



March 21, 2010

The Church on the Green

From The First Church of Christ in Longmeadow, United Church of Christ

“Embraced by the love of God in Christ, our mission is to love and serve our world. We seek to grow in Christ’s family through our journey—inward toward faith and knowledge, outward toward love and justice—always rooted and nurtured in worship.”

The Catcher: An Easter Parable

Catholic priest and Christian writer, the late Henri Nouwen, found an unusual story to illustrate what a difference it makes to know that “Jesus Christ is risen.” It means we can entrust the death of our loved ones and our own death to God. Visiting a circus in Germany, Nouwen was captivated with the trapeze artists, The Flying Rodleighs. He became friends with the group’s leader and asked him how they manage to fly through the air. The leader responded:

As a flyer, I must have complete trust in my catcher. The public might think that I am the star, but the real star is my catcher....The secret is that the flyer does nothing and the catcher does everything. When I fly I have simply to stretch out my arms and wait for him to catch me. The worst thing I can do is to try and catch the catcher. A flyer must fly and a catcher must catch and the flyer must trust, with outstretched arms that the catcher will be there for him.¹

For Christians, the season of Easter is the great season of trust. From the Bible, particularly the character of Mary, we learn that Easter means letting go and “trusting in the catcher.”

1 Trapeze Artist “Flyer Rodleigh,” quoted by Henri Nouwen in *Our Greatest Gift: A Meditation on Dying and Caring* (San Francisco: Harper, 1994), pages 66-67. Quoted by Joseph S. Harvard, III, in *Journal for Preachers*, Easter 2010.

As you prepare for our Easter celebration, don’t over think the holiday. Don’t get yourself all twisted up trying to “understand” it or “make sense” of it. Just stretch out your arms and let go. The catcher will take care of the rest.



See you in church!

Michael S. Bennett
Senior Pastor

Milestones

Baptisms

Clara Ann Petit, daughter of Jared and Shana Petit, February 21

Joseph David Chianciola, son of Cory and Karla Chianciola, February 28

In Memoriam

Whitney C. Stiles, 1931 - 2010

Leslie Pohli, 1956 - 2010

Minister's Advisory Panel Update

by Gerry Overstreet

The Minister's Advisory Panel (MAP) was formed in January with the goal of working together with Pastor Mike Bennett to re-energize his ministry and to assist him in developing and achieving objectives that support the broader ministries of First Church.

Our first task was to develop a shared understanding of the circumstances that have prompted the need for this type of team. Having accomplished that, we began to discuss Pastor Mike's ideas for activities that could be implemented in the near term with a goal of demonstrating his renewed ministry focus. At this point we are concentrating on three key activities: new approaches to preaching/teaching, improving the execution of our pastoral care ministries, and developing effective channels of communication between Pastor Mike and the church lay leadership teams. We recognize that this is just the beginning and that many more opportunities lie before us.

Part of the task of MAP will be to collect input from the congregation (you!) We would like to hear your ideas and thoughts - what you feel the church and Pastor Mike are doing well, but also where you feel we could improve. To facilitate this discussion, we have created a special e-mail account: FirstChurchMAP@verizon.net. If you have e-mail access, this would be a great way for us to hear your thoughts. Alternatively, you could send a hand written note to the church office (Attention: MAP), or look for one of the team during coffee hour after the Sunday morning worship service.

The MAP team (Bruce Keator, Nola Kulig, Carole Mazzarino, Don Murphy, and I) would deeply appreciate your support and prayers throughout the coming months as we work on your behalf to help build plans for the future work of our church.

A Week in Milot, Haiti

by Dr. Mark Pohlman, Co-chair, Haiti Committee

Ever since the devastating January 12 earthquake in Port-au-Prince, I have been looking for specific ways that I could help our partners at CONASPEH in their recovery efforts. When the opportunity to join an orthopedic team going to CRUDEM's Hopital Sacre Coeur in Milot near Cap Haitien in northern Haiti arose, I quickly signed up. CRUDEM and CONASPEH are different organizations with similar goals. CRUDEM's president Dr. Peter Kelly, who works in Ludlow, and I have both have been interested in exploring ways to cooperate in helping the Haitians. Unlike the complete collapse of CONASPEH's headquarters and medical clinic, CRUDEM's hospital was undamaged and has expanded to become a major treatment center for earthquake victims.

So urged on by my wife and children, and being accompanied by my daughter Karen, who is a family nurse practitioner and former ER nurse, we made plans to meet the team in Fort Lauderdale on Friday, February 12. The group of 26 included 4 orthopedists, 2 orthopedic residents, internists, anesthesiologists, podiatrists, physical therapists, nurses, an x-ray tech, reporter and photographer, and support staff. Interestingly there were 4 father-child pairs in the group. The following morning we flew to Cap Haitien and were quickly taken over a rut filled road to Milot. Soon after we were assigned to our mosquito net covered Army cot, we hurried out to experience our first of many arrivals of patients by helicopter from the USN Comfort hospital ship. We then took a tour of the new temporary hospital facilities, 6 large Army tents holding 30-35 patients each plus schoolrooms converted into wards. The usual census of 60 patients had expanded to about 350 since the earthquake. Unexpectedly,



we were greeted by several Baystate and other area physicians and nurses, many of whom had come to Milot a few days earlier on the private plane whose owner had volunteered to bring back some children to the Springfield and Boston Shriner's Hospitals. Overall, there were about a dozen people from Western Mass in Milot during the week.

By Saturday evening, I was back in the operating room for the first time since retiring 7 years ago. The patient was a 12 year-old girl who had an infected amputation stump high above her elbow that had to be reopened. She reminded me of a similar aged, graceful one-armed ballet dancer whom I saw recently in the performance of the Nutcracker in Northampton. I hope that this young girl can make a similar physical and emotional recovery. During the week, I was able to help operate on three other patients requiring intra medullary rod fixation of complex femur and tibial fractures. The hospital had recently had acquired a fixation system, called the SIGN nail. Since a fellow resident of mine designed it, I have always had a special interest in its development. Now I could actually place it in patients. It was surprisingly easy to get back into being a surgeon and it felt good. The risk of infection under these circumstances is always a big worry.



The rest of the time Karen and I went to all the tents and wards to consult on any patients with wound problems or orthopedic problems. If we saw someone who needed surgery we would fill out a simple form and take it over to the hospital. The operating surgeons would then make the final decision on evening rounds. Pre-earthquake, the team of visiting orthopedists would do about 20 cases in a week. This week they were averaging 15-20 a day. For us the pace was steady but we could stop for a break whenever it was needed. Most surgeries were done by 8-9 pm. At 8 pm the entire team would meet and go over the problems of the day and have a moment of reflection.

On Monday we had a scare when we got a report that a school had been collapsed by a mudslide in nearby Cap Haitien with numerous casualties. There was general disbelief that there could be even more misery, but everyone knew what to do. Luckily, yet sadly, there were only four deaths. One student died on the way to our hospital; the others were cared for at other hospitals.

On Tuesday, there was a solemn procession of about 1500 people walking down the street in front of the hospital, celebrating "Fat Tuesday" before the start of Lent. Prayers and some music, but no frivolity. On Wednesday, we were treated to an afternoon going up to the Citadel, 3000 feet high over looking Milot. It was a huge fortress built after the French were defeated to help be sure they didn't come back. It is now a World Heritage Site. Even though it was in dense clouds, the massiveness of it was very impressive. We had to climb the last thousand feet on a stone path. Horses were available, but only one in our group was so inclined to ride one. One man followed me up with his horse, expecting me to change my mind about walking up. He gave up after going 2/3 of the way.

The rest of the time was spent either making rounds, doing dressings, or helping in the operating room. It was an experience that I wish all medical personnel could have. It was very inspiring to see how stoic the Haitians are and how willing they are to care for family and strangers. Each tent became a small community of mutual support. Seeing that love in action was a very special experience and a gift that I hope we can share back home.

By day one, we felt like veterans. By day seven, we were ready to go home, yet we didn't want to leave. Hopefully we will be able to return.

Friday Evening Fellowship to Meet April 9

Suzanne Strempek Shea - author of several best selling books including *Selling the Light of Heaven*, *Lilly of the Valley*, and *Around Again*, will be our speaker. Be sure to mark your calendar for this special gathering. The Women's Benevolent Society members were very enthusiastic about her presentation when she met with them last year, and we're lucky to have her come back to another First Church event. Time is 7:30 p.m. Location TBA.

2010 Women's Retreat

The UCC Silver Lake Conference Center in Sharon, CT was the sight for the the 2010 Women's Retreat where twenty seven women of First Church spent the weekend of March 5-7. The theme was "Connections," and the women took this to heart, connecting and rejuvenating, making new friends and reconnecting with old, sharing new experiences and reminiscing about old times.

Mary Friedman led the group Saturday morning on an exploration of connections and different ways to write about them. Examples of poetry, lists, letters and interviews were shared for inspiration. The first part of the session was spent writing about connections with a place. The second half was spent on connections with a person. Laughter and tears filled the lodge as the ladies split into groups to share their personal stories of connections.

The second workshop of the morning was led by Wanona Dobbs. Everyone was given a puzzle piece that was prepared with some seemingly random red lines. To personalize the pieces, the ladies were instructed to draw four pictures: one to symbolize something they are passionate about, one to symbolize Lent, one to symbolize somewhere they had seen God that week, and one to symbolize something that everyone there had in common. When they were done, each unique piece was put together to reveal the message "We Are All a Part of Each Other."

During the afternoon, many members of the group spent some free time exploring the grounds of the conference center, which began as a YMCA camp called Camp Easton in the 1950s. Groups spent time together carefully navigating the snow covered hill down to the lake and

exploring the two outside chapels.



were long, short, sad, and funny, but all were personal and as a whole brought the group together with a wonderful sense of connection.

Before heading home on Sunday, the group took part in a personalized worship service led by Wanona Dobbs. Susan Kennedy provided the music on her flute, and many members of the group participated in different parts of the service. The 'sermon' consisted of several women sharing one of the connection pieces they had written during the first workshop session. It was a very meaningful, beautiful way to end our time together.

Everyone then headed home, grateful for the blessing of the time we spent together. Our thanks go out to the planning committee: Bridget Keator, Cindy Hibert, Mary Friedman, Wanona Dobbs and Mary Randall for all of their hard work in making this retreat such a great success!



Holy Week at First Church

Palm Sunday, March 28 at 10:00 a.m.

With the distribution of palms to the congregation, we celebrate Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem.

Maundy Thursday, April 1 at 7:00 p.m.

This service is in remembrance of the Last Supper and the betrayal of Christ. Communion will be served and there will be a Service of Tenebrae.

Good Friday, April 2 from 12:00 noon to 3:00 p.m.

For centuries, Christians have spent the three hours from noon to 3:00 p.m. commemorating the time Jesus spent on the cross. Our First Church sanctuary will be open for quiet prayer and meditation during this three hour period. You may come and go as the Spirit prompts and as your schedule allows.

John Gerry-Karajanes, our Director of Music (and ordained Lutheran pastor) will lead four brief times of structured prayer at 12:00 noon, 1:00 p.m., 2:00 p.m. and 2:45 p.m. The church will be in silence except for some organ music at times. Helpful material for praying and reading can be found in the New Century (black) Hymnal on pages 1-60 and 816-887. The hymns themselves can also be read very beneficially as devotions. The pew rack Bibles can also be used for reading and meditation.

Easter Sunday, April 12 Alleluia! Christ is Risen!

6:30 a.m.

Greet Easter morning with a sunrise "Come As You Are" service on the front steps.

9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.

Join us with songs of praise and joy as we seek to find words to express the truth of Easter. Place a flower on the living cross on the front lawn of the church. Child care will be provided for children through age 5.

10:00 a.m.

Join us in Bailey Hall in-between the services for our 2nd annual Easter Sunday Pancake Breakfast. (See back cover)



News and Reviews from the Church Library

by Judy Ebeling

Not just for women, one of our newest books, titled *The Top 100 Women of the Bible*, tells the reader who they were and what they mean to us today. Author Pamela McQuade designed the format of each story to begin with a Bible reference, followed by the woman's story and author's commentary.

Many women today carry the names of those women who lived so long ago. It is fun to look up the woman whose name we bear and see how her story might speak to us today. Mary, Sarah, and Elizabeth are women familiar to most of us, but what about Demaris, Keturah, and Jochebed? What was their importance?

Many women in the Bible are known by something they said or did. Some we only know at "the wife of..." One of these unnamed women is Pilates' wife, who sent this message to him while he was sitting on the judge's seat: "Do not have anything to do with that innocent man." Reader, you will be surprised as to why she sent that message to her husband about Jesus!

Children's Ministries

Hygiene Kits

We spent the first few weeks of February collecting donated items to be used in hygiene kits to be sent to Haiti. The children of Faith First church school spent one of the Sundays in February putting together



hundreds of the kits, which each contained a hand towel, wash cloth, bar of soap, comb, toothbrush and nail clippers. The children in the Montessori

kindergarten classroom also collected supplies and helped to assemble over 100 kits. During the first week of March we packaged and delivered just over 600 hygiene kits to the Church World Services office in Ludlow, who are sending them on to Haiti.

There are still many items left that could be used in hygiene kits, but **we are in need of more hand towels, wide tooth combs and nail clippers** in order to make the kits complete. We would like to make another delivery of kits in May, so we will be collecting these items through the month of April.

A huge thank you goes out to everyone who donated the supplies for the hygiene kits. We received large donations from Ludlow and Holyoke High Schools which were added to the generous donations from First Church members and friends.



Senior YES (Grade 9-12)

Sunday, March 21, 6:30 p.m.

Food, Inc. film discussion; Planning & Preparations for Easter sunrise service

Sunday, March 28, 6:30 p.m.

Planning & Preparations for Easter sunrise service; Food related activity

Sunday, April 4; 6:30 a.m.

Easter Sunday sunrise service. No evening meeting.

Sunday, April 11, 6:30 p.m.

Regular meeting, youth lounge.

Sunday, April 18

No meeting. School vacation.

Sunday, April 25, 6:30 p.m.

Regular meeting, youth lounge.

Middle YES (Grade 6-8)

Monday, April 12, 6:30 p.m.

Regular meeting, youth lounge.

Sunday, April 25, 2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Nature walk in Forest Park.

Confirmation Class

March 28: "The Church: Worship"

April 11: "The Church: Service and Mission"

Questions on youth activities or Confirmation Class? Contact Associate Pastor Beth Boisvert (567-6287 or beth@firstchurchlongmeadow.org) for more information.

March 21 - April 17

Sunday	Mon.	Tue.	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Sat.
21 10 a.m. Worship *+ 11:15 a.m. Adult Ed 6:30 p.m. Sr YES!	22 10 a.m. Women's Benev. Board 7:00 pm. Deacons	23 1:00 p.m. Praying the Scriptures 4 p.m. Joyful Noyse 5:30 p.m. Lenten Interfaith Potluck 8:00 p.m. Council	24 8:45 a.m. Men's DCF 12:00 noon Bible Study 4:30 p.m. Praying the Scriptures 6:00 p.m. Bell Choir 7:30 p.m. Chancel	25 April 1 MAUNDY THURSDAY 8:45 a.m. Men's DCF 11 a.m. Bible Study 4:30 p.m. Praying the Scriptures 7:00 p.m. Worship	26 2 GOOD FRIDAY 12:00 noon - 3 p.m. Three Hour Prayer Vigil	27
28 PALM SUNDAY 10 a.m. Worship *+ 11:15 a.m. Confirmation Class 6:30 p.m. Senior YES!	29	30 1:00 p.m. Praying the Scriptures 4 p.m. Joyful Noyse	31 1:00 p.m. Praying the Scriptures 4 p.m. Joyful Noyse	8 8:45 a.m. Men's DCF 11:00 a.m. Bible Study 4:30 p.m. Praying the Scriptures 6:00 p.m. Bell Choir 7:30 p.m. Chancel	9 11:45 a.m. Women's Benevolent 7:30 p.m. Friday Evening Fellowship	10
4 EASTER 6:30 a.m. Worship 9:00 a.m. Worship** * 10 a.m. Pancake Breakfast 11 a.m. Worship ** *	5	6 7 p.m. Mission	7 1:00 p.m. Praying the Scriptures 4 p.m. Joyful Noyse	14 1:00 p.m. Praying the Scriptures 4 p.m. Joyful Noyse	13 6:30 p.m. Youth Ministries	12 6:30 p.m. Middle YES!
11 10 a.m. Worship *+ 11:15 a.m. Confirmation Class 6:30 p.m. Sr YES!	12 6:30 p.m. Middle YES!	13 6:30 p.m. Youth Ministries	14 1:00 p.m. Praying the Scriptures 4 p.m. Joyful Noyse	15 8:45 a.m. Men's DCF 11:00 a.m. Bible Study 4:30 p.m. Praying the Scriptures 6:00 p.m. Bell Choir 7:30 p.m. Chancel	16	17

* with Childcare for Infants & Toddlers + Faith First Church School 1-7 ** Communion Sunday - bring a canned or packaged food for Open Pantry

The First Church of Christ in Longmeadow
United Church of Christ
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Longmeadow, MA 01106

Contact Us

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Staff

Senior Pastor The Reverend Michael Bennett
Associate Pastor Beth Boisvert
Director of Music John Gerry-Karajanes
Director of Children's Ministries Nancy Yesu
Assistant Director of Children's Ministries Deb Garrity
Program Director Gay Wesson
Administrator Maura Stevens
Director of Communication Deb Garrity

Next deadline: April 1

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Easter Sunday Pancake Breakfast

When: Easter Sunday, April 4 at 10 a.m. in Bailey Hall

What: Pancakes, sausage, scrambled eggs, juice, milk, coffee and tea

Cost: \$3.00 per person (\$10 maximum per family)

Dress: Wear an Easter bonnet (or bring a canned/ packaged food for Open Pantry) and save \$1.00

Come: After the 9 a.m. or before the 11 a.m. service

RSVP: Return this form to the church office, email mstevens@firstchurchlongmeadow.org, or call 567-6287 to let us know you are coming!

Name: _____

Number of guests: ____

Lilies for Easter

Participate in the First church tradition of placing Easter lilies on the altar on Easter Sunday. Fill out this form to have your sentiments included in the bulletin at the services of worship on Easter Sunday, April 4.

A donation of \$15.00 is requested for each plant, and all forms must be in the church office by Friday, March 26. Make checks payable to First Church of Christ in Longmeadow. All lilies are delivered to the homebound and nursing home residents after the service.

Given by: _____

In loving memory of: _____
