

May 9, 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.”*

## Feel the Spirit!

There’s something in the air. Perhaps you’ve noticed? No, it’s not the pollen, although that blast of summery weather we had at the beginning of April does seem to have brought that out early. Maybe it’s the onset of spring, the joy of Easter, the anticipation of new beginnings, or a mixture of them all, but there’s some kind of energy bubbling up lately here at First Church! It’s wonderful to walk into the sanctuary on Sunday mornings and feel that electricity in the air. But can we keep it up? Well, we’re certainly going to try!

We’re heading quickly towards the end of our program year and the beginning of the quieter summer season, but before we get there, we’re going to have some great times of celebration and fellowship. First, I hope many of you can drive down or hop the “fan bus” to NYC to celebrate my ordination with me on Saturday, May 15. Then, on Wednesday, May 19, in light of our smashing success with the Lenten dinners and Easter pancake breakfast, we’re gathering for food and fellowship once again for a festive Italian dinner. This will be a great opportunity to connect with familiar faces, as well as reach out and get to know someone new. The following weekend is Long Meddowe days, a chance to share our energy and spirit with the whole community—and it coincides with Pentecost, the

most Spirit-filled (and my favorite) day in the church year!

When we tell the story of Pentecost—traditionally considered the birth of the Church—we tell the story of a group of people so filled with the Holy Spirit that bystanders thought they were drunk! While I’m not suggesting that we try for the same reaction, I have a feeling that as we continue our journeys together with this same wonderful energy and spirit, people will begin to wonder if there is something in the air at First Church. Of course there is: the Holy Spirit. And there’s plenty to go ‘round!



Peace,

*Beth Boisvert*

Beth Boisvert  
Associate Pastor

# The Minister's Advisory Panel

The Minister's Advisory Panel [MAP] has been created to help optimize the talents and energies of our senior minister for the betterment of our faith journey here at First Church of Christ Longmeadow. E-mail your thoughts and comments: [FirstChurchMAP@verizon.net](mailto:FirstChurchMAP@verizon.net)



## **Carole Mazzarino**

A faithful parishioner, Carole has served on several boards, including Children's Ministries. Longtime residents of the town, Carole and Gary have two daughters attending college, Seanna and Maria.

## **Nola Kulig**

Being a newer member of our Church, Nola brings a fresh POV to this journey. Her work as a consultant is sure to shed new pathways and options for our senior minister. Nola and Alan have a young daughter, Olivia.



## **Gerry Overstreet—Chair**

Many know Gerry's musical talents and they can be helpful in terms of timing, space and process with the actions of this panel. Gerry and Christine have two sons, Daniel and John



## **Don Murphy, Ed.D**

Educator, mentor, pillar of common sense, Dr. Murphy is a long-time member of our Church and continues to give to this faith community. Don and Mary have a grown son, Evan.



## **Bruce Keator**

The former Chair of the Trustees, Bruce brings his "can-do" energy to the panel. He also shares that energy with wife Bridget and their two kids, Lynsey and Ryan.

# Haiti Update

by Lucy Cassells, Haiti Committee

More than three months have elapsed since Haiti's capitol, Port Au Prince, was devastated by natural disaster. Despite the fact that we no longer see the images on our televisions each day, the earthquake that killed and injured hundreds of thousands and left almost a million homeless continues to wreak havoc on the country and its people. Despite the outpouring from around the globe, the distribution of aid has been difficult and the work of cleaning up and rebuilding is monumental. In the midst of all this, the Haitian people work to reclaim their lives.

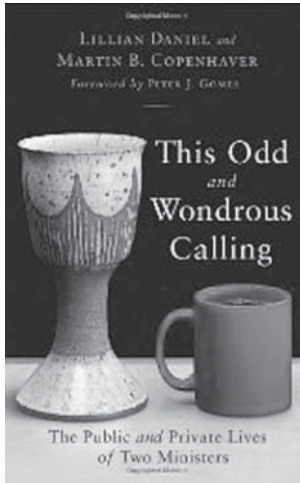
CONASPEH, the large grassroots protestant Haitian organization with whom we are partners in mission, continues to try and provide emergency relief to the many members of their affected congregations. At the same time, the executive board of CONASPEH has developed plans for the recovery and reconstruction phases of this effort. Mark Pohlman, Paul Gorman, and I were able to meet with CONASPEH President Patrick Villier and Felix Ortiz, the head of Latin and Caribbean ministries for Global Ministries, in Cleveland on April 17. Our goal in meeting with Patrick was primarily to show the love and support of this congregation.

In terms of updates over these past weeks, the rubble from the collapsed CONASPEH headquarters has been cleared. CONASPEH has since held a memorial service on the site which was attended by Geoffrey Black, the newly installed general minister of the UCC in the United States. This was a clear and strong demonstration of the UCC's solidarity with the people of CONASPEH and Haiti. We were able to participate in this ceremony in a small way by gathering to ring our own church bell while reading the names of each of the 17 who died and transmitting this by cell phone in real time. The land next door to the old CONASPEH headquarters had been purchased several months ago, with funds donated from this and other churches including CONAPSEH churches. That land has now been enclosed with the addition of a separating wall and gate entries, allowing the site to function as a compound. CONASPEH received a freight container of aid supplies from the churches of Puerto Rico and the container itself has been modified to function as office space and afford some storage of supplies. There are now multiple tents on the land and school was set to restart on April 19. Patrick told us that most of his time in recent weeks was spent fielding inquiries from parents who wanted their children to be able to return to school and he felt good about meeting this goal. CONASPEH hopes to be able to restart seminary training next month, and will work towards returning to nursing training possibly as early as the fall, though it will depend on the resources they have available.

CONASPEH is continuing to distribute aid as best they can. They use funds they receive from Global Ministries locally to purchase needed items and are working to purchase suitable vehicles for even more deliveries. They have given grants to families who lost children in the disaster. They have also entered a program sponsored by the Mennonites, called STAR, which specifically helps those recovering from major traumatic events. This organization helped victims after hurricane Katrina and the massive tsunami in the Far East several years ago. CONASPEH has upwards of 400 leaders who will benefit from such training in order to help their congregations deal with the aftermath of this tragedy and the ongoing challenges they face every day. These CONAPSEH leaders are, by and large, currently living with their congregants under large tents, where tents are available, that serve as nighttime shelters, daytime schools and churches and as community gathering places.

Looking further into the future, CONAPSEH is developing plans for building on the compound property in order to support its programs. The additional land space allows them to envision the construction of five single story buildings which will allow them to school almost twice as many children as before, provide some post secondary technical training, house a health care clinic, provide lodging to seminarians traveling to the city for classes, and potentially house visiting guests. The leaders of CONASPEH continue to find hope through their faith and strive to help the Haitian people not just survive, but experience lives with dignity and justice. Each time we talk or meet with them they express sincere and deep gratitude for the accompaniment of all the members of the First Church of Christ in Longmeadow and its friends. Please know that your prayers, your donations, and words spoken to others so they might learn more about Haiti and CONAPSEH make a real and durable difference in people's lives.

## Book Discussion with Pastor Mike



Read With Mike!

Coffee and Book Discussion

Wednesday, June 2

From 7:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. in the Buxton Room

Join Senior Pastor Mike Bennett for a fun and interesting evening discussing the new book, *This Odd and Wondrous Calling: The Public and Private Lives of Two Ministers* (Eerdmans, 2009). In this engaging collection of reflections on the ministry, two UCC pastors share their insights, humor, and passion.

Order your own copy of the book (available on Amazon for \$10.88) and read it before the session. Why not bring a friend?

## The Heavenly Bake Shop Needs Your Help!

Once again, Senior YES! will be running a bake sale during Long Meddowe days. This is generally the biggest fundraiser for the mission trip. But to make it a success, we need assistance from you! The youth are looking for donations of baked goods: cookies, brownies, bars, breads...if you can bake it they can sell it! They will handle all packaging, so no need to worry about that. Donations can be made or brought in ahead of time and frozen, or leave at the church on Friday, May 21. Please let Pastor Beth know if you plan on donating goods so she can help the youth plan how much to bake!

## What is Praying the Scriptures?

by John Gerry-Karajanes

Praying the Scriptures is a group activity to which all are welcome at any time. Groups spend one hour each week practicing two prayer disciplines that have been part of the Christian experience for many centuries. It doesn't look like prayer because it is a silent practice. A short passage of scripture is read four times with silence between for "hearing," "meditating," "praying," and "contemplating." Then anyone who wishes may share thoughts on the scripture in a safe, relaxed environment where you can say what you think about it without anyone correcting you. This enables us to consider many dimensions of the passage and is an enriching time. Finally, we spend 15 or 20 minutes in silent "Centering Prayer." This is a contemplative practice where we make it our intention to let go of all thoughts, images, memories, feelings, all the actions of the mind, and consent instead to the Divine Presence and Action within us. We conclude the hour with the leader slowly praying the Lord's Prayer.

Praying the Scriptures currently meets twice each week: Wednesdays at 1:00 p.m. and Thursdays at 4:30 p.m. Speak to Director of Music John Gerry-Karajanes if you would like to participate but cannot make either of these times. Please join us!

# News and Reviews from the Church Library

## Library News

Your “church librarians” continue to add new books to our library from time to time thanks to memorial monetary donations. We get ideas from our ministers, as well as books we have read, or books we are told about, or have reviewed. We also continue to get actual book donations that fit the library’s guidelines. Thank you all. You keep us going.

We are trying especially to update our sections of Justice and Mission and Life Challenges and Passages. One of our newest books is called “Setting Boundaries with Your Adult Children” by Allison Bottke. This book is full of ideas of how to continue to help your children, even as adults, to learn to take on responsibility for their own lives and for us to learn to let go. It reads very easily and many of us can relate to some of the issues brought up in the book. It can be found under the Life Challenges and Passages section.

Another book we have just received is “Closing the Food Gap” by Mark Winne. It addresses the type of food available in this country to the poor of the inner city, the multiplicity of fast food restaurants and the lack of fresh food and vegetables. Statistics on the relationships between health and the quality of one’s diet are interspersed throughout the book. There is discussion on the importance of institutions like the food stamp program, food banks as well as community and inner city gardens, inner city farmers markets and how all these can positively affect all of us. The mushrooming development of whole foods markets, the enthusiasm for organic and local produce is all interrelated. “Closing the Food Gap” fosters further development of these many programs and ideas.

We have introduced five other new books this month, too. Keep checking us out!

## Book Review

by Judy Ebeling

If you like to read mystery stories, you might like to check out a new book in our library, *The Bible Code*. It peaked this reviewer’s interest after seeing the subject covered on TV’s History Channel.

This book is the first full account of a possible scientific discovery that may change the world. It is written by Michael Drosnin, a skeptical secular reporter who spent five years investigating the subject, and he ultimately became part of the story.

He writes that for 3,000 years a code that foretold future events has remained hidden. In the past, many scientists and scholars have tried to uncover the code -- men like Sir Isaac Newton. Only in the present time have we had the tool, the computer, to unlock this code, and it may reveal our future. Is the code a warning of unprecedented danger? Or is it a series of possible futures whose ultimate outcome we can still decide?

Read all about it!

## Milestones

### Birth

Lucy Madeleine Parsons, daughter of Lori and Duncan Parsons, April 1, 2010

# Children's Ministries

## Peace Camp T-Shirt Design Contest

Peace Camp is being held during the week of August 9, at Trinity United Methodist Church, in partnership with First Church. They are holding a contest for the design of the T-shirt that will be given to all campers.

All of us are God's children, and because of that, each of us has a piece of God's heart in us. We can help live out God's dream in our world. Can you look at the world with your heart and see what God sees? God's dream is a world of peace—where everyone has what they need, no one is hungry, where there is no more pain or sorrow, and everyone is sharing and caring.

\* Close your eyes, and take a deep breath.

\* Imagine God's dream with your heart and mind.

\* Picture what the world would look like in God's dream. What do you see?

\* Now draw it on a piece of 8 1/2" x 11" size paper, using no more than 3 colors.

Create an image of what peace looks like to you. It doesn't need to be a drawing. It may be colors, images, or symbols. Just remember: only 3 colors! Submit your entry no later than June 1st to Director of Children's Ministries Nancy Yesu. If your image is selected, it will appear on all the PEACE CAMP T-shirts this summer! All entries will become part of a Peace Collage. Not to worry: No dream is ever wasted.

If you are interested in registering your child for Peace Camp, please contact Director of Children's Ministries Nancy Yesu (567-6287/nyesu@firstchurchlongmeadow.org). Further details on Peace Camp can be found via the link on the First Church homepage: [www.firstchurchlongmeadow.org](http://www.firstchurchlongmeadow.org).



### Senior YES (Grade 9-12)

**Sunday, May 9, 6:30 p.m.**

Regular meeting, youth lounge.

**Sunday, May 16, 6:30 p.m.**

Regular meeting, youth lounge.

**Saturday, May 22**

Heavenly Bake Shop at Long Meddowe Days.

**Sunday, May 23, 10:00 a.m.**

Senior Sunday. Graduating Seniors will be recognized during worship.

**Sunday, May 23, 6:30 p.m.**

Regular meeting, youth lounge.

**Sunday, June 6, Time TBD**

End of year picnic at Bliss Park.

### Middle YES (Grade 6-8)

**Monday, May 17, 6:30 p.m.**

Regular meeting, youth lounge.

**Sunday, June 6, Time TBD**

End of year picnic at church.

## Confirmation Class

**May 16:** "What Does it Mean for You to be a Christian?" Sharing our Statements of Faith

**May 26:** Confirmation Banquet, 6:00 p.m. followed by rehearsal in sanctuary

**June 6:** Confirmation Sunday

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

## May 9 - May 29

Sunday	Mon.	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Fri.	Saturday
<b>9</b> 10 a.m. Worship * 6:30 p.m. Senior YES!	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b> 6:30 p.m. Youth Ministries	<b>12</b> 1:00 p.m. Praying the Scriptures 4 p.m. Joyful Noyse	<b>13</b> 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	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b> Pastor Beth Ordination in NYC
<b>16</b> 10 a.m. Worship *+ 6:30 p.m. Senior YES!	<b>17</b> 6:30 p.m. Middle YES!	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b> 1:00 p.m. Praying the Scriptures 4 p.m. Joyful Noyse 6:00 p.m. "Italian Night" Pasta Dinner 7:00 p.m. Trustees	<b>20</b> 8:45 a.m. Men's DCF 12:00 a.m. Bible Study 4:30 p.m. Praying the Scriptures 6:00 p.m. Bell Choir 7:30 p.m. Chancel	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b> Senior YES! Heavenly Bake Shop at Long Meddowe Days
<b>23</b> 10 a.m. Worship*+ Senior Sunday Joyful Noyse Sings 11:15 a.m. Make-your-own-Sundae Church School Celebration 6:30 p.m. Senior YES!	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b> 7:00 pm. Deacons	<b>26</b> 1:00 p.m. Praying the Scriptures 6 p.m. Confirmation Banquet 7:30 p.m. Council	<b>27</b> 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	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>

\* 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*  
763 Longmeadow Street  
Longmeadow, MA 01106

### Contact Us

413-567-6287

[admin@firstchurchlongmeadow.org](mailto:admin@firstchurchlongmeadow.org)

[www.firstchurchlongmeadow.org](http://www.firstchurchlongmeadow.org)

### 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: May 13

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## Celebrate the First Church Spirit at "Italian Night"



**D**o you love pasta and good fellowship? Come on out to an "Italian Night" dinner on Wednesday, May 19 at 6:00 p.m. We had so much fun at the Lenten dinners and Easter pancake breakfast that we want to keep the good times rolling.

Come out and congratulate Pastor Beth on her ordination, catch up with old friends or make some new ones. We will enjoy pasta, salad, bread and dessert. Join us!