

The Meeting House Times



The Congregational Church of Salisbury, United Church of Christ

February 2010



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Pamela Wyeth, Editor

A Glimpse into Who We Are

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Orrin Rydingsword on Silver Lake

Orrin Rydingsword was one happy camper! He attended one of the many week-long conferences at our UCC Silver Lake Conference Center in Sharon last summer, between his third and fourth grade years at Salisbury Central School. All I had to do was ask, "How did you like Silver Lake last summer, Orrin?"

"I really liked it. It was a lot of fun. The name of my conference was All God's Critters, and it was about us humans and all the other animals on earth. I really, really liked it. I think there were about 30 kids in my conference. The name of my best friend there was Elliott; he was a little older than me. We got to do all kinds of things. One morning I got up early and went swimming. One of the counselors went with us. The water was warmer than I thought it would be. We could pick jobs that needed to be done, and I liked being a waiter in the dining room. We set the tables and served the food. That

was fun. The food was good. There were three chapels in the woods where we had services. There were lots of other kids there at the same time as our conference. I really, really liked it, and we've already looked at their conferences for this summer. I definitely want to go back again!"

"What would you say, Orrin, to somebody who said they were going to Silver Lake for the first time?"

"I think you will definitely have a good time! I really did! The first night might be a little rough sleeping on a different bed, but they let you bring one stuffed animal."

"Was the bed comfortable?"

"Way better than my bed at home. I really liked it!"

All in all, a five-star thumbs-up rating from this Silver Lake camper. Summer conferences are for students in grades four through high school (stuffed animals optional). There are applications available in the parish hall corridor and on the Pastor's Resource table. Each conference has a limited number of campers and most fill up quickly. All the information is on their web site at: <http://silverlake.ctucc.org/>



Lee Collins



SOUPER Bowl Sunday

The church school is sponsoring a special drive for OWL's kitchen on Super Bowl Sunday, February 7th. Everyone is requested to bring a can of soup to church on that day. You will also have a chance to donate any coins you might be carrying to support this effort.

Lenten Study



Although this idea will not come to many of you as particularly novel or news-breaking, the American church is finding itself shrinking for one reason or another. Most would agree that among those reasons would be spiritual bank-

ruptcy, unresolved internal conflict, cultural irrelevancy, financial downturns, if not many others. What churches across the spectrum have also discovered is that simply attempting to respond to these concerns, one at a time, has not necessarily resolved or reversed the trend in their own congregations. Many are left with a sense of inevitable decline and wondering what to do to stop it.

It would be foolish to suppose that one answer, one approach, or one book can justifiably respond to this nationwide plight. Many theologians, ministers and sociologists have added their two cents to this dilemma, some, admittedly, with significant response and even a following. Unfortunately, however, once a life-giving answer is discovered and introduced, it seems that so often it is thrust upon us with the label of “*panacea*” and reduced to a formula; once that happens, its half-life of effectiveness has begun, and it won't be too long before it becomes obsolete.

This year's Lenten study will be focused on the book *Christianity for the Rest of Us* by Diana Butler-Bass. It is an exploration into how some churches across America have defied current trends and found ways to thrive as expressions of the Christian faith in their communities, despite this national downsizing of mainline Christian congregations. The book is about the findings of her research and not her own theories of success-building. Her discovery suggests that the most effective congregations in the American mainstream are thriving because they have made a concerted effort to focus the life of their churches on the *practices* of the faith, not the *theology* of it.

While it is arguably true that our beliefs form and inform our actions, this author suggests that the churches defying the odds are ones that have approached that idiom conversely, and allowed their beliefs to be formed and molded by their actions and practices of the faith those practices that were clearly lived out by Christ and taught to his disciples, and those practiced by the 1st Century church.

Since I'm hoping you'll join us in our study — either in class, or remotely online by way of our church blog — I won't list those practices here. But they will be the center of our discussions together during this Lenten time. Churches across the country have found this book not only enlightening and provoking, but eliciting the practical application of their faith in everyday life, both as individuals and especially as faith communities.

From **Tuesday, February 16th, through March 30th, the class will be offered twice on Tuesdays at 9:30 a.m. and 7:00 p.m.** The book must be purchased or obtained ahead of time (we'll be making a bulk purchase on Feb. 1), and I'm encouraging all who want to take the study to read as much of it as they are able to prior to the first class. A sign-up sheet is on the Pastor's Resource table in the Parish Hall, and the cost for the book is only \$10, thanks to a discount rate we were able to obtain. If you want to join the study but cost is an issue, simply let me know.

When God said through the prophet Jeremiah to the nation of Israel, “*I know the plans I have for you, plans for a future and a hope...*” He says it to the Church, as well. And we can learn to be beneficiaries of that promise, as He continues, if we “*...seek Him and search for Him with all of our hearts.*” Let's apply that diligence, that determination to have all from God that He wants to give us, this year and this Lenten season.

Pastor Steve

Email: rev.steve@salisburycongregational.org
Blog: <http://salisburycongregational.wordpress.com>

EARTHQUAKE VICTIMS NEED YOUR HELP!

It has been suggested by church members that **Church World Service** is a worthy and efficient conduit for immediate aid to Haiti. It's supported by the UCC as an established ecumenical effort, and it's easy to donate on their web site (<http://www.churchworldservice.org/site/PageServer>).

This from their site:

"Church World Service works with partners to eradicate hunger and poverty and to promote peace and justice around the world.

Recognized as one of America's Most Efficient Charities, Church World Service has earned an A rating from the American Institute of Philanthropy and was named one of the Top 100 Highly Rated Charities by GiveSpot.com."

Give generously.

Susie Belcher & Peggy Heck, Board of Christian Action

Church School



Church School News

Did you learn this hymn when you were a child?

"Tell me the stories of Jesus I love to hear; Things I would ask him to tell me if He were here."

In February, the church school will begin a multi-age study of

the life and times of Jesus. Special art projects, music, and drama will help the children learn the stories which are so important to our faith. We would love to have extra helpers and "new" faces during this unit. If you would like to volunteer to help in one or more class periods, please contact Barbara Collins at barb@leecollins.com or (860)435-0051.

"Scenes by the wayside, tales of the sea, Stories of Jesus, tell them to me."

Pot Luck Supper



There will be a potluck supper on **Friday, February 26th 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. Bread, dessert and beverage will be provided. Bring a friend. Bring a family. Cartoons for the kids.

There is no need to RSVP. Do you need a ride? Wondering about a cancellation due to winter weather? Give one of us a call: Barbara Collins (860-435-0051) or Sarah Rydingsword (860-435-9479).

Repent – a worthy word for Lent

What pops into your mind when you hear the word "repent"? Is it a dark and somber word for you, perhaps reminding you of John the Baptist's shouting for people to repent and be baptized?

What does the word "repent" mean anyway? Literally, it means to stop the way one is going, turn around, and then walk in the opposite direction. It refers to turning away from sin and shallow living and to begin walking through life following God's direction.

Lent, which begins on Ash Wednesday, February 17th, is an opportunity to check our spiritual condition, to repent (if needed) and to walk more faithfully with our Lord.

If we take Lent seriously, we can begin to discover a new vision for life – a more joyous way to live. Lent can enable us to discover the immeasurable benefits of living the Christian life passionately.



Thank you!



It has been two months since the Every Member Canvas began with a moving service about giving and being thankful for our many blessings here in church and in our everyday lives. The congregation had received their letters about how much money was needed for 2010, ways of giving, and a pledge card to put in the offering basket. This was a small ceremony that encouraged everyone to participate in whatever way they could.

We pray, praise, rejoice and worship as a congregation. Giving as a congregation makes us all that more vital and alive. We are, indeed, a strong, committed and generous church family. I know this now more than ever, as we have *almost* reached our goal of raising \$180,000 in less than two months.

It is amazing how kind and generous you all have been, and how quickly you have responded to the needs of our church and the work we do. In this time of economic uncertainty, you have demonstrated what a caring congregation we are, not just by how much money you have pledged, but the spirit in which you have done so.

It is never easy asking for money. You have all made my job a happy one and an enjoyable one.

Thank you ALL for being the kind, generous, and loving congregation that you are.

A small reminder that if you have not yet pledged, it is not too late. We cannot reach our goal without you.

Carol Magowan, Director, Every Member Canvass

How Can I Say "I love you"?

Jesus said we are to love one another even as he loved us. His intention was not just for one day a year, but for every day. For those who might be struggling with this thought here are a dozen ways of saying "I love you!":



- Cambodian: Bon sro lanh oon
- Chinese: Wo ai ni
- French: Je t'aime
- German: Ich liebe dich
- Greek: S'agapo
- Hebrew: Ani ohev otahk
- Hungarian: Szretlek
- Italian: Ti voglio bene
- Norwegian: Jeg elsker Dem
- Polish: Kochem cie
- Russian: Ya vas luibliu
- Spanish: Te quiero

Are any of these too difficult to pronounce? Then just live the meaning of it!

Deadline for the March Newsletter: Saturday, February 20th



**Weekend of
May 15 - 16, 2010**

**For a CELEBRATION of
AL SLY and
his forty years
with us!**



In Nigeria, the name of God is "Father of Laughter"

"Mirth is God's medicine. Everybody ought to bathe in it. Grim care, moroseness, anxiety - all this rust of life - ought to be scoured off by the oil of mirth."

-Henry Ward Beecher

"We are all here for a spell. Get all the good laughs you can."

-Will Rogers

"If you're not allowed to laugh in heaven, I don't want to go there."

-Martin Luther

"A prominent doctor discovered that cheerful people resist disease better than chronic grumblers. He concluded that the surly bird gets the germs."

-Lorin D. Whittaker, M.D.



The Deacons met a number of times in the past few weeks to finalize the selection of members for the Search Committee for our next settled pastor. It was a gratifying experience to discover the unique talents and enormous willingness of every nominee.

Our congregation should be reassured that the input through the dialogue sessions and the many personal conversations, helped to clarify our search for a committee that represents the spectrum of our current church community.

To every nominee, our heartfelt thanks and praise for your time and honesty, answering the many questions that were put before you. By now, everyone on the church's mailing list should have received a letter sent by our Moderator, Rod Lankler, announcing the names of those serving. The committee will be commissioned by the congregation in our church service on Sunday, January 31st, and begin their duties in February.

In the midst of this, the Deacons commenced a brainstorming session on what could be considered Pastoral Care or Outreach. This has long been a topic of concern in need of our attention. We are hoping to discover better ways of serving not only our own church community, but those of the local towns, as well. We look forward to furthering our exploration and enacting solutions.

Janet Kaufman for the Board of Deacons

Search Committee

- | | |
|-----------------|----------------|
| John Arnold | Cynthia LaPier |
| Malcolm Brown | Carol Magowan |
| Theresa Carroll | Alden Tyrol |
| Mary Davidson | Sarah Zarbock |

Lenten Study Group

Christianity for the Rest of Us

by Diana Butler-Bass

Exploring how to thrive as a congregation in an era of shrinking American churches.

Tuesdays, February 16th - March 30th
Mornings at 9:30 or evenings at 7:00
(See article on page 2.)



Shrove Tuesday — Then and Now

The day before Ash Wednesday is Shrove Tuesday, sometimes called “Fat Tuesday.” Centuries ago Christians often stuffed themselves with food before beginning 40 days of fasting for Lent.

In those days, many Christians used up all the food containing fat, including dairy products. Because so many foods, including pancakes, used those fat products, many churches had huge feasts. A lot of people ate until they could hold no more — the beginnings of all-you-can-eat dinners.

Today many congregations still keep at least a semblance of the tradition. In communities around the world, churches serve pancakes on Shrove Tuesday. But today the purpose is to have Christian fellowship, not to devour everything in sight.



A Day for Ashes

Since the Middle Ages, Christians in the so-called Western Church have observed Ash Wednesday (the seventh Wednesday before Easter) as the first day of Lent. On this day, in many churches, worshippers receive ashes on the forehead as a reminder of their sorrow for their sins. The ashes are often made by burning palm branches left over from the previous year’s Palm Sunday. Ash Wednesday is February 17th this year.



FEBRUARY



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2 <i>Groundhog Day</i>	3 10:00 - Prayer Group 7:30 - Choir Rehearsal	4	5	6
7 10:00 - Worship & Communion 11:15 - Board of Trustees <i>Boy Scout Sunday</i>	8	9	10 7:30 - Choir Rehearsal	11 5:15 - Bell Choir Rehearsal	12	13
14 10:00 - Worship & Church School 11:15 - Board of Christian Action <i>Valentine's Day</i>	15 <i>Presidents' Day</i>	16 9:30am - Lenten Study Group 7:00pm - Lenten Study Group	17 10:00 - Prayer Group 7:30 - Choir Rehearsal <i>Ash Wednesday</i>	18 5:15 - Bell Choir Rehearsal	19	20 March Newsletter Deadline
21 10:00 - Worship & Church School 11:15 - Church Council <i>1st Sunday in Lent</i>	22	23 9:30am - Lenten Study Group 7:00pm - Lenten Study Group	24 7:30 - Choir Rehearsal	25 5:15 - Bell Choir Rehearsal	26 5:30 - Potluck Supper	27
28 10:00 - Worship & Church School 11:15 - Board of Deacons <i>2nd Sunday in Lent</i>		 <i>February is Black History Month</i>				

February Birthdays

- | | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| 3rd Adam Rashkoff | | 16th John Merwin |
| 4th Don Buckley | | 17th Cynthia LaPier |
| 4th Eric Chin | | 18th Ashley Tedder |
| 8th James Habacker | | 19th Jack Anderson |
| 8th Bruce McEver | | 20th Jack Ritchie |
| 9th Merrick Noyes | | 24th Jim Filkins |
| 9th Hannah Ohlinger | | 24th Hope Fitting |
| 12th Daniel Rashkoff | | 25th Ginny Filkins |
| 13th Ivy Currie | | 26th Christina Rogers |
| 13th Jonathan Capecelatro | | 26th Stephanie Tierney |
| 14th Rod Lankler | 28th Cora Rydingsword | |
| 15th Laura Flores | | |



Valentine's Day

Many stories about the origin of Valentine's Day have come down through the centuries. There's no definitive story, but most revolve around the imprisonment of Valentinus (St. Valentine) for his disregard of Roman laws.

Many legends are also associated with Valentine's Day. For example, because birds seemed to arrive and mate in some countries in mid-February, human couples came to be called "love birds."

In 1667, the first recorded Valentine card was printed. Today, people will give their sweethearts countless millions of cards and acres of heart-shaped boxes filled with candy. But why wait for Valentine's Day to share love with others? Remember Jesus' words in John 13:34 (NRSV): "I give you a new commandment, that you love one another."



Presidents' Day ~ Monday, February 15th

* A JAR OF *
**Love and
 Appreciation**



Sometimes we forget to show love and appreciation to people who are closest to us. Use this fun craft to let everyone in your family know how much you care.

What you need:

- Plastic jar with lid
- Heart-shaped foam pieces
- Heart-shaped stickers
- Glue
- Construction paper
- Scissors
- Pencil or crayons

What you do:

1. Decorate the jar and lid with heart-shaped foam pieces and stickers.
2. Cut out 2" or 3" heart shapes from the construction paper.
3. On each paper heart, write what you appreciate and love about your family and each member. Have all family members do this, too.
4. Place the heart messages inside the jar. Fold them in half, if necessary.
5. On each day in February, pull out one heart and read the message aloud to the family.
6. Notice the changes in your family when everyone feels loved and appreciated!



Just for KIDS

Our first love

In Deuteronomy 10:12 (NIV), Israel is asked a question that's also for us to answer: "What does the LORD your God ask of you?"

To find the answer, write the words from the puzzle pieces on the matching shapes in the completed heart.

... your heart and with all your soul ..."

Answer: " ... fear the LORD ... to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all ..."

Equal opportunity

When young Kelli said her prayers each night, she would bless every family member, every friend and every pet (current or past). Toward the end of her prayers, she'd say, "And all girls."

One night her father asked his daughter why she always ended that way.

"Because," she replied, "everybody else always finishes their prayers by saying, 'All men.'"

