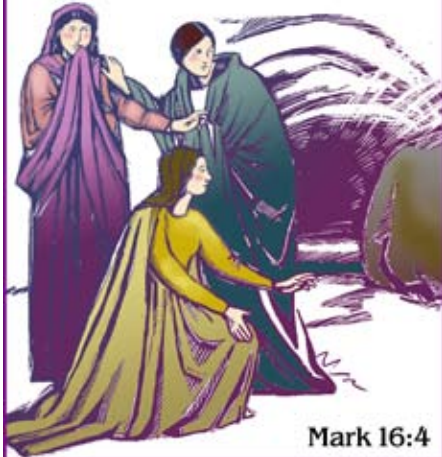


The Meeting House Times

The Congregational Church of Salisbury, United Church of Christ

April, 2009

They saw that the
stone ... had already
been rolled back.



Alleluia!

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*Our Choir Prepares for Stainer's "Crucifixion"
Good Friday, April 10th, 5:00*

Giving First: The Secret of Our Success

We've all heard it said: every action is met with an equal (and opposite) reaction. Our reactions, therefore, are just as formative, just as influential, as the actions we are responding to. In our relationships, this has particular significance - because our reactions to neglect, disappointment, hurt feelings, missed opportunities, and failed expectations - determine the potential of that relationship's longevity, and play a significant role in predicting whether or not it will ultimately remain intact.

So then, it begs the question: Is the success of a relationship mostly on our shoulders? Is it not a "50-50" parlay? Well, in theory, yes. But in reality, we often find our relationships suffering from the periodic "falling short" of our - or their - providing that 50%. What happens then?

To the first question, I refer to Paul when he wrote to the church in Philippi:

"If therefore there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, make my joy complete by being of the same mind with each other, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose. Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself. Do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. Have this attitude in yourselves, which also was in Christ Jesus, who emptied himself, taking on the form of a servant."

Paul's formula for successful relationships within the church community was surprisingly simple: prefer one another's needs over your own.
That's it.

Paul's formula for successful relationships within the church community was surprisingly simple: prefer one another's needs over your own. That's it. Simple. Uh huh.

Well, we know better than that. It isn't simple at all. It's quite difficult, actually, to put someone's needs and expectations before our own, especially if we are in the midst of a moment when they have failed to meet ours. Ah - but this is where becoming like Christ comes into full expression. This is the call - the trick, if you will - to give more than our share, or to give it when they have forgotten theirs.



If we dare to claim we are Christians, then following that example is our charge. And if we as a church are determined to have healthy relationships with each other, we will need to be resolved on this point; that to say, "giving is a two-way street" does not cut it in truly healthy relationships. It is not in the giving, but in the giving *first*, that a relationship sustains the hope of a vibrant future.

As we continue in this season of Lent, the time of selflessness and sacrifice, perhaps wondering what we might give up, I challenge you like I challenge myself: to allow God to give us a new understanding of what it is to prefer one another to ourselves, and to look out for the interests of others. For such an approach to relating to each other is the only true prescription for an ongoing successful bond, and is the first step in becoming like the One we claim to worship and follow. Let that be the focus of our attention, the pursuit of our energies, and the desire of our hearts.

Pastor Steve

**Annual Meeting
Part II**

**Sunday, April 19th -
11:15**

**Congregational
Meeting**

Please attend, listen,
comment, and vote.
We need you there!
**Child care will be
available.**



Palm Sunday - April 5th

The Palm Sunday procession is one of our favorite church traditions. Weather permitting, **we will gather on the green in front of the White Hart at 9:50** with our friends and neighbors from Saint John's Church. At 10:00 we will have a brief prayer, strike up the band, and process down Main Street singing "All Glory, Laud and Honor." Those not parading, please note: worship in the Meeting House will begin at about 10:15.

This year the One Great Hour of Sharing offering will be NOT be collected at the Palm Sunday service. OGHS envelopes will be available in the narthex and on the Pastor's Resource Table and will be part of the offering on Sunday, May 3rd.



Good Friday Cantata: "The Crucifixion" April 10th - 5:00

This classic choral work by John Stainer will be performed by the our choir and featured soloists directed by Al Sly.



Easter Sunrise Service - April 12th - 6:10 a.m.



You are invited to greet the sun at the Town Grove. Bring the kids, bring your house guests and your neighbors to this informal ecumenical community service. We stand in a semicircle facing the eastern side of the lake, and if there are no clouds, we watch a glorious sunrise as we pray, sing, and celebrate the resurrection at daybreak, as did Mary and the women who were the first witnesses of the empty tomb. After the worship we enjoy coffee, doughnuts and fellowship in the Grove building.



Service of Tenebrae April 9th - 7:30

The service of Tenebrae marks a significant moment of the Lenten season in the Salisbury Congregational Church. Readings from the gospel recount events leading up to the crucifixion, communion is served, and as candles are extinguished, the church is darkened and participants leave in silence. It is a moving and contemplative service that brings special meaning to the resurrection celebrated on Easter Sunday.

Whether you are attending for the first time or returning annually, the Deacons of the church encourage your participation. Please consider inviting a friend as well. We look forward to sharing this memorable service with everyone.

Easter Sunday Service of Celebration

The worship begins at 9:45 when our bell choir plays a joyous prelude. The service will also feature music by our Senior Choir, including the Hallelujah Chorus from Handel's "Messiah." After the benediction, Al Sly will play the Widor "Toccata," a fitting and inspiring celebration of Christ's resurrection.



Our UCC (United Church of Christ) Conference President in our Pulpit

The Rev. Dr. Davida Foy Crabtree was our guest speaker for our worship service on Sunday, March 29th. Davida has been the Minister and President for the Connecticut Conference of the UCC since 1996, and prior to that was the Conference Minister for the Southern California Conference, where Pastor Steve was ordained. She has won several awards in the religious and humanitarian fields, and is the author of the book "Empowering the Church."

After a significant battle with cancer, she has returned to both her job and the pulpit with renewed vigor with a message of hope, unity, and covenantal support.



Happy Birthday! in April

1st	Carly Craig, Sandra Haiko, Ellie Stewart, Maggie Crain
2nd	Linda Estabrook, Shirley Rogers
5th	Trudi Fox
9th	Rachel Reed, Susan Ritchie
11th	Ted Sands
12th	Barbara Jacquette
13th	Audrey Eriksson
14th	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
27th	Hannah Stewart
30th	Barbara Collins, Rebecca Palmer

Pastor's Office Hours:

Steve Austin is usually in his office on Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday - 9 to 5. On other days he is usually in town but not in the office at regular hours.

There will be a potluck supper on Friday, April 17th 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 the family. Bring a friend. Stay as long as you like. "Veggie Tales" cartoon for the kids.



There is no need to RSVP. **Do you need a ride? Give one of us a call: Barbara Collins (435-0051) or Sarah Rydingsword (435-9479).**

Our April Calendar

Wednesday, the 1st: Prayer Group - 9:30

Thursday, the 2nd: Lenten book study 9:00

Sunday, the 5th: Palm Sunday

Gather on the White Hart green - 9:50
Worship with Communion
and Church School - 10:15
Board of Trustees - 11:15

Thursday, the 9th: Maundy Thursday

Service of Tenebrae - 7:30

Friday, the 10th: Good Friday

"Crucifixion" cantata - 5:00

Sunday, the 12th: Easter Sunday

Sunrise service - Town Grove - 6:10
Worship - 9:45
No Church School - Crib/toddler care and activities
for Grade 2 and younger

Wednesday, the 15th: Prayer Group - 9:30

Friday, the 17th: Potluck supper - 5:30

Sunday, the 19th:

Worship and Church School - 10:00
Annual Meeting, Part II - 11:15

Sunday, the 26th:

Worship and Church School - 10:00
Dialogue session I - 11:15 (Lunch provided)

Monday, the 27th: Board of Deacons - 4:30

Wednesday, the 29th: Prayer Group - 9:30

Special dates

- o Palm Sunday - April 5th
- o Holy Week - April 5th - 11th
- o Maundy Thursday - April 9th
- o Good Friday - April 10th
- o Easter Sunday - April 12th
- o Administrative Professionals Day -
Wednesday, April 22nd

Congregational Dialogue Sessions

One of the more powerful ways we can collectively determine our future and discern God's plan for us as a church is to engage from time to time in small and large group dialogues around specific points of vision, mission, and ministry - issues behind which it is critical for us to have a united front.



We will be hosting three such sessions in the upcoming months - on April 26th, May 17th, and June 1st. On each of these Sundays, worship will be followed by a short coffee time in the Parish Hall, moving immediately into the session. These sessions will last approximately three hours, and lunch will be served. **Child care will be available.**

In these upcoming sessions we will be focusing on our church's strengths, passions, and both individual and collective stories of what "Church" has meant and has become to us and to our community. As was mentioned in our recent QandA time, these conversations will take place in several contexts - one-on-one, small table, and whole-group discussions. They will have as their objective to discover what our call in ministry really is as a church in this community and in this generation, and how our experiences have led and facilitated those strengths. We will also explore areas that may need strengthening.

These church-wide conversations, as well as the ones we will continue with in the Fall, will be your opportunity to have a significant voice in several points of interest and focus of our church - what our vision is going forward; how that vision translates into mission, outreach and ministry; how we build unity among ourselves in the midst of diverse passions, convictions and agendas; and how we can identify and embrace the leadership necessary to implement our discoveries, as the search for your next settled pastor gets underway.

You do not want to miss these Sessions!

Please mark these dates down and plan on attending. Your church - and your new interim pastor - need you, your perspective, and your prayerful input. See you there!

Lord, help me resist the temptation to make a mountain out of a mole hill just by adding a little dirt.

Your Nominating Committee at Work

The members of the Nominating Committee have been meeting throughout February and March to determine what positions need to be filled in the upcoming year. We are grateful to our church friends and members who have been active in working with our committee so that everyone better understands all our church roles. We are now in the process of speaking to those who have been recommended or have volunteered their talents.

We will have our proposals ready by the end of March, and all members should receive this information in the Annual Report that will be mailed in early April. These nominees will be voted on at the Annual Meeting on April 19th.

We encourage everyone that is able to attend this important meeting. Thank you for supporting our efforts.

Janet Kaufman, for the Nominating Committee



Roger, Natalie, and Maggie Crain on March 15th - Natalie's baptism Sunday.

Everybody, Somebody, Anybody and Nobody

This is a little story about four people: Everybody, Somebody, Anybody and Nobody.

There was an important job to be done, and Everybody was sure that Somebody would do it. Anybody could have done it, but Nobody did it. Somebody got angry about that, because it was Everybody's job. Everybody thought that Anybody could do it, but Nobody realized that Everybody wouldn't do it. It ended up that Everybody blamed Somebody when Nobody did what Anybody could have done.

Thank You, Linda!

Many church tasks and responsibilities are carried on week in and week out by people quietly doing what needs to be done. Thanking one person in no way passes over the good done by others. But one member particularly deserves recognition by all of us, and that's Linda Estabrook, a VIP in the Fellowship Committee.



Anyone who has done fellowship hour after church knows how much she does to help you prepare. Anyone who has come to a pot-luck supper has eaten her luscious desserts - every

time - nobody needs to bring dessert because she always makes it. At almost any event that needs food or refreshment, including the Red Cross blood collections, she is there. Pies and cakes for the Fall Festival, in charge of refreshments after choir concerts, cakes for Sunday birthdays - you know who did it.

On a recent Sunday there were no flowers for the meeting house table. In the middle of preparing for fellowship hour, Linda drove off to where she works (no advertisement here, but it rhymes with Balisbury Harden Denter) and presto! we had flowers.

So thank you, Linda, for all you do! And for the rest of us - this is a reminder to please sign up for Sunday flowers and Fellowship Hour!

Summer conferences at Silver Lake are filling up quickly. Young people planning to attend should sign up soon! Go to:

www.silverlakect.org

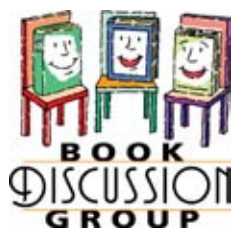


A cowboy once offered this sensible notion of living the Christian faith:

“Lotsa folks who’d really like to do right think that servin’ the Lord just means shoutin’ themselves hoarse praisin’ his name.”

“Well, I’ll tell ya how I look at that. I’m workin’ here fer Jim. Now, if I’d sit around the house here tellin’ what a good fella Jim is, and singin’ songs to him, and gettin’ up in the night to serenade him, I’d be doin’ just like a lot of Christians do. But I wouldn’t suit Jim, and I’d get fired mighty quick.”

“But when I buckle on my straps and hustle among the hills and see that Jim’s herd is all right and not sufferin’ fer water and feed, or bein’ off the range and branded by cattle thieves, well then, I’m servin’ Jim the way he wants to be served.”



The Lenten book discussion groups are meeting regularly and growing in numbers of participants.

We are reading and discussing Graham Standish’s “Becoming a Blessed Church.”

Steve has transcribed and summarized the points that have come up in both groups, and they are now on our church’s blog page.

Go to www.salisburycongregational.org and click on the Blog link. Interesting and thought-provoking reading!



EASTER CARD

Many symbols remind us of Jesus' death and resurrection. This Easter, put some of those symbols on special cards. Then give the cards to other people to share the good news that Jesus is alive.

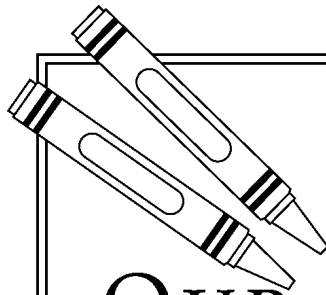
What you need:

- Craft foam
- Pencil
- Scissors
- Hot glue gun
- Empty food can without label
- Paint and paintbrush
- Paper plate
- Paper (8 1/2" x 11")
- Markers or crayons



What you do:

1. Choose some simple Easter shapes to draw on the craft foam (cross, empty tomb, heart, etc.).
2. Cut out each shape.
3. With an adult's help, glue the shapes onto the can.
4. Pour a thin layer of paint onto a paper plate.
5. Roll the can in the paint and then roll the can onto the paper.
6. Try this several times using different colors.
7. When your paper is dry, fold it into a card.
8. Write "Happy Easter!" or a Bible verse on the front of the card. Then give it to someone.



Just for **KIDS**

OUR LIVING HOPE

Easter is a time to rejoice because of what God did for us in sending his Son. Jesus is our living hope. Read 1 Peter 1:3-4 (NIV) below. Then find the **bold** words in the crossword search.

"Praise be to the **God** and **Father** of our **Lord Jesus Christ!** In his great **mercy** he has given us **new birth** into a **living hope** through the **resurrection** of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an **inheritance** that can **never perish, spoil or fade** — **kept in heaven** for you"



P	R	A	I	S	E
P	E	R	I	S	H
B	I	R	T	H	A
K	E	P	T	U	S
L	O	R	F	A	D
E	V	E	A	R	G

R	E	S	U	R	R	E	C	T	I	O	N	J	E	S	U
H	E	A	V	E	N	I	N	H	A	D	L	I	V	I	N
I	G	S	P	O	I	N	H	E	R	I	T	A	N	C	E
C	H	R	I	S	T	L	O	R	D	P	R	A	I	S	W



H	O	P	N	S	E
H	O	P	E	P	L
L	I	V	V	O	I
J	E	S	E	I	V
E	V	E	R	L	I
S	U	F	F	E	N
U	T	A	S	I	G
S	O	D	O	E	T
A	M	E	R	C	Y

While writing up a routine vandalism report at an elementary school, I was interrupted by a little girl about 6 years old.

Looking up and down at my uniform, she asked, "Are you a policeman?"

"Yes," I answered and continued writing the report.

"My mother said if I ever needed help I should ask the police. Is that right?"

"Yes, that's right," I told her, and I began to pay a little more attention to her. She looked okay to me.

"Well, then," she said as she extended her foot toward me, "would you please tie my shoe?"