,
Joy



WaySharers will meet on Friday, May 6 for Yoga.

On Friday, May 20 they will meet for Bingo. Both programs are held from 7-9pm in Coe Fellowship Hall.

We are looking for volunteers to help out on an occasional Friday night—no experience required—but a warm heart needed.

Please call Cynthia Mathis (908) 233-0180 if you are interested.

**Annual Adult Retreat
Friday, May 6 and Saturday, May 7**

The third annual FCC all-adult spiritual retreat will take place on Friday, May 6 and Saturday, May 7. This year's theme will be **"The Spiritual Practices"**. We will identify a number of what the Christian and other traditions consider spiritual practices, what they mean, and how we might best use ours in the course of our daily lives to both enhance our faith and contribute to our own and others' lives.

We will be returning to the site of last year's retreat, the Bellevue Stratford Inn, just one block from the water in Ocean Grove, New Jersey, from late afternoon on Friday, May 6 to late afternoon on Saturday, May 7.

The cost for attending will remain the same as last year, \$140. This includes the expense for one night's lodging, meals, snacks and materials. Checks should be made out to "First Congregational Church".

Please contact Lyn Kelman, Joy or Mark to reserve a spot, or for any questions or concerns.

In just two years time, the all-adult retreat has grown into one of our most popular growth opportunities. We hope that you will seriously consider giving yourself the "spiritual gift" of taking part in it.



It's Tag Sale Time!

The Summer Mission Trip Tag Sale is on Saturday, May 14. This will be our last tag sale fundraiser for the Summer Mission Trip. We will plan a different spring fundraiser for next year. Discussions for that will begin after the Tag Sale. So for now it is time to clean out those attics and basements!

We began taking donations on Monday, April 25 from the congregation only. We will begin accepting donations from the general public on Monday, May 2. Donations will be accepted during Church Office hours, 9am-3pm. For help with larger items and furniture, please contact the church office about donating and pick up.

If you are interested in helping with the Tag Sale pre-sorting, April 26 - May 7, please contact Denise Schifando, cschifando@yahoo.com, (908) 232-2368. All of the items will be moved into Patton on Sunday, May 8. The final sorting of all donations will occur in Patton the week of May 9. For sorting and pricing, May 9 - 13 contact Lisa Thornton, ostara4@verizon.net, (908) 889-4437. A schedule to sign up for the sale day will be posted in Patton and sent out by email blast. All help will be most gratefully welcome! Any questions or to work the day of the sale please see Rev. Mounts.



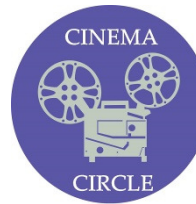


Our final Adult Studies unit for the year continues in May:

“Hazardous Saints”

Tuesdays: May 3, 10, 17 and 24
7:30-8:30pm
Coe Hall

During this six-week video based unit, we will explore the lives of six people who made critical contributions to Christianity by advocating for significant change and making a difference in the lives of many in their time and since: Barnabas, Francis of Assisi, Thomas Cranmer, Sojourner Truth, Dorothy Day, and Oscar Romero. After reviewing each person’s life on video, we will examine and discuss the ways in which we might follow their example in our own lives.



Join us on Thursday, May 5, in Chapel Lounge at 7pm to see the movie *Calvary*.

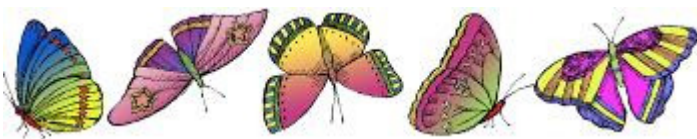
Father James (Brendan Gleeson) is a small-town priest in Ireland who during Sunday confessions is told he will be killed in a week’s time. Deeply troubled and conflicted about how to respond, he attempts to carry out his calling through the following days. As he moves closer to the appointed day of his murder, he is forced to confront a troubling array of spiritual challenges from his parishioners and his estranged daughter (Kelly Reilly). Father James’ life begins to fall apart as he faces those struggles and the final confrontation arrives—one that will crystallize his values and what he wants his life to have been about.

All are welcome to join in on the viewing and discussion of the film. Cinema Circle meets on the first Thursday of each month at 7pm to see movies as a group. For more information, please contact Ed or Debbie Saridaki at (908) 889-4719.

Adult Studies For 2016-2017

Give us your ideas!

Plans are already underway for next year’s Adult Studies program, and we hope you’ll help us move them along. Please consider providing us with any suggestions you have for new courses, formats, day/times, or anything else you think might improve our efforts in the vital aspect of our community’s spiritual life.



A short ride to Summit on Thursday, May 5 is all that **Readers and Riders** need to take in order to enjoy the Reeves-Reed Arboretum, an historic estate and gardens created in the late 1880’s. The current exhibit in the Wisner House is “New Growth” by Susan Manispetzer, whose bent-wood sculptures are characterized by color,

beauty, form and grace. After a short stroll outside the house to view the spring landscape, we will move on to celebrate Cinco de Mayo in Garwood at Grill Creations Mexican Restaurant. Please call Bev Heinrich at (908) 233-8656 to sign up for this unusual excursion by Tuesday, May 3. We will leave from the Church parking lot at 10:30am.

Save the date

On Thursday, June 9 male and female lighthouse aficionados are going ‘down the shore’ to the Twin Lights Historic Site in Highlands, NJ.



Readers and Riders’ April Trip to the Westfield Memorial Library



In April, the Readers and Riders gained access to the inner sanctum of the Westfield Memorial Library.

Under the capable guidance of Jennifer Schulze, Head of Adult Services, they were able to boldly go where few have gone before: to explore the behind-the-scenes quarters where some of the many new books (would you believe 400 per month on average!) are individually categorized and processed. A cataloguer needs to judge what call number and what subject to assign to a book so that readers can easily find what they are looking for among the library’s 350,000 items! Furthermore, the library’s Local History Room safeguards original maps, local church records, published family histories, and query files among its many jewels.

An Italian-themed lunch at Il Gabbiano in Cranford provided a convivial ending to an edifying morning.

Emma Lucadema - 2016 Winner of the Marc Wesley Hardy Human Rights Award:



(Pictured l-r: Kristal Hardy-Ali, sister of Marc Hardy, Emma Lucadema, 2016 recipient and Justin Rosin, 2010 MWH award recipient, who presented Emma with her award.)

The 2016 winner of the *Marc Wesley Hardy Human Rights Award* is Emma Lucadema, a Union County Magnet High School Senior. She was given her Certificate and Award during Worship on April 24.

Emma, a member of the National Honor Society, takes very seriously the 3 attributes of membership in that organization: Scholarship, Leadership, and Service, and excels in all three. From helping to run charity drive collections for the homeless, collecting personal hygiene items for U.S. troops, achieving the highest awards in Girl Scouts, to participating in many activities at her church, Emma is always willing to volunteer to help wherever she is needed.

Emma is very active with her church, First United Methodist Church of Scotch Plains, which has a fairly large Chinese membership which speaks Mandarin. She has been an ongoing support for these members, and has learned much about their culture, helping her to appreciate even more the freedom we have in America. She teaches Sunday School, runs the UNICEF program, co-teaches the Confirmation Class, and represents the youth on the Staff Parish Relations Committee. She has been volunteering for many years in her town, including helping out during Hurricane Sandy.

Emma has been a Girl Scout for 13 years, and has received the Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards. She is very active and has participated in several projects in her church and community to earn these awards. The Gold Award alone is done individually, and requires more than 100 hours of work.

The Marc Wesley Hardy award is given in memory of Marc Hardy, a member of our church, who lost his life in a car accident in 1990 during his senior year at Westfield High School. Because of his dedication and commitment to Human Rights, this award was established.

If you would like to make a donation to the MWH Human Rights Award fund, please contact the church administrator, Jim Palme.

Come One, Come All, to the All-Church Picnic

Sunday, May 15—Immediately following Worship, in the Backyard of First Congregational Church

Cost—\$5 for adults, \$4 for children (\$15 max per family)



Join us for a wonderful afternoon of food, fun and fellowship! Enjoy sub sandwiches, hotdogs, and a make-your-own sundae bar! There will be a face-painting, games and activities for all ages! And don't miss Joe's Pie Eating Contest! We can't wait to see you all there!

Volunteers needed to make this day a success! Sign up in Patton or online to help! Please contact bridget.p.andersen@gmail.com with any questions.

Sign up to attend during Coffee Hour.

Sound Loop Activated

In order to help everyone best hear our worship celebrations and other events that happen in the Sanctuary, FCC installed a Sound Loop system several months ago. It is not available in the chancel or balcony areas.



To use the system you need to have a hearing aid with a t-coil that you can access. You need to turn that on when in the Sanctuary. It does not work automatically. You will need to turn it off when leaving the church. If you don't know if you have one, please check with your healthcare provider. They can also explain how and when to connect.

If you do not have a t-coil hearing aid or need help with sound amplification, you are welcome to use one of the three "Loop Listeners" we also purchased. These are small devices worn around the neck that come with headphones. Please ask the ushers if you would like to try one. If you have any questions or concerns, please see Keith Westerhold or Rev. Mounts.

Moving Meditation: Monday Evening Classes
May 16, 23, 30 from 6:30-7:15pm



Most classes will be held in Patton. (Look for signs on doors).

Moving Meditation is a simple, gentle, graceful movement, stress reduction technique based on ancient Asian Qigong wellness systems.

Questions, please call Laura Berzofsky at (908) 232-0169.

Donations welcome- raising funds for FCC's Youth Mission Trip 2016.

Church School News

May 22 - Church School Sunday Church School Musical Presentation

The children, 3-years-old through Middle High, will be singing, accompanied by the FCC youth band, a special song under the direction of our Associate Music Director, Joe Regan. Come and hear this performance during the worship service on May 22. It will truly be a treat! A final rehearsal for this musical presentation will be held in Patton Auditorium on May 22 at **9:30am sharp!**

Teacher Appreciation and Recognition Sunday

Please come and join us on May 22 as we recognize one of our most important ministries – our Church School teachers, Assistants and Substitutes, for their indispensable contribution to our community through their ministry.

Sunday, May 29 – Family Worship Service

A special Family Worship Service will be offered on May 29 as we look to provide regular opportunities throughout the year for families to worship together. Crib Room will be provided for infants through two-year-olds.



Teachers Are Needed!

It is that time of the year when we begin to plan for the next Church School year. During the coming weeks the Church School Committee will be recruiting teachers. Get involved as a teacher or helper. Show your children your commitment to their Christian education. We would love to hear from you. If you are interested, please call Alida Woods, (908)322-5030.

Summer Sunday Stories

If you enjoy working with children, but you can't teach during the school year, then Summer Sunday Stories may be for you. Summer Sunday Stories is designed to accommodate family worship during the summer months. It will be held during the worship services from June 19 through August 28.

If you are interested in co-teaching, please contact Alida Woods, (908)322-5030. Teenage helpers are also needed.



17th Annual Cake Auction – A Special Thank You!

A special thank you to Ellen Hollis and the Middle High class for coordinating the 17th Annual Heifer Cake Auction to raise money for Heifer International. Thank you again Ellen for suggesting this event 17 years ago and for your efforts in coordinating it every year since. We were blessed to have the contribution of 34 cakes and the auction raised \$802.00. Thank you to all who made it such a success.

The Heifer International Arks and Read To Feed Pledges Are Due

Please return the Heifer Project Ark Banks and Read-to-Feed pledges to your child's teacher or to Alida Woods if you have not done so already.

Thank you to all those who participated in this year's Heifer Mission Project. You are helping Heifer fulfill its mission to end global hunger and poverty while caring for the earth. To date, we have raised \$802.00 through the Cake Auction, \$92.71 through the Fill-the-Ark Program and \$384 through Moving Meditation.

Special recognition goes to first grader, Isabella Burdick, for raising \$80 through the Read-to-Feed program!

Please consider giving as much as you can since each dollar raised for Heifer International will be matched dollar for dollar by Wally and Linda Parker. We are once again truly grateful to Wally and Linda Parker for this generous contribution.



The new Youth Band and Choir under the direction of Assistant Music Director Joe Regan made their debut in worship on Sunday, April 10 with their rendition of Day by Day. Looking forward to hearing more from them in the future.

May Confirmation Schedule

Sunday, May 1
No Class

Sunday, May 8—Mother’s Day
No class

Sunday, May 15
11:30am Class
Kotetsee

Sunday May 22
11:30am Class
Kotetsee

Sunday, May 29
11:30am Class
Kotetsee

Mission Trip Update

Plans are well underway for our Summer Mission Trip working with YSOP (Youth Service Opportunity Project) in Washington DC. We are three months out. We have 23 students and 10 adults who are planning to go. We will find out soon which of the sites and agencies we will be working at in Washington DC. Plans are also underway for what we will be doing in our free time and for our evening programs.



While the Tag Sale is our major fundraiser, there will one more fundraiser at 16 Prospect Wine Bar and Restaurant in July. Details will be in the announcements and in the June *Congregationalist*.

Thanks as always for your wonderful support and enthusiasm! We are excited about this trip and the serving we will be doing in Washington DC.



Youth Fellowship

The month of April was filled with meetings, fellowship and fun. Thanks to YF Leaders Jeremy Bonnell, Nattie Fountain Jardim, Joey Elkin, Phillip Rehwinkel and William Rehwinkel for all the great games. We also managed to find time to get ice cream at Stone Cold Creamery!



We continued to plan the Summer Mission Trip to Washington DC, as well as get ready for the Tag Sale fundraiser on Saturday, May 14 (see story p.4). In May we will walk the outdoor Labyrinth at the Cranford Presbyterian Church and then go out for lunch for our last formal meeting of this semester. We’ll end the semester on Sunday, May 22 with our traditional end of the year picnic and barbecue at the Boyeas. Info on the party will be emailed.

Planning for next fall is underway. If you have any ideas for activities, events or outings please let Rev. Mounts know.

May Youth Fellowship Schedule

Sunday, May 1
11:30am - YF Meeting
Cranford Labyrinth and lunch afterwards

Sunday, May 8
11:30am - Tag sale move into Patton
No Meeting -Mothers Day—YF Meeting

Sunday, May 15 - All Church Picnic
No YF meeting- YF to help with picnic

Sunday, May 22
5pm - YF End of Year Picnic
The Boyea’s house

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Next Deadline: May 17



The Annual Progressive Appetizers and Desserts Evening

Saturday, May 21
Sign Up Now — Deadline is May 14

Mark your calendar! On Saturday, May 21, from 6:30 until 10pm, join adult members and friends of FCC for our annual progressive event. Sign up at Coffee Hour during the month of April, or fill out the form below and mail it to the Church Office. The evening is a great way to make new friends and get together with old ones. Everyone is asked to either prepare food or open their home for part of the evening. Please call or email Jane Westerhold at (908) 789-2182, or jane.westerhold@gmail.com for more information or transportation.

Appetizers: 6:30–8:15pm

You and your co-hosts (2-3) will plan and share expenses for soft drinks, wine, and hearty hors d'oeuvres for approximately 25–30 people.

Dessert: 8:30–10pm

We need one generous person to host the evening's finale. (~60 people). You will have several co-hosts to help plan and share expenses for coffee/tea and desserts.

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

Check one:

Appetizer Hosts (2-3 to volunteer home)

Appetizer Co-Host
(provide food/beverages)

One Dessert Host (volunteer home)

Dessert Co-Host
(provide food/beverages)

Please list food allergies: