

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.”

“We, the First Church of Christ in Longmeadow, strive to live out our stated mission to seek love and justice in our world. We welcome persons of every age, race, ethnicity, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, mental, physical, emotional, economic and social status, and circumstance of life into the full participation and ministry of our church.”



Thank You, Eunice...I Mean, Dorothy!

I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that lived first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, lives in you. —Timothy 1.5

In a few weeks, our whole family will be travelling to California to celebrate my Mom’s 90th birthday. It will be a great celebration as all three siblings and families gather at my brother’s house in the Bay Area. In addition to celebrating Mom’s birthday, we’ll be meeting her new great-granddaughter, baby Alice, for the first time. Four generations together!

My Mom is a remarkable person. As she turns the corner to 90, she has amazing reserves of energy, she exhibits a distinctive zest for living, and she is a highly competitive duplicate bridge player. (Silver Life Master, for those of you who know about such things.) She grew up on a farm in North Dakota, went to college in the nearby town, taught school for a short time, met my father when they both worked for Boeing during WWII, and raised a family in Seattle while supporting my Dad’s demanding career as a golf professional. Her life has had many interesting chapters.

One constant, however, has been her faith. She grew up in the Free Methodist tradition (her Uncle Elmer McKay was a well-known Free Methodist

Evangelist!), attended Seattle First Methodist Church as a young woman, and later brought up her children at my home church, Magnolia United Church of Christ (Congregational). I started out going to church with my Mom as a little boy and we still sit together in the same pews when I am home to visit. Like most sons, I love my Mom and am grateful to her for many things. But I am especially thankful to have had my mother as a mentor and model in the Christian faith.

In the New Testament, Paul reminds Timothy that he has received his faith through his mother, Eunice, and grandmother, Lois. In those times, just like today, the influence of parents is critical in the transmission of faith between generations. And, let’s be honest, it has often been *mothers* who have championed the Christian cause in the midst of family life.

Paul reminded Timothy to be thankful for his mother and her role in his faith development. I am certainly thankful for mine!

See you in church!

See you in church!

Michael S. Bennett
Senior Pastor



Coming Attractions

Saturday, January 28
Italian Night Fundraiser
6:00 p.m.

Friday, February 3
Women's Benevolent Luncheon
11:45 a.m.
(right)

Sunday, February 5
Budget Forum
11:15 a.m.
(see below)

Saturday, February 11
Acolyte Orientation
10:00 a.m.
YES! Babysitting Fundraiser
5:00 p.m.
(see page 4)

Wednesday, February 22
Ash Wednesday Worship Services
7:00 a.m. & 7:00 p.m.

**Please see the complete calendar of
events on our website:
www.firstchurchlongmeadow.org**

Acolytes Wanted!

We're bringing back the acolytes! Any children in grades 3-8 who would like to be an acolyte (or just learn more about what it involves) are invited to an acolyte orientation at 10:00 a.m. in the Sanctuary on Saturday, February 11. If you cannot attend but are interested, please contact Pastor Beth.

Women's' Benevolent Luncheon

Shirlee Fassell to Share Couture Art Quilts

All women of First Church and guests are invited to attend the February 3, 2012, meeting of the Women's Benevolent Society. There will be a short business meeting at 11:45 a.m., followed by the luncheon and program. Our speaker, Shirlee Fassell, a long time member of First Church, will be sharing her couture art quilts. Shirlee's grandmother was a seamstress and fostered in her a lifelong love of embroidery. When Shirlee retired in 1998, she concentrated on studying embroidery with many textile artists. In 2007, her embroidered crazy quilt was a finalist in the \$100,000 Quilt Challenge. In that same year she started studying couture embroidery at the Ecole Lesage in Paris, France, learning tambour hook techniques. Shirlee has been using these techniques as well as needle embroidery to create her own style of couture art quilts.

Don't forget to mark February 3, 2012, on your calendar and plan to join us for fun, food, and fellowship. Please bring a salad or dessert to share or make a \$5.00 contribution.

Trustees Corner

by Denine Northrup, Chair, Board of Trustees

Happy New Year! The New Year for Trustees means proposing a budget to be voted upon during our Annual Meeting in February. We base our budget on pledging and other revenue sources. As you may be aware our pledging has declined each year over the past five years. These reductions have made it more and more difficult to support all that First Church has to offer. In recent weeks some very generous donors increased their giving or gave gifts amounting to approximately \$28,000, this made up over half of our budget shortfall. Thank you so much for those who were able to give a bit more!

Unfortunately we are still approximately \$20,000 behind last year. The remaining budget challenges are very difficult and will affect personnel if we are to have a balanced budget. We are budgeting accordingly though prayerful that we will have giving that will allow for full support for all our staff. To enhance communication and transparency pertaining to the budget prior to the annual meeting we will be holding a Budget Forum on February 5th at 11:15 in the Buxton Room. All are welcome to come and learn more about the budget and the implications for First Church and have any questions answered.

Ash Wednesday Services February 22

Pastor Beth will once again lead two Ash Wednesday worship services: one at 7:00 a.m., and one at 7:00 p.m. The morning service is a little shorter, and in a contemplative style, while the evening service is more traditional. At both services, those in attendance may choose to receive ashes on their foreheads or the back of their hands, or receive a blessing without ashes. Both services are a meaningful and reflective way to begin the season of Lent.

Haiti Matters

On January 4 a group from First Church traveled to Haiti to see the progress that has been made by our Haitian partners at CONASPEH, the National Council of Spiritual Churches of Haiti, in Port-au-Prince. The group on this 10-day trip consisted of (pictured below), 1. Dr. Mark Pohlman, 2. Mary Friedman, 3. Dan and 4. Hannah Glick, 5. American International College nursing professors Ayesha Ali, and Beth George, senior A.I.C. nursing students Karen Morphey and Agatha Joseph (a Haitian-American who speaks Creole). Mary's nursing classmate from North Carolina, Olivia Griffin, also joined the group. The group brought the nursing kits donated by members of First Church and nursing and medical texts in French. There were many signs of hope: frameworks of the two huge new classroom buildings, one to house all the primary children and the other the secondary students, nursing program, seminary and labs. Solar panels are planned for the roofs. Twelve new latrines are in process. A new road will provide access from a rear gate on the property. They are hoping to be connected to the electrical transformer by the state within a few weeks. Goals for the future include an expanded library and clinic space. Classes were presented to the Haitian nursing students in handwashing, eye health and safety, intestinal parasites, hip and elbow dislocation, assessment of the chest and lungs, and post-traumatic stress. Throughout these classes there was an emphasis on the nursing process of Assessment, Diagnosis, Planning, Implementation, and Evaluation. The visitors met with scholarship students supported by our church and had many meetings with administrators to compare curricula, improve communication and internet access, and share ideas. They were greatly encouraged by all the efforts and signs of hope they saw at CONASPEH during their stay. More information and photos of this trip can be found on the Mission page of the church website (www.firstchurchlongmeadow.org).



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The First Church of Christ in Longmeadow
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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Staff

Senior Pastor The Reverend Michael Bennett
Associate Pastor The Reverend Elizabeth A.C. Boisvert
Director of Music John Gerry-Karajanes
Director of Children's Ministries Nancy Yesu
Children's Ministries Assistant: Karen Glick
Program Director Gay Wesson
Administrator Maura Stevens
Director of Communication Deb Garrity

YES meetings (Grade 9-12)

Sunday, February 5, 12, 26 7:00 p.m.
Regular meetings, youth lounge.

Saturday, February 11, 5 - 9:00 p.m.
Babysitting fundraising event.

Sunday, February 19
No YES! School vacation.

YUP Meetings (Grade 6-8)

Sunday, February 5, 12, 26 4:30 p.m.
Regular meetings, youth lounge.

Sunday, February 19
No Yup! School vacation.

Babysitting Fundraiser Event

On Saturday, February 11, in lieu of Second Saturday, YES will be offering a night of childcare at the church. It's the Saturday before Valentine's Day, so the hope is that parents can go out and enjoy themselves for a few hours. Youth will lead games and activities, and there will be a couple of adults present as well to assist in supervising. The event will run from 5:00 - 9:00 p.m., and the cost is \$25 per family (proceeds will go toward the youth mission trip to Ecuador). Pizza will be served. Children must be over 3 and potty-trained. Contact Pastor Beth (567-6287/beth@firstchurchlongmeadow.org) with any questions.

The Toilets Are Coming!

After being sidelined by the October snowstorm, "Operation Toilet" will attempt to return this spring. Look for sign up forms in a future COG; those who previously signed up for "Potty Protection Insurance" will remain covered.

34 members and friends of First Church recently attended a Springfield Armor basketball game. 3 members of YES sang the National Anthem, and Katie Glasgow won the raffle. A good time was had by all!

