

When you read through this edition of *First Notes*, you will see First Church of Christ in Wethersfield is a very active congregation as well as a large, historic and evangelical church. All visiting guests are warmly invited to consider membership in this family of faith. Inquiry classes are held several times a year. The next one is **Sunday, April 20**, 10:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. (lunch and childcare provided). If you are interested, please indicate in the Friendship Register, visit the church website or call **Betty** at 529-1575, ext. 212, for details.

Holy Week Happenings

PALM SUNDAY is **March 16**. Services are held at regular times (8:00, 9:15, and 11:00 a.m.) and this is a Family Sunday. Children ages 5 and up attend the first part of the service with their families. The message by **Senior Pastor Jey Deifell** will be *Worthy Worship*. The *WIND* service will be held as usual, at 11:00 a.m., with a message by **Pastor Tessa Afshar**.

ON WEDNESDAY NIGHT (March 19) **Senior Pastor Jey Deifell** will be hosting a free viewing of the movie *The Passion of the Christ* in the Worship and Fireside Rooms, beginning at 7:00 p.m. Tickets are not necessary; just come and invite a friend. **Parental discretion is strongly advised** based on the content of the movie.

MAUNDY THURSDAY SERVICE — A special service will be held in the Meetinghouse on **Thursday, March 20**, at 7:00 p.m. It will include Holy Communion, a meditation by **Pastor Persh Parker**, and a **Tenebrae** (dimming of lights).

GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE — Worship “at the foot of the Cross” on **Friday, March 21**. A meditation will be given by **Pastor Mike McDowell**. Join us in the Meetinghouse from 2:00 to 3:00 p.m.

FAMILY EASTER CELEBRATION — Join us on **Saturday, March 22, 3–5 p.m.**, in Keith Jones Hall for our annual family Easter celebration. We will color eggs, enjoy a puppet show, hunt for eggs and make a craft. Sign up on the poster in the Wells Area and bring your own hard-boiled eggs. We'll supply the rest! Cost is \$4 person/\$12 family.

EASTER SUNRISE SERVICE is scheduled for **6:00 a.m.** in the Village Cemetery. **Todd Willard** will give a message and the First Church Brass Ensemble will provide the music. What a glorious way to start this important day!

EASTER BREAKFAST (hosted by **Pastor Mike McDowell**) will be served in the Fireside Room at 6:30 a.m. Sign up in the Friendship Register, on the poster in the Wells Area or call **Arlene** at 529-1575, ext. 211. Cost: \$4/person; children 5 and under/free; family/\$10. Volunteers are needed to make Monkey Bread, and to help serve and clean-up. If available, call **Arlene**.

HOLYWEEKCHILDCARENEEDED during the Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and all four Easter Sunday services. Please call 529-1575, ext. 208, to volunteer.

EASTER ANGELS ARE NEEDED on **Monday, March 24**, to deliver the Easter plants to homebound and bereaved members and friends. If you are willing to help, please sign up in the Friendship Register, noting “Angel” after your name and include your telephone number. Come to the church between 9:00 a.m. and 12:00 noon that day (reminder calls will **not** be made) to receive assignments for delivery of two or three plants. (If you would like to be an Angel but cannot deliver the plants that morning, indicate this in the Friendship Register. Your plants and assignments will be waiting for you in the Wells Area or the Connector. There are always a few Angels who make their calls after work on the next day.) For more information, call **Janet vonWodtke** at 659-2638.

Worship Service Information

TRADITIONAL SERVICES — Worship in our Meetinghouse on **Sunday mornings** at 8:00, 9:15 and 11:00 a.m. The same message is given at each service.

CONTEMPORARY SERVICE — All are invited to join us for an informal, contemporary worship service. *WIND (Worship in New Dimensions)* is held on **Sunday mornings** in Keith Jones Hall. The service begins at 11:00 a.m. but you're welcome to come at 10:45 a.m. for private prayer and meditation. Our wonderful worship team leads the congregation in praise songs and a message is given by one of our pastors. Easter will only have Meetinghouse services.

MIDWEEK LENTEN SERVICES will be held in the Meetinghouse on **Wednesday nights**, 6:30–7:10 p.m., **through March 12**. Each service will include worship, a time of prayer and an inspiring “heart-to-heart” talk. For a list of the “heart-to-heart” speakers, visit the First Church website at www.firstchurch.org.

FIRST CHURCH WORSHIP SERVICE ON TV — Our traditional worship service (recorded the previous week) can be seen on **Sundays** at **1:00 p.m.**, in Glastonbury, Rocky Hill, South Windsor, Manchester, Wethersfield and Newington; on Cox Cable's Channel 15 (and on Channel 14 in Wethersfield). Please call **Laurie Hart** at 529-1575, ext. 225, if you notice any problems.

FIRST CHURCH WORSHIP SERVICE ON RADIO — Radio Station WJMJ presents excerpts from our traditional services **from 8:00 to 8:30 a.m.** on **Sundays**, at 88.9 FM (central Connecticut), 91.5 FM (Hamden) & 107.1 FM (New Haven).

SERMONS — Printed copies of some sermons can be found in the Wells Area and also on the First Church website, at www.firstchurch.org, where some audio versions are available as well. Note: The same sermon is usually preached both in the Traditional and WIND services on alternate Sundays.

FLOWER MEMORIALS & STEEPLE LIGHTING — Would you like to honor a loved one by providing flowers for the traditional services in the Meetinghouse or the WIND service in Keith Jones Hall? For information about flower memorials, which cost \$40, call **Kathy Mayer** at 529-7454. If you would like to honor a loved one by having the Steeple lit in their name, call **Carol Chase** at 521-7676. The cost of Steeple Lighting is \$40 for a solo memorial and \$20 for a shared memorial.

Announcements and Special Events

IDEAS ARE NEEDED for our church's **375th Anniversary Celebration**. The committee is open to suggestions for ways to reflect First Church in three ways: the past, the present and the future. You can share your ideas by calling chairperson **Lisa Leonard** at 563-9656.

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER — An ecumenical worship service will be held at Trinity Episcopal Church (just north of First Church on Main Street) at 1:00 p.m. on **Friday, March 7** (World Day of Prayer). First Church will be participating with other Wethersfield churches. The theme this year is **God's Wisdom Provides New Understanding**. For more info, call **Irene Mueller** at 563-9912.

OPERATION INASMUCH is a one-day outreach event modeled after very successful programs in the South which mobilize as many church members as possible by sending them out into the community to meet practical needs and share the love of Christ. **On Saturday May 17**, our First Church family will tackle a number of service projects and help the needy in Wethersfield. (For this first event we're doing projects in Wethersfield, and we hope to expand in the future.) Projects are being coordinated by the *Operation Inasmuch* committee, led by **Chip Darius** and **Ed Ryszkiewicz**. The work will be appropriate for all skill levels, and for all ages over 3rd grade. **Know someone with a need in Wethersfield which can be met within one day? Want to help?** Look for forms in the Wells Fellowship Area and watch for more info soon on the church website.

E-TITHING — Would you like to reduce your paperwork? Do you find yourself too busy to write checks and keep track of a yearly pledge? You can contribute through an automatic monthly withdrawal from your bank account. For more information, call **Ann Fuschi** in the Finance Office at 529-1575, ext. 218.

REGISTRATION FOR 2008-2009 NURSERY SCHOOL YEAR — We offer classes for children who are two-years-and-nine-months through five-years-old. Included in our curriculum are chapel, music and movement sessions and classroom chemistry. In addition, children can attend Christian-based themed extended sessions before or after their classroom activities. Our lunch bunch sessions are offered four days a week. Make an appointment to join a school tour or ask for registration materials to be sent to you by calling the church at 529-1575. If you have questions, ask for **Joan Hines** at ext. 235.

WEDNESDAY NIGHT SUPPERS — Enjoy supper with your First Church family on **Wednesdays**, from 5:30 to 6:15 p.m. in Keith Jones Hall. Prices are \$6 per adult; \$3 per child (ages 5-10). Kids under age 5 eat free! Sign up in the Friendship Register on **Sunday mornings**, noting how many people are in your party, or call **Betty** at 529-1575, ext. 212. **Note: There will be no supper on March 19.**

Children's and Family Ministries

Vicki Huffman, Director / 529-1575, ext. 206 / vickih@firstchurch.org
Marcia McCann, Special Events/Preschool Coordinator / ext. 208 / marciam@firstchurch.org
Debbie Hertle, Administrative Assistant / ext. 303 / debrah@firstchurch.org

CHURCH SCHOOL — First Church provides programming for infants and children of all ages. The Crib Room is staffed during the 9:15 and 11:00 a.m. services and a registered nurse is on-hand. Church School classes are offered at 9:15 and 11:00 a.m. on **Sunday mornings**, for children age 2 through Grade 7. At 11:00 a.m., 8th-graders are encouraged to attend the Confirmation Class, and youth in Grades 9-12 meet in the Parlor (see Youth Ministries section for Middle School and High School information).

LARGE GROUP TIME, for children in Grades 1-6, is held on the **first Sunday of each month** only. On all other Sundays, elementary children should go directly to their classrooms (except for Family Sundays, when they attend worship with their families). **Next Large Group Sunday: April 6.**

ON FAMILY SUNDAYS — Children in Grades K-6 attending the 9:15 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. classes go directly to the worship service with their parents, and are dismissed to their regular classrooms following the *Children's Talk*. **Next Family Sunday: March 16.**

A SPECIAL NEEDS CLASS, for children in preschool and kindergarten, is offered at 11:00 a.m. in the Gym Room. "Special Needs" includes Autism, ADHD or other behavioral or emotional-challenges/diagnoses. **Leslie and Len Golas** provide loving care. Children must pre-register for this class before attending. Call 529-1575, ext. 303, for details.

KIDS' CLUBS are held on **Wednesday nights** from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. Children in **Grades 1-5** are invited to come enjoy some mid-week fun and spiritual growth. Feel free to invite a friend. **Note:** There will be no Kids' Clubs held on **March 19.**

- **CHRISTIAN SERVICE BRIGADE (for Boys in Grades 1-5)** — Together with their dads or other adult mentors, boys get to have fun, learn about God's creation and grow closer to Him and each other. They do this through games, crafts, Scripture memorization and stories. For more info, or to volunteer your time, contact **Tim Penn** at 644-5783. You may also visit www.csbministries.org.
- **PIONEER GIRLS (For Girls in Grades 1-5)** — This Christian ministry helps girls have fun, learn new skills, build relationships, study the Bible and ultimately, learn to live for Christ in every aspect of their lives. Pioneer Clubs serve over 3,000 churches throughout North America. We meet in the lower level of the Marsh Building. For more info on this group, call **Phoebe Ostergren** at 571-8748.

FAST (Fifth and Sixth Grade Team) — Youth in Grades 5-6 are invited to gather for special events which include fun, fellowship and an opportunity for service. Leaders are **Vicki Huffman** (529-1575) and **Jon Beaty** (529-0673).

- **SLOT CAR RACING (Racing with Jesus)** is held at Jon Beaty's house. Join us on **March 14** and **March 28** for Family NASCAR Nights 6:30-9:30 p.m. All attendees should bring a snack or beverage to share with others. For more info, call **Jon**.

MOPS (Mothers of Preschoolers) — All moms of preschoolers are invited to the next meeting on **Thursday, March 6**, 9:15-11:15 a.m., in the Fireside Room. The theme is **Bring Spring in with Flowers**—including a demonstration by a representative from **A Victorian Garden** in Wethersfield. The cost is \$5 to cover the supplies for a silk flower wreath we will make. Please call **Debbie** at 529-1575, ext. 303, to register for childcare.

Youth Ministries

Todd Willard, Director of Youth Ministries / 529-1575, ext. 219 / toddw@firstchurch.org
Marcia McCann, Special Events Coordinator / ext. 208 / marciam@firstchurch.org
Debbie Hertle, Administrative Assistant / ext. 303 / debrah@firstchurch.org

CONFIRMATION CLASS — For **eighth-graders**, meets in the Youth Room each **Sunday morning** at 11:00 a.m. The class is led by **Todd Willard**. The students will be confirmed on **Sunday, May 4**, at 11:00 a.m.

HIGH SCHOOL CLASS — Youth in **Grades 9-12** are invited to meet each **Sunday morning** at 11:00 a.m. in the Church Parlor (near the Choir Room). Teachers are **Erik and Sarah Anderson** and **Christina Phillips**.

BIBLE STUDY GROUPS

- **MIDDLE SCHOOL GIRLS** — All girls in grades 6-8 are invited to join us for a time of spiritual growth and fellowship. *Daughters of Eve*, led by **Betsy Gleba** and **Melanie Kessler**, meets on **Monday nights** from 6:45 to 8:00 in the Youth Room. For more information, call **Todd** at 529-1575, ext. 219.
- **HIGH SCHOOL GUYS** — Come enjoy games, fellowship, pizza and a great Bible study on **Tuesday nights**, 6:30-8:30 p.m., at Ted Willard's house in East Hartford. Led by **Ro Cherry**, **Jeff Heyer**, **Ted Willard** and **Todd Willard**, all high school guys are welcome. For information or directions, call **Ted** at 568-0660.
- **HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS** — Join us on **Tuesday nights**, 6:30-8:30 p.m. in the Youth Room, for *REIGN (Rejoicing Everyday In God's Name)* led by **Diane Krause**, **Jessy Miskin**, **Lisa Peery** and **Tegan Willard**. For info, call **Todd** at 529-1575, ext. 219.

MIDDLE SCHOOL P.F. — Led by **Marty Bernardi**, **Adam Gove**, **Dave Gove** and **Todd Willard**. All youth in **Grades 6-8** are welcome to join us in the Youth Room on **Wednesday nights**, 6:30–8:00 p.m., for fun, fellowship and spiritual growth.

HIGH SCHOOL P.F. — A mix of great fun, fellowship and spiritual challenge! All High School students are invited to gather in the Youth Room on **Sunday nights**, 7:30–8:45 p.m. Newcomers and friends are always welcome.

YOUTH WORKCAMP/MISSION TRIP (July 6-12, 2008) — See the Missions & Christian Outreach section (page 11).

MORGAN SCHOLARSHIPS OFFERED to College and Graduate Students— **First Church** offers the **\$1500 Donald W. Morgan Scholarship**, awarded annually to a qualified full-time student who is preparing for full-time Christian ministry; and the **\$1500 Grace Morgan Scholarship**, awarded annually to a qualified full-time student with a history of showing Christian compassion in community outreach. Applications and information on eligibility and other requirements are available on our website (under Missions & Christian Outreach) or in the Wells Area. For more info, please e-mail **Daryl Ostergren** at dahowgren@copper.net. *Applications must be submitted by March 31, 2008.*

YOUTH MINISTRY NEWSLETTER — Youth Ministries distributes a monthly e-mail newsletter for parents, in order to enhance the quality of communication between parents and the youth ministry. If you are interested in being included on the list, please send an e-mail to toddw@firstchurch.org. For more info, call **Todd** at 529-1575, ext. 219.

Adult Learning and Discipleship

Michael McDowell, Pastor / 529-1575, ext. 201 / michaelm@firstchurch.org
Arlene Eriksen, Administrative Assistant / 529-1575, ext. 211 / arlenee@firstchurch.org

BIBLE STUDIES ON SUNDAYS

- *Faithful Families*, for all parents with children including the teen years, led by **Matt Daly** and **Behn Sikora**, is held at 9:15 a.m. in the Morgan House Birch Room.
- *The Upper Room Discourse* (from the Gospel of John), led by **Greg and Ellen Voth**, is held at 9:15 a.m. (Morgan House Chestnut Room).
- *The Minor Prophets*, led by Dr. **Glenn Sunshine**, is held at 11:00 a.m. (Fireside Room).

A LENTEN STUDY, entitled *Forty Days and Forty Minutes ... Jesus, the New Way*, is held from 7:20 to 8:00 p.m. on **Wednesdays during Lent** (February 6–March 12) in the Morgan House Drawing Room. This Lenten DVD study, led by **Pastor Mike McDowell**, with noted British scholar, pastor and author **Dr. Tom Wright**, Bishop of Durham, will help you to see Jesus as you've never seen Him before. For more info, call **Arlene** at 529-1575, ext. 211.

AN ECUMENICAL BIBLE STUDY, led by **Claire Agee**, currently focuses on what the Bible says about **Suffering**. Join us on **Wednesday mornings** in the Morgan House Drawing Room, 9:30-11:00 a.m. For more info, call **Claire** at 529-3628.

THE TRUTH PROJECT, led by **Jon Vining**, **John Cook** and **Brian Durso**, meets on **Thursdays**, 7:00–9:00 p.m., in the Church Parlor. This is an in-depth DVD-based small-group curriculum comprised of 13 lessons taught by **Dr. Del Tackett**. Look at life from a biblical perspective. Each lesson discusses the relevance and importance of living the Christian worldview in daily life. If you are interested in attending or have any questions, please call 860-712-9664 for more info.

GOD'S COMFORT — This support group, for those with **chronic illnesses**, is offered on the **2nd & 4th Thursdays** of each month. Facilitated by **Roger Willard**, the group meets from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. in Conference Room 1.

INTERESTED IN JOINING A GROWTH GROUP? We all long for real community identity. First Church Growth Groups are patterned after this biblical standard for real community. Growth Groups are small gatherings which meet, usually in homes, on a regular basis for fellowship and sharing, Bible study and supportive prayer. To register, call **Arlene** at 529-1575, ext. 211.

BROWN BAGGERS, a.k.a. Benevolent Reading of Worldly Notable Books Addressing God's Grace, Essence, Reliability & Simplicity — Discussion meetings are held the **first Tuesday** of each month, Morgan House Cafe, 6:00-8:00 p.m. Brown bag your dinner and join us for a lively discussion. February's reading for **March 4** is **Cindy McDowell's** new book *Role of a Lifetime – Your Part in God's Story*. For more info, call **Ron or Leslie Vliet** at 229-8331.

EASTER WORSHIP SERVICES will be held on **Sunday, March 23**, at **7:30 a.m., 9:00 a.m., 10:30 a.m. and 12:00 noon**. Experience glorious music in our beautifully decorated Meetinghouse! **Senior Pastor Jey Deifell** will give an inspiring message entitled *Easter It's*. Plan to come early as it can get crowded and **please review the parking map on page 13 to see parking options**.

Couples Ministries

Luke and Michelle Adams, Coordinators / 721-1255

COUPLES CLASS — Discover the single greatest secret to a successful marriage and reap the benefits of marriage as God intended! Cracking the communication code between husband and wife involves understanding one thing: unconditional respect is as powerful for him as unconditional love is for her. Based on **Dr. Emerson Eggerich's** ground-breaking bestseller, *Love and Respect*, this 14-week DVD series is held on **Sundays** at 9:15 a.m. in the Morgan House Drawing Room. The workbook costs \$11 per couple. For more information, contact **Luke and Michelle Adams** at 721-1255.

Women's Ministries

Tessa Afshar, Pastor / 529-1575, ext. 202 / tessa@firstchurch.org
Arlene Eriksen, Administrative Assistant / 529-1575, ext. 211 / arlenee@firstchurch.org

WORDS OF DELIGHT — This year's Thursday morning Bible study, led by Faye Smith and Janice Johnson, meets from 9:30 to 11:00 a.m. in the Church Library. Their new theme is *Letters to the Early Church* and will help us glean the loving wisdom of God, which transcends time and culture. All newcomers are welcome!

TUESDAY AND FRIDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY — Vicki Huffman is facilitating an 11-week Beth Moore Bible study, *A Woman's Heart: God's Dwelling Place*. This study is being held on Tuesdays, 7:00–8:30 a.m. in the Youth Room and on Fridays, 9:30–11:15 a.m. in the Worship Room. Childcare is available (for a small fee). If interested in participating, call 529-1575, ext. 208.

WOMEN'S RETREAT — The fifteenth annual First Church Women's Retreat will be held April 4-6, at the luxurious Farmington Marriott, featuring keynote speaker Neely Towe, Senior Minister Emeritus at Stanwich Congregational Church in Greenwich, CT, which experienced explosive growth under her teaching. Neely will be speaking on *Becoming A Woman of Excellence* and what excellence really means to God. **In order to guarantee your room, reservations must be received by March 3. Last day of registration is March 14.** We highly recommend overnight stays for a truly refreshing experience. For more info, please call Arlene at 529-1575, ext. 211.

Men's Ministries

Bob Papertsian, Men's Ministries Coordinator / rjapertsian@sbcglobal.net
Arlene Eriksen, Administrative Assistant / 529-1575, ext. 211 / arlenee@firstchurch.org

MEN'S MORNING BIBLE STUDY — Our 24-week study from InterVarsity Press is called *Christian Beliefs*. Meets every Tuesday, 6:45–8:00 a.m., in the Fireside Room. For details, please call 529-1575, ext. 211.

THE DAD IN THE MIRROR — See your heart for God reflected in the children you love! Based on the popular book *The Dad in the Mirror* by Patrick Morley and David Delk, this 12-week study, led by John Rascius, Chip Darius and Bob Papertsian, meets in the Worship Room on Tuesdays, from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. All dads, granddads, uncles, soon-to-be dads and mentors are invited to learn what Christian fatherhood is and how to transfer Christ's love to your children. To register, please e-mail Bob Papertsian at rjapertsian@sbcglobal.net or call Arlene at 529-1575, ext. 211. When you register, let us know if you already have the book.

SATURDAY MORNING MEN'S PRAYER BREAKFAST — Celebrating 20 years! All men are invited to gather in the Fireside Room every Saturday, from 7:30 to 9:00 a.m., for prayer, Scripture discussion, fellowship and a hearty breakfast. For further info, please call Sam Rodriguez at 316-5305.

THE MEN'S MONTHLY PRAYER WALL — New "members" are welcome at any time — all we ask is that you pick a day of the month as your day to pray for Men's Ministries, First Church and other requests for prayer. This is intended to be in addition to the daily prayers you do on a regular basis. You are only active on the Prayer Wall during the day of the month you select. Three to five days before the beginning of each month, every brother on the Prayer Wall will receive the prayers for that particular month via e-mail. For more info, please contact Bob Papertsian at rjapertsian@sbcglobal.net.

Caring Ministries

Joan Deifell, Director / 529-1575, ext. 203 / joand@firstchurch.org
Michelle Adams, Administrative Assistant / 529-1575, ext. 210 / Care@firstchurch.org

EMERGENCIES — Members of our Servant Leadership Team are on call 24 hours a day. Call 529-1575, ext. 210, and leave a detailed message, the time of your call and a number where you can be reached. We're here to pray for and support you in your time of need.

THE CARE BOARD in the Wells Area connects those in need of service with a willing provider. To add an item of your own, please fill out a yellow form (located in the Caring Concerns Room) and place it in the prayer box provided.

CARING CONCERNS ROOM — Visit the Caring Concerns Room (behind the Reception Desk) on Sundays to share your special needs or the concerns of another. Fill out a yellow Caring Concerns form or a blue Prayer Request slip.

LICENSED COUNSELORS — Jacqueline Tedesco Whitehead, Clinical Social Worker, at 559-3904; and Kristen Lathrop, licensed Psychologist, at 299-6992. Call Caring Ministries for names of other counselors.

CELEBRATE RECOVERY — Are you interested in finding out more about *Celebrate Recovery*? If so, please stop by the table in the Wells Area on Sunday mornings. A group is meeting regularly to pray and plan for the program to begin at First Church. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 6 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. in the Morgan House Drawing Room. Everyone is welcome since all have or have had hurts, hang-ups or habits at some point in our lives for which we need healing. For more information, call Caring Ministries at 529-1575, ext. 210.

GRIEFSHARE will meet for 13 sessions every Monday, from 6:30 p.m. to 8:15 p.m., beginning June 2 in the Morgan House Drawing Room. For more information, please call Caring Ministries at 529-1575, ext. 210.

THE WAY BACK is a support group for parents who have children with special needs. They normally meet on the first Saturday of the month, from 10:30 a.m. until noon, in the Church Parlor. In place of the regular monthly meeting, a game night (with pizza and soft drinks) will be held on Friday, March 7 at 6:00 p.m. Anyone interested in playing games with children with special needs is invited. Please RSVP by March 6 to allow enough time to order pizza. For more info, or to RSVP, contact Brenda Sullivan at 657-4361 or 5040psbs@cox.net. Parents looking for support and encouragement in a Christian environment will find this time well spent.

BLOOD PRESSURE READINGS — The Parish Nurse Ministry offers free blood pressure readings after worship services, in the Caring Concerns Room, behind the Reception Desk, on the second Sunday of each month. Nurses who wish to help, call Joan Haines, 529-2281.

LOVED ONES IN ARMED FORCES? The Care Board now lists names and addresses of members of the Armed Forces overseas who are related to our First Church members. Please pray for them. To have your family members posted, send their names and addresses (and a small photo, if you wish) to Caring Ministries.

IS A FIRST CHURCH MEMBER IN THE HOSPITAL? First Church staff and Pastoral Care Team members try to visit and pray for them. However, privacy laws often prevent hospitals from notifying us when our members are hospitalized. Please ask a family member to notify us—any time, day or night—at **529-1575, ext. 210**.

Ministry of Music and the Arts

David Spicer, Minister of Music & the Arts / 529-1575, ext. 204
Dave Gilbert, Associate / 529-1575, ext. 209 / music@firstchurch.org

MEMORIAL CONCERT — Join us in the Meetinghouse on **Good Friday, March 21**, at 7:00 p.m., for a special presentation of *Requiem* by **John Rutter**, performed by our choirs, soloists, and a Festival Orchestra, conducted by **David Spicer**. Rutter's *Requiem*, which has been called "genuinely exquisite," was composed in 1985 and consists of seven movements, including the beloved and melodic setting of **Psalm 23**. All are invited to this concert, which is made possible by gifts given in memory of loved ones or in recognition of living persons, and by contributions on behalf of the concert. For more information about giving a gift, please call **Dave Gilbert** at 529-1575, ext. 209. There is no admission cost for the concert; a free-will offering will be received. Childcare will be available for those up to age 8.

A PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBIT, based on the **23rd Psalm**, will be held in the Connector on **Sunday morning, March 9**. The photos, taken by First Church member **Bin French**, will reflect the majesty of God's Creation and the magnitude of His love.

INTERESTED IN JOINING one of our vocal or handbell choirs? For details, please contact the Ministry of Music & the Arts at 529-1575, ext. 209, or visit our website.

ART ENJOYMENT CLASS meets on **Tuesdays** from 10:00 to 11:30 a.m. in the Worship Room. For more information, contact **Peg Wallace** at 563-9508.

- March 4 — Janet Hansen - *Robert Bateman*
- March 11 — Theo Fitzgerald - *They are Not Your Granny's Bed Covers: A Look at Contemporary Art Quilts*
- March 18 — Easter Week - *No Class*
- March 25 — Meg Barstow - *Judith Leyster - 17th Century Dutch Woman Artist*

PUPPET MINISTRY meets on **Tuesday afternoons** to rehearse. If you'd like to be a part of this ministry, call **Cindy Jones** at 295-8835.

DRAMA MINISTRY — There is a real need for volunteer staff to revitalize, organize and direct a drama ministry here at First Church. If you have had experience in this area, please prayerfully consider helping us out. For more info or to volunteer, please contact **David Spicer** at 529-1575, ext. 209.

DANCE MINISTRY — To help enhance our worship services and concert series, we are looking for volunteers to organize and direct a liturgical dance ministry. If you feel God is "nudging" you to consider helping, please contact **David Spicer** at 529-1575, ext. 209.

CLOWN MINISTRY — Clowns of all ages can join us in making people smile on special occasions at First Church and out in the community. **No experience necessary!** If you're interested in being a clown, call **Charlotte Mead** at 529-6418.

Prayer Ministries

PRAYER REQUESTS: Caring Ministries, 529-1575, ext. 210 • Betty Metcalf, 632-2024

We believe God sustains and grows us through prayer. For this reason, our church and its ministries are bathed in prayer every day of the week. Here are a few other prayer opportunities:

PRAYER AFTER SERVICES — Prayer teams are available in the Chapel after the 9:15 and 11:00 a.m. services on **Sundays**. If you have any prayer needs, please go to the Chapel where trained ministry teams will be happy to pray for you in private. (On Family Sundays, the Chapel is not available. Please ask one of the Pastors for prayer.) If the prayer ministers are delayed arriving in the Chapel, or if there is a long line, feel free to ask one of the Pastors for help.

THE PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY meets on the **first Tuesday** of each month. All praying knitters are welcome! Call **Elaine St. Onge**, 529-7821, for more information.

HEALING PRAYER — Call **Betty Trani**, 529-1575, ext. 212, to make an appointment with the Healing Prayer Team.

PRAYER CLASS — *Getting to the Heart: Prayer from the Inside Out*, taught by **Wendy and Phil Coy**, focuses on different ways of increasing our intimacy with God through prayer, healing prayer, listening for God's leading and other aspects of a deepening prayer life. This class is hands-on and includes "lab" times. The remaining classes will be held on the first and third Tuesday of every month through May. Please contact **Betty Trani**, 529-1575, ext. 212, to sign up.

ELEOS — "Eleos" is a Greek word which means mercy and compassion. Jesus was often moved by compassion to pray for others. *Eleos* is an open gathering to all who need fellowship and prayer support as they travail through challenging times. Led by **Kristen Lathrop**, PsyD, and members of the Prayer team, *Eleos* meets every other **Tuesday**, from 6:45 to 8:00 p.m., in the Parlor. For more information, please call **Kristen** at 436-2650.

DIAL-A-MESSAGE (529-1785) is our telephone ministry of daily devotional messages. If you know of someone who needs encouragement, suggest this number.

WEEKLY PRAYER ARMOR is a guide to praying for the First Church staff, lay leadership, ministries and missions of our church in the course of a week. If interested in praying for First Church, please contact **Tessa Afshar** at 529-1575, ext. 202.

PRAYER REQUEST/PRAISE REPORT blue forms are found near each Meetinghouse entrance, along with a box for completed forms. Submissions are compiled into the Prayer List (also blue), allowing you to pray for others throughout the week.

PRAYER WALL — The prayers on the Prayer Wall are routinely prayed for and remain current for four weeks. They will be removed from the prayer list after that period, unless you give us an update.

TELEPHONE/E-MAIL PRAYER CHAIN — To request a confidential or church-wide prayer or offer a praise report call Caring Ministries at 529-1575, ext. 210; send an e-mail to care@firstchurch.org; or call **Betty Metcalf** at 632-2024. Every day many faithful pray-ers will be interceding for your request. To join the group of pray-ers, call Caring Ministries.

Opportunities to Serve

NOAH'S ART is a weekly outreach ministry through *Hartford City Mission*. It strives to teach children in Hartford's north-end the life-changing truth of God's Word and to engender a passion for art and the artistic gifts that the Lord has instilled in them. This ministry needs volunteers to assist during the program (**Wednesdays**, 3:30-5:00 p.m.) by working with the children as they do their art work. These children need to feel Christ's love and encouragement through believers like you! Please contact **Lia** if you can help at 930-4338 or lia44lee@yahoo.com.

MERCY MEALS — Like to cook? Willing to purchase a meal once a year? There is always a need for providers of meals for members coming home from the hospital or rehab facilities or just going through difficult times. Monthly callers to coordinate meals are also needed. Please call **Caring Ministries** at 529-1575, ext. 210.

PRISON MINISTRIES — *Alpha Prison Ministry* meets on **Mondays and/or Thursdays**, to minister to inmates at Cheshire and Webster Correctional Institutions in Cheshire, Osborn Correctional Institution and Willard-Cybulski Institution in Somers, Robinson Correctional Institution in Enfield and Manson Youth Institution in Cheshire. *Good News Prison Ministry* also meets every other Sunday at the Manson Youth Institution in Cheshire. Group leaders and helpers are needed. Please call **Larry Mayer**, 529-7454, for details.

THE THRIFT SHOP will be celebrating their **Spring Opening** on **March 4**. Located in the basement of the Marsh Building, the shop is open on **Tuesdays** and **Saturdays** (10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.), and on **Thursdays** (11:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.). Donations of spring clothing and small household items are welcome; there is a collection bin in the Main Street vestibule. Your donations help to serve those in our church and in our community.

VISITORS NEEDED — Would you like to be a regular visitor to a homebound member or to members in nursing homes? Caring Ministries can match you up with someone to visit at least once a month. Please call 529-1575, ext. 210.

SHEPHERD'S VOICE — The *Shepherd's Voice* audio ministry needs assistants. If you can volunteer for just an hour—once a week or every other week—to help copy CDs, please call **Laurie Hart** at 529-1575, ext. 225. No experience necessary; but must be organized and dependable.

SHARE THE GIFT OF HOSPITALITY — Help First Church continue to be a welcoming, hospitable community. There are many areas in which you can serve, including Greeters, Coffee Hour, Wednesday Night Suppers, Receptions and Special Events. We also need volunteers to mentor and welcome our new members. If you'd like to volunteer, contact **Joyce Senn** at JSSSSSS@aol.com or 721-0341.

PAID CHILDCARE WORKERS are needed on **Thursday mornings**. Please call **Arlene** at 529-1575, ext. 211, for details.

MEALS ON WHEELS is in need of drivers in the Wethersfield area. If you could give a couple hours of your time, just one day a month, call **Tom Wraight**, 529-8146.

Communications

Laurie Hart, Communications Coordinator / 529-1575, ext. 225 / laurieh@firstchurch.org
Wendy Powell, Communications Assistant / ext. 224 / wendyp@firstchurch.org
Fax: (860) 721-7861

THE SHEPHERD'S VOICE MEDIA MINISTRY offers CDs and DVDs of our 9:15 and 11:00 a.m. Traditional services. In addition, copies of the 11:00 a.m. WIND service are available on CD. Please order all CDs and DVDs using this system:

Find small brown Order Envelopes in Friendship Registers or Connector.
Pre-pay \$2 per CD or \$5 per DVD (special events are \$10).
Put envelope in OFFERING PLATE or give it to RECEPTIONIST.
Pick up your order the following week at the Reception Desk.
For more info, please contact **Laurie Hart** at 529-1575, ext. 225.

THE SPIRE, our church newsletter, is published twice a month. The deadline for submitting information for Issue #15 is **Friday, March 7** (covers 3/22/08–4/4/08). The deadline for submitting information for Issue #16 is **Thursday, March 20** (covers 4/5/08–4/18/08). Please send your information to **Laurie Hart** — via e-mail, fax or phone (see above). This publication is also available on our website.

FIRST NOTES (this publication) is published at the beginning of each month. If you have information to submit for next month's issue, please contact **Wendy Powell** by **Wednesday, March 12**. *First Notes* is also available on our website.

OUR CHURCH WEBSITE contains details about programs, service opportunities, sermons and the many ministries of First Church. Our website address is www.firstchurch.org. If you have any suggestions for further enhancement or would like to report any website issues, call **Webmaster Wendy Powell** at 529-1575, ext. 224.

Missions & Christian Outreach

Persh Parker, Pastor / 529-1575, ext. 205 / pershp@firstchurch.org
Daryl Ostergren, Outreach & Missions Chair / 571-8748 / dahowgren@copper.net

MISSIONS NIGHT will be held on **Wednesday, March 26** at 6:30 p.m. in the **Meetinghouse**. **This event will feature** First Church supported missionaries **Jon and Valerie Brown**, who serve with **Cross Worlds** in Brazil.

SILENT AUCTION & TALENT SHOW will be held on **Saturday, March 29**. The Wells Area and Connector will be filled with various items to bid on including gift baskets, art, gift certificates, gourmet meals, gadgets, an overnight or weekend getaway, services (i.e. baby-sitting, cooking, painting, home repair, house cleaning, yard work), furniture, etc. The auction will be held from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. Then the Talent Show begins (at 7:00) and will feature a variety of acts performed by members of our First Church family. **All proceeds from this event go towards our two summer mission trip groups (Maine and the Dominican Republic)**. If you have an item or service you would like to donate for our **Silent Auction**, please contact **Penny Crompton** at 635-1530 or dcrompton@sbcglobal.net.

HARTFORD CITY MISSION is partnering with **Urban Young Life** to introduce a fun, outreach-based ministry geared toward unchurched urban youth in Hartford! Our newest initiative will kick off this **April**, with programs **each Friday night** at the *SAND School* on Main Street in Hartford's north-end. If you are interested in volunteering, or just want more information, contact **Vicki Huffman** at 529-1575, ext. 206 or **Rex Fowler**, HCM's Youth Outreach coordinator, at 805-8660. An introductory meeting will be held **Friday, March 7**, at *The Vine*, HCM's ministry house in Hartford's north-end, at 6:30 p.m. We're providing pizza and dessert, so please RSVP to Vicki or Rex!

INTERGENERATIONAL MISSION TRIP (July 4-12, 2008) — First Church members are once again going with the **First Baptist Church of Wallingford** on a short-term mission trip to **La Ramona, Dominican Republic**. Participants will serve on a hospital construction team, an evangelical team, help in medical clinics on the bateys (sugar cane fields) or work with the batey children. This intergenerational mission trip provides a great opportunity for many to serve the Lord. The team is collecting medicines, vitamins, clothing, and school supplies. For more information or to contribute to the team, please contact **Dana Crompton** at 635-1530 or dcrompton@sbcglobal.net.

YOUTH GROUP WORKCAMP (July 6-12, 2008) — Our middle school and high school youth (age 13+) are invited to participate in this summer's trip to **Machias, Maine**, organized by *Group Workcamps*. This trip will enable our youth and their leaders to touch the lives of people through home repair. No experience is necessary to go on this mission trip—just a willingness to serve people who are elderly, disabled or disadvantaged. We will gather with people from other Christian churches to make a real difference. The groups eat together, worship together, make new friends and create memories which last a lifetime—all while brightening the spirit of a community! For more info, call **Todd Willard** at 529-1575, ext. 219.

HEATHER & HOPE DEIFELL are serving others on a "year-long ministry around the world" to serve, train and encourage youth and those who work with youth. They have completed their time in Mozambique, Malawi, throughout South Africa and Madagascar (Africa), India, Cambodia, Thailand, Laos and China. They are now on the south island of New Zealand and have several ministry contacts there. **Jey and Joan will be joining Heather and Hope after Easter for three weeks on the north island of New Zealand**. To find out more about their activities and read their impressions, you can access their blogspots at www.globalmissionproject.blogspot.com and www.hoped.blogspot.com.

WETHERSFIELD FOOD BANK is always in need of donations! You may place monetary donations in the Offering plate on **Sundays** (cash or a check made payable to First Church with the memo, "Food Bank"), or leave any donations of non-perishable food items with the church receptionist. For more information, call **Howard Page**, 563-3275.

OUTREACH GIFT SHOP is open after each service on **Sundays** and also on **Wednesday nights**, from 5:00 to 6:30 p.m. Stop by and visit the shop located in the Marsh Building, first door on the left as you walk from the Meetinghouse.

SAVE THOSE LABELS & CODES — Women's Fellowship and Outreach Ministries are collecting labels and codes from Campbell's products. They are donated to the Children's Home of Cromwell, to help them acquire educational materials and vans. A collection box is located in the Main Street vestibule. Thank you for your support.

MY SISTER'S PLACE — Would you like an opportunity to "show the Gospel" to homeless women and children in Hartford? My Sister's Place is an emergency shelter which provides temporary housing for up to 16 women and their children. The shelter is in need of volunteers to prepare and deliver meals to its Hartford location. If you are interested in this opportunity, please contact **Vicki Silva** at 529-3116 for further information.

SOUTH PARK INN — Could you lend a helping hand to the homeless? Do you have a half day you can spare? We need volunteers to help prepare a meal for the residents of the South Park Inn—a homeless shelter in Hartford. To explore this opportunity, call **Debbie Moser** at 870-3847.

Singles Ministries

**Persh Parker, Pastor / 529-1575, ext. 205 / pershp@firstchurch.org
Betty Trani, Administrative Assistant / 529-1575, ext. 212 / bettyt@firstchurch.org**

AFFIRM SINGLES (Adult, Friday, Fellowship, Inspiration & Relational Ministry) provides opportunities for single adults to meet together in a welcoming and accepting environment for fun, fellowship, spiritual growth, learning and service. A variety of programs are planned including worship, talks followed by small-group discussion and evenings featuring music and fun. Details can be found in the **AFFIRM Singles** newsletter, or visit their page on our website: www.firstchurch.org/singles. Meetings are held on **Friday nights** at 7:00 p.m.

| | | |
|---------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| March 7 | Speaker: Mary Anne Livermore | <i>Three Secrets</i> |
| March 14..... | Speaker: Bud Reading..... | <i>Emotional Closeness</i> |
| March 21..... | Good Friday..... | <i>No Singles</i> |
| March 28..... | Fun Night..... | <i>Movie Night</i> |

DIVORCE SUPPORT GROUP meets on **Friday nights** at 6:30 p.m. Newcomers are always welcome. You will find a helpful and supportive environment here. Call **Betty** for details: 529-1575, ext. 212.

DIVORCE RECOVERY SEMINAR — **NEW HOPE/NEW BEGINNINGS** will be the theme of our seminar weekend scheduled for **March 14-15** at our church. Detailed registration brochures are available. Questions? Call **Betty** at 529-1575, ext. 212, or check the website: www.firstchurch.org.

Library

The Mildred Edwards Jones Library and Resource Center
Charlotte Mead, Coordinator / 529-6418

THE CHURCH LIBRARY features a wide selection of books, magazines, videos, audio tapes and CDs, including Christian music and books-on-tape. The library also includes an inviting children's room with a large collection of books and videos. Located in the Marsh Building (last room on the right, heading toward the Parlor), the library is open and staffed on **Sunday mornings** following each service.