

September 5, 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.”

“...See All the People”

In one of my first sermons here at First Church—maybe even my very first!—I spoke about how the church is not a building, but the people who gather to practice their faith together. I used the familiar children’s rhyme, “Here’s the church, here’s the steeple, open the door, and see all the people” to illustrate the point. At no time in the church year do I see this more plainly than the time we’re entering now—the beginning of the “program” year.

Things around Longmeadow and First Church get a little quiet during the summer. Attendance is generally down as people go to second homes, vacations, or just take a little break from the normal routine. Choir doesn’t rehearse, many committees don’t meet, youth groups don’t gather, and there aren’t many organized activities. Even during the week the building is quieter with no Montessori students.

All of that changes after Labor Day. Starting on Picnic Sunday, First Church buzzes with activity once again—and it’s all due to *you*, the people. You are the music through singing in the choir or from the pews. You are the committees that help run everything. You are the conversations that happen around the tables of a church supper. You are the prayers and reflections shared in a Bible study. You are the students in our Sunday school classes. You are the volunteers who provide food to Loaves and Fishes.

I can’t wait for Picnic Sunday—it’s like a Homecoming celebration. First Church feels whole again as we gather back to this place and these people. We come back *to* church, and return to *being* the Church, energized for whatever this year will bring us. What a great feeling.



Welcome home, Church.

Beth Boisvert

Beth Boisvert
Associate Pastor

The Board of Deacons presents...

First Church Picnic

Sunday, September 12th
following the 10:00 a.m. Worship Service

Casual Dress

Picnic on the lawn under the tent

Menu

Hamburgers & Hotdogs

Salads & Chips

Soda & Juice

Desserts

All are Welcome!

No Preregistration or Charge!

Reconciling Family and Faith: An Introduction to “Open and Affirming”

by Anne Keyser

My friend Andrea is more than just a friend.” My sister’s words rendered me mute.

Was I speechless with joy? Thrilled that my sister Lise had found a soul mate and life partner?

No. I was horrified that my sister loved a woman. And I was convinced it was not true. Undoubtedly she was in a phase of rebellion or misunderstood a deep female friendship. Or she was retreating from men after a painful break from her college beau. Or she was reacting to our parents’ bad marriage, which was then at the brink of divorce.

Whatever it was, it was not the *real* Lise. Not *natural*. Not *Biblical*.

I thought all these things and more. And, unfortunately, I also spoke them. My family members did, too, hurting Lise terribly and creating wounds that may never fully heal.

It’s been almost 20 years. Lise and Andrea’s commitment has not wavered. I’m happy to say my beliefs have; in fact, they have radically changed. I have embraced Andrea, accepted Lise as a woman capable of loving a woman, and apologized to both. I have reconciled their love with my Christian faith and have found a church where my whole extended family is welcome.

Eight hundred UCC churches have chosen to make public statements about being welcoming to people of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions. They have declared themselves “Open and Affirming” (“ONA” for short). Should First Church of Longmeadow do the same, or is it enough that my sister and her partner are safe worshipping in our pews?

For the next year, First Church will explore this question through a program of study and sharing. In monthly sessions, guest speakers and scholars will help us better understand sexuality and sexual orientation, Old and New Testament statements about homosexuality, and the struggles of Christian families with members who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgendered.

The first session of First Church’s Open and Affirming (ONA) program will be held Sunday, October 3, immediately following worship. The program’s end-date is not yet determined; it will be important to allow time to examine all opinions and concerns about what it might mean for *our* church to become Open and Affirming.

Please join this important journey of exploration and growth.

Questions or comments? Contact any of the ONA program organizers: Mary Friedman, Beth Boisvert, Dave Pyers, Karen and Rachel Glick, Nancy and Julie Yesu, Carey Larsen, or Anne Keyser.

Come and Learn More!

ONA Session 1: Sunday, October 3, 11:15 a.m. in Bailey Hall. Join us for a light lunch and an introduction to the “Open and Affirming” program at First Church. Contact the church office by September 26 if you need child care during the program.

Buy a Brick for The Gray House!

The Gray House is a small neighborhood human service agency located on Sheldon Street in the North End of Springfield. In 1982, five Sisters of Saint Joseph purchased a 17 room Victorian house at public auction. In 1984, the Sisters opened the Gray House for services that provided for the civic, social and educational needs of the people in the neighborhood. The mandate of the original founders is that “the Gray House is a place where peace is lived and learned and hope is shared.”

This year The Gray House is celebrating 25 years of service to the community! To commemorate this milestone they are creating a beautiful garden and patio in the backyard, a place where adult learners can enjoy class outside and children in the after school program can share dinner. The garden will honor the founding Sisters of St. Joseph. The Gray House is one of the many local area causes supported by mission funds from First Church. The Gray House provides food, clothing, Christmas gifts, educational services for adults, after school tutoring, and summer camp.

Individuals are being invited to purchase a brick to be engraved and incorporated into this exciting project. Those who have visited The Gray House and seen the current backyard space will understand what a huge difference this project will make! If you are interested in helping, visit www.bricksrus.com/order/grayhouse or www.grayhouse.org. If you have questions, call Dena or Glenn at 734-6696.



How We Spent Our Summer Vacation

Here are just a few ways that members of First Church spent the summer. Several Faith First Sunday School students spent a week at Peace Camp, which was presented by Trinity United Methodist Church on Sumner Avenue in Springfield in partnership with First Church. Several First Church music lovers took a trip (or two) to Tanglewood to hear the Boston Symphony. An lastly, First Church itself spent the summer being spruced up and painted. We hope you all enjoyed the beautiful summer. We are looking forward to the beginning of a new program year starting September 12 with Picnic Sunday!



Youth to Report on Summer Mission Trip

Members of the Senior YES! Youth Group who travelled to Ashland, Virginia in July will be reporting on their trip on Sunday, September 12. The worship service, including the sermon will reflect on some of their experiences participating in Harvest of Hope where they gleaned corn. Come hear in their own words about their trip and what they learned.



Christmas is Coming!



Which means that the Women's Benevolent Society's annual Christmas on the Green Church Fair is coming, too! Believe it or not, the Church Fair committee is already looking forward to the big day: **December 4, 2010!** It's a great committee with lots of good ideas and energy, all working together to make this another big success. Even if you're not on the committee, we look forward to your donations, as well. Why not take advantage of the remaining days of warmer weather to put your talents to work in creating something for the fair?

Here are some ideas:

- **Gift Baskets with a Theme:** If you collect items that would make a good theme basket -- say for a dog or cat lover, a gardener, a teacher, a secretary, a hostess gift -- our committee will be happy to arrange them attractively in a basket. Be creative! We could also use some baskets in very good condition that would hold those items.
- **Sewing:** How about American Girl Doll Clothes, fashion items, table runners, aprons? Are you a quilter who could make placemats, wall hangings, crib blankets?
- **Knitting:** Children's sweaters are always a hit, as well as hats, mittens, scarves, Christmas stockings.
- **Woodworking:** Small toys or puzzles, games, step stools, treasure boxes, birdhouses, spice racks, small furniture -- all would be welcome.
- **Gifts from Afar:** Do you have something brought home from your travels that might make a nice addition to our Gifts from Afar Boutique? Or perhaps you have an exotic item hiding in your attic.
- **Silent Auction:** And while you're up in the attic keep your eyes open for that special something for the Silent Auction!
- **Jewelry:** Do you have jewelry of any kind -- pins, necklaces, bracelets, earrings -- which you no longer wear? Christmas jewelry is very popular.
- **Attic Treasures and Vintage Home Goods:** So often we seem to collect things which we no longer need or want, but feel they are too good to throw away. Think about Vintage Home Goods and Attic Treasures when you're sorting through those boxes that have a way of accumulating in the attic and cellar. Home goods in good condition would be very much appreciated.

- **Book Nook:** Do you have books piling up around your ears? When you've finished reading them, how about donating them to the Book Nook? (*No text books or encyclopedias, please*)
- **Cookies in a Can:** Empty Red and Green Folgers plastic coffee cans, both large and regular size will be appreciated.
- **Jams, Jellies and Relishes:** We need jelly jars (8 or 10 oz).
- **Yarn Remnants:** If you find your self with skeins of yarn left over after a project, we can often use that.
- **Visit Craft Fairs:** Get some ideas that you or someone you know might be able to replicate.

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AFTER LABOR DAY, items for **Attic Treasures**, **Gifts from Afar** and **Vintage Home Goods** may be left at the Church in Room 9. **Books** may be left in the Benevolent room closer to the date of the Fair, and **Jewelry** may be left in the church office in the designated box. When you have other items you have created, you may leave them in the church office, or call us and we'll store them for you until the fair.

If you haven't yet signed up to help with the fair, we'd love to have you join in the fun. Any questions? Just call Pedge Daniels (567-0309).

## The Women's Benevolent Society Announces its 207th Season

The Women's Benevolent Society was established in 1803 to promote the missionary activities as well as the social and spiritual life of the women of the First Church of Christ in Longmeadow. The society is thought to be the oldest continuously active women's group of its kind in the country. The Women's Benevolent Society invites all women of First Church, and their friends, to join us for a time of fellowship and interesting speakers. The meetings include a light lunch and time for conversation prior to the speaker's program.

This year we begin our season on Friday, October 1 at 11:30 a.m. with Holly Smith-Bove, President of the Springfield Museums. Holly will give an overview of all the exciting programs in art, history, and science that are taking place at the Quadrangle for the 2010-11 Season.

This fall special meetings will be scheduled to work on projects for the annual church fair, Christmas on the Green" which will be held on December 4.

Future meetings will include Lori Swanson, Education and Outreach Manager of the Dakin Pioneer Valley Humane Society in November, and February will feature Peter Santos, local Historian. Our annual World Day of Prayer observance will be in March, and Dr. Robert A. Barkman, Professor of Biology and Education at Springfield College, will be featured in April.

Mark your calendars and join us for fun, good food and fellowship. Please bring a salad or desert to share.

### Auditor Needed

The Women's Benevolent Society is in need of a volunteer to perform a yearly audit on their records. If you can help, please call Shirlee Fassell (567-6663).

# Children's Ministries

## Reminder! Faith First Starts 9/12

Faith First Church school, our center-based Christian education program, will begin on Sunday, September 12. Parents with children in grades K-6 should have received a registration form. Please note that parents are asked to volunteer for one 4-week rotation to help us staff our very successful program. If you have not already done so, please return the form, with your volunteer choices marked. If you need a new form, they are available on our website ([www.firstchurchlongmeadow.org](http://www.firstchurchlongmeadow.org)).

Children will once again be able to pick out a "Pew Pal" beanie baby to keep them company during the first part of the church service. Tables will be set up outside the church on the morning of September 12.

Children in grades 1-6 will begin their day in the worship service and be invited to Faith First during the early part of the service. Children in Pre-K/K have the choice of beginning in the Pre-K/K room on the 2nd floor, or staying for the first part of worship and being escorted upstairs by a parent when the older children leave for church school. As we have for the past few years, we will continue to collect an offering from the children before they leave for church school.

For more information on church school, or if you did not receive a registration form, please contact Director of Children's Ministries Nancy Yesu at 567-6287 or [nyesu@firstchurchlongmeadow.org](mailto:nyesu@firstchurchlongmeadow.org).



### Senior YES (Grade 9-12)

**Sunday, September 12, 10:00 a.m.**  
Mission Trip reporting during worship.

**Sunday, September 12, 6:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.**  
Kick-off picnic.

**NOTE THE NEW TIME FOR SR. YES!**  
**Sunday, September 19, 7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.**  
Regular meeting. Youth lounge.

**Sunday, September 26, 7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.**  
Regular meeting. Youth lounge.

### Middle YES (Grade 6-8)

**Monday, September 20, 6:30 p.m.**  
Kick-off meeting.

**Saturday, September 25, 10:00 a.m.**  
Apple picking. Details to follow.

**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.**

## Confirmation Classes

### Confirmation 1 (Grade 7)

**September 12:** Stay in worship for mission trip presentation.

**September 19:** Regular class, Room 1. Parent meeting after worship.

**September 26:** Regular class, Room 1.

### Confirmation 2 (Grade 8)

**September 19:** Parent meeting after worship.

**Please Note:** Students of BOTH Confirmation classes along with at least one parent or guardian are asked to come to an information meeting following worship on Sunday, September 19. During this meeting, Pastor Beth will talk about the curriculum and activities planned for each class, the expectations for the confirmands and their families, and answer any questions or concerns.

# New Online Calendar

This page of the COG has traditionally been reserved for a full page calendar. Due to the changing nature of meetings, etc. this printed calendar is quite often incorrect by the time it reaches your mailboxes. We have been feeling for some time that this makes for a waste of paper. The online calendar, available on our church website ([www.firstchurchlongmeadow.org](http://www.firstchurchlongmeadow.org)) is updated whenever a change takes place or a new event is planned, making it a much more accurate way to keep everyone informed about what is happening at First Church. The newest version of the online calendar is maintained through Google calendars (example shown below). This new calendar is very robust, allowing viewers to click on an event and find out the room number as well as a brief description of the event. Therefore, we are proposing eliminating the full page calendar in the COG. It will be replaced by a "Coming Attractions" list of upcoming events which fall outside the normal weekly/monthly meeting schedule (see example on page 8). Please contact the church office (567-6287) if you feel strongly about keeping the printed calendar in the COG. Otherwise, please visit our online calendar as often as you like to keep well informed about the great things that are taking place at First Church! (Note: the Sunday bulletin will still contain a printed version of the calendar that will be accurate as of the week the bulletin is printed.)

## September 2010

|                                                                                |                |                      |                                                                  |                                                                                  |                        |                                |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 29<br>10am - Worship<br>10:15am - Summer                                       | 30             | 31                   | 1<br>1pm - Praying the                                           | 2<br>8:45am - Men's<br>4:30pm - Praying                                          | 3                      | 4                              |
| 5<br>10am - Communion<br>10am - Worship                                        | 6<br>Labor Day | 7<br>7pm - Board of  | 8<br>1pm - Praying the                                           | 9<br>8:45am - Men's<br>4:30pm - Praying<br>7:30pm - Chancel                      | 10                     | 11<br>Patriot Day<br>5pm - 2nd |
| 12<br>10am - Worship<br>10:15am - Faith<br>11:15am - All-<br>6:30pm - Kick-off | 13             | 14                   | 15<br>1pm - Praying the<br>4pm - Joyful Novse<br>7pm - Board of  | 16<br>8:45am - Men's<br>4:30pm - Praying<br>7:30pm - Chancel                     | 17                     | 18                             |
| 19<br>10am - Worship<br>10:15am - Faith<br>11:15am - New<br>7pm - Meetina @    | 20             | 21                   | 22<br>1pm - Praying the<br>4pm - Joyful Novse<br>7:30pm - Church | 23<br>8:45am - Men's<br>4:30pm - Praying<br>7:30pm - Chancel                     | 24                     | 25<br>9am - Pathways           |
| 26<br>10am - Worship<br>10:15am - Faith<br>7pm - Meetina @                     | 27             | 28<br>7pm - Board of | 29<br>1pm - Praying the<br>4pm - Jovful Novse                    | 30<br>8:45am - Men's<br>4:30pm - Praying<br>6pm - Bell Choir<br>7:30pm - Chancel | 1<br>11:45am - Women's | 2<br>6pm - Guess Who's         |

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

www.firstchurchlongmeadow.org

## Staff

*Senior Pastor* The Reverend Michael S. Bennett

*Associate Pastor* The Reverend Elizabeth A. C. 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: September 9

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## Coming Attractions

**Thursday, September 9**

Chancel Choir Rehearsals start (7:30 p.m.)

**Sunday, September 12**

Faith First Church School Starts

All-Church Picnic after worship

**Wednesday, September 15**

Joyful Noyse Rehearsals start (4:00 p.m.)

**Thursday, September 30**

Bell Choir Rehearsals start (6:00 p.m.)

**Friday, October 1**

Women's Benevolent Kick-off mtg (11:45 a.m.)

**Saturday, October 2**

Guess Who's Coming to Dinner (6:00 p.m.)

**Sunday, October 3**

Open & Affirming Info. Mtg & Lunch (11:15 a.m.)

## Farmer's Market

**A "First" at First Church**

**Sunday, September 12 during the Picnic**



Do you grow flowers or vegetables? Do you make preserves, pesto, spaghetti sauce or dried floral arrangements?

First Church

member Sally Malkasian

is organizing a table where you can showcase your produce and/or talents by contributing an item to be sold during the picnic.

The possibilities are endless! To name a few more: apple pie, cherry cobbler, cranberry sauce, a basket of fresh apples, a bunch of fresh zinnias.

Proceeds will benefit the Church Directory Project.

Please call Sally (567-5853) with questions or to sign up to help us celebrate the bounty of the season.