

The Meeting House Times

The Congregational Church of Salisbury, United Church of Christ
April, 2008

Confirmation Class Retreat - April 18th - 20th

At 5:30 on Friday, April 18th, eleven boys and girls will join Dick Taber and Jen Kronholm at the Silver Lake Conference Center. This is the culminating experience of a process which began with a series of classes on comparative religions led by Joanne Taber.



The Retreat will focus on the Holy Spirit, worship and Christian behavior. The young people will then decide whether or not they choose to be confirmed, join the congregation and become adults in the eyes of the church.

We are grateful for the periodic involvement of those who are serving as sponsors and to the Board of Deacons who will be hosting a dinner in honor of the class members on April 26th. Confirmation will take place during the morning service on Sunday, May 4th.

Join Us for Supper

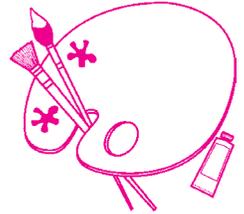
There will be a potluck supper on Friday, April 18th at 5:30 for anyone and everyone who would like a casual evening out. Bring a large main dish or salad (either homemade or take-out) to share. Dessert and beverage will be provided.



You don't even have to RSVP, but you can if you want to: Barbara Collins (435-0051) or Sarah Rydingsword (435-9479). Bad weather? Need a ride? Give us a call.

Talents Displayed by our Joyful Noyses

Both Charlie and Karin Noyes are well-known for their artistic talent, and they will soon have their artwork on display at Noble Horizons. Everyone is welcome to the opening reception on Friday evening, April 4th, from 5:00 - 7:00. The exhibit will remain on display weekends from 11:00 to 4:00 until May 18th. It will be located in the Taconic Learning Center room in the Wagner wing - through the main entrance and down the corridor past the Country Store.



Annual Meeting - Part II

Sunday, April 27th - 11:15

Please attend, listen, comment, and vote.



• "Life is like an onion: You peel it off one layer at a time, and sometimes you weep."

- Carl Sandburg

Annual Reports from Committee chairpersons are due in the church office by Sunday, April 6th, in time to be mailed out before the annual meeting.



Taber Talk

There is no doubt in my mind that churches are being challenged. The nature of the challenge before us is starkly evident in the results of a recent survey conducted by the Pew Forum on Religion and published in The Hartford Courant on Feb. 26th headlined: "Changing Face of Religion:

Protestants Retain Slim Majority -
Unaffiliated Group Growing."

The study finds that in Connecticut and Rhode Island 10% of the population reported being affiliated with Evangelical Protestant Churches and 13% reported being affiliated with mainline churches. This compares nationally with 26% Evangelical and 18% mainline churches. 23% of CT and RI participants report no religious affiliation, while 43% are Catholic.

These figures confirm my sense of what is happening in the local community, but nonetheless, it is somewhat startling to see it black and white. There are at least as many unaffiliated people in our state as there are Protestants! My guess is that the number of unaffiliated is growing; more and more of the children who do come to our church school tell us that their peers do not attend any church.

As we have said before, the challenge for parents is increasing as so many more activities are becoming available for children to do on Sunday mornings. While we are concerned about the decline in participation in our church school, parents who are visiting here report that other churches they visited have no activities for children at all. We are grateful for the excellent work done by Barbara Collins, Joanne Taber, Judy Stewart, the Tierneys and others.

It is my conviction that we need to take these developments very seriously because nothing less than the future of the "liberal" church is at stake. Will there be a place in Salisbury 20 years from now:

- where doubt and inquiry are encouraged?
- where the gifts of women in ministry are celebrated?
- where service to the community is encouraged after the example of Christ?
- where children learn to aspire to love people and use things and not vice versa?
- where one can embrace the gospel and the theory of evolution?
- where "whoever you are and wherever you are on life's journey, you are welcome here?"

It is my purpose to promote dialogue about the challenge which lies before us. God knows I don't have all the an-

swers. However, I cannot resist making two points:

1. It is evident that the "mission frontier is at our doorstep." What more could we, should we be doing to invite our friends and neighbors to take part in the life of this congregation?

2. Having a new Associate Minister - no matter how inspiring a preacher or dynamic a leader nor compassionate a pastor - will not be able to solve all the problems. Everybody needs to be involved in building up the body of Christ in this place. And thanks be to God, we have a solid foundation!!

May the joy of the Easter season fill your heart!

Peace, Dick

Have You Made Plans?

Easter is a time to deal with the certainty of death and the hope of resurrection. Those who have not taken the time to fill out the form "Planning a Funeral or Memorial Service" are encouraged to pick one up on the marble top table on the stage, fill it out and return it to the church office.

It is a loving thing to do; you will be helping your loved ones in the process of planning your service. Instead of sitting together and wondering what Mom or Dad would have wanted, they will know your preferences. If you have attended a service that was planned ahead of time, you will know how authentic and meaningful such a service can be.

And imagine how good you will feel when you have done it!

Singing in Church

"Sing lustily and with good courage. Beware of singing as if you were half dead or half asleep; but lift up your voice with strength. Be no more afraid of your voice now, nor more ashamed of its being heard, than when you sang the songs of Satan. Sing modestly. Do not bawl, so as to be heard above or distinct from the rest of the congregation, that you may not destroy the harmony; but strive to unite your voices together, so as to make one clear melodious sound."

The Associate Pastor Search Committee continues its work. We are in the final stages of assembling a profile of our church to present to prospective candidates. It is an exhaustive (and fairly exhausting) process, and many of you have helped by your thoughtful responses to our written surveys and in the survey gatherings. Thank you, responders!



The Board of Trustees, Dick Taber, Treasurer John Arnold, and the Pastoral Advisory Committee are all helping to complete the 22 pages of questions and discussion points, and we very much appreciate what they are doing. This is truly a group effort.

After we complete and submit the profile we will receive from the UCC Connecticut Conference resumes of people who have expressed an interest in the position we're offering. And then the next stage will commence - sifting through that material to determine which candidates we want to find out more about.

We will continue to keep the congregation abreast of where we are in our work. We are counting on your prayers and good wishes!

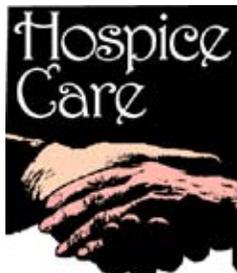
For the Search Committee, Lee Collins

Betsy Beck, Lee Collins, Jane Elwood,
John Estabrook, Mike Fitting, Kathy Mera,
David Rich, Sarah Rydingsword, Sara Wardell



Registration Now Open for Hospice Volunteer Training

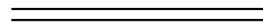
Hospice Volunteers of Northwest Connecticut will hold a Hospice Volunteer Training program April 3rd to May 8th. The classes will meet six Thursdays from 1:30 - 4:30 in the Good Neighbors building, 1 Low Road in Sharon.



Volunteers are essential to hospice care. They learn to provide support to terminally ill patients and their families in homes, skilled nursing facilities, and hospitals. Volunteers provide help with meals and transportation, pa-

tient and family support, and companionship. Hospice Volunteers are asked to give 2-3 hours a week when working with a family.

Registration is required. For more information and to register, please call (860) 364-1796



Two old friends met one day after many years apart. One man asked, "How has everything been going with you?"

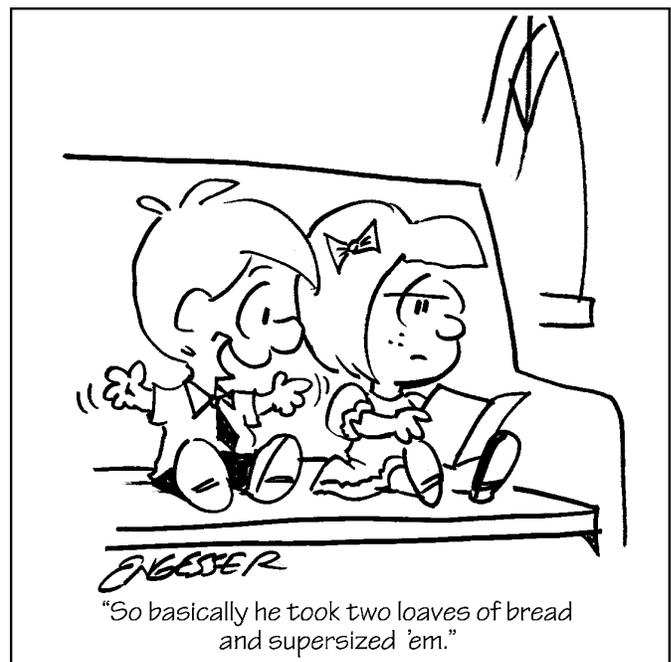
"Well, I used to be as rich as Bill Gates," replied the second man.

"Wow! How did you manage that?" asked his stunned friend.

"One day I opened the Bible at random, closed my eyes and dropped my finger on a word. The word was 'oil.' So I invested in oil, and boy, did the oil wells gush! Then another day I dropped my finger on a different word in the Bible, and it was 'gold.' So I invested in gold, and those mines really produced!"

"Amazing! But you said you 'used to be as rich as Bill Gates.'"

"Yeah, I lost it all. One day I closed my eyes and pointed at a page. When I opened my eyes, my finger rested on the words 'Chapter Eleven.'"





in April

| | |
|------|---|
| 1st | Carly Craig, Sandra Haiko, Ellie Stewart, Maggie Crain |
| 2nd | Linda Estabrook, Shirley Rogers |
| 4th | Susan Ritchie |
| 5th | Trudi Fox |
| 9th | Rachel Reed, Susan Ritchie |
| 11th | Ted Sands |
| 12th | Barbara Jacquette |
| 13th | Audrey Eriksson |
| 14th | Eliza Bell, Mike Fitting, Robert Rout |
| 15th | Noah Rashkoff, David Rich |
| 16th | Anthony O'Niel |
| 17th | Bobbie Olsen |
| 19th | Betsy Beck |
| 21st | Leslie Herold, Judy Stewart |
| 22nd | Jeffrey Beck, Harriet Lipton |
| 23rd | Mike Beck |
| 25th | Hildegard Jones, Holly Tierney |
| 26th | Craig Allen |
| 27th | Hannah Stewart |
| 30th | Barbara Collins, Rebecca Palmer |

Special dates

- Administrative Professionals Day - Wednesday
April 23rd

Church Library Catalog Available Online

Maybe you've admired the growing church library in the Parish Hall but just don't have time during coffee hour to peruse the titles. Now you can access the library catalog online at:

<http://www.librarything.com/catalog/SalisburyUCC>.

As new titles are added to our library they are catalogued and listed at this library-cataloging source. Take a look; you might find something you want to read.

Our April Calendar

Wednesday, the 2nd: Prayer Group - 10:15

Friday, the 4th: Men's Bible Breakfast - 7:15
Bible Study - 1:00

Sunday, the 6th: Annual Reports due
Worship with Communion
and Church School - 10:00
Board of Trustees - 11:15
Youth Fellowship - 5:00

Friday, the 11th: Men's Bible Breakfast - 7:15
Bible Study - 1:00

Sunday, the 13th:
Worship and Church School - 10:00
Board of Christian Action - 11:15

Wednesday, the 16th: Prayer Group - 10:15

Friday, the 18th: Men's Bible Breakfast - 7:15
Bible Study - 1:00
Confirmation Class retreat
Potluck supper - 5:30

Sunday, the 20th:
Worship and Church School - 10:00

Wednesday, the 23rd: Prayer Group - 10:15

Friday, the 25th: Men's Bible Breakfast - 7:15
Bible Study - 1:00

Saturday, the 26th: Confirmands dinner - 6:00

Sunday, the 27th:
Worship and Church School - 10:00
Annual Meeting, Part II - 11:15
Youth Fellowship - 5:00

Monday, the 28th: Board of Deacons - 5:30

Wednesday, the 30th: Prayer Group - 10:15

