

The Meeting House Times

The Congregational Church of Salisbury, United Church of Christ
January 2011



*Services: Sundays at 10:00 a.m.
 Worship & Communion, 1st Sunday of the month at 10:00 a.m*

Pamela Wyeth, Editor

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No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here!

A LOOK BACK AT 2011 IN PICTURES



Pastor Steve's Final Service



Pastor Diane's First Service



Palm Sunday Procession



Watoto Children's Choir Performance



Pastor Diane's Installation



Fall Festival



Welcoming New Members



Giving Tree Generosity



Christmas Pageant



Christmas Concert

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Growing in Faith Together

SPEAK FOR YOUR SERVANT IS LISTENING (1 SAMUEL 3:10)



Grace and Peace to you in the New Year. As I begin my second year with you, I invite you to join me in listening for God's call for our church. Our theme for 2012 will be "What Is God calling you to do?" As we discern our path together I am hopeful that we will continue to build a community that is firmly rooted in love of

God and neighbor.

The church universal is an ever-changing entity. Since the beginning of time communities of faith have gathered to celebrate God's presence in their lives. Forms of prayer, music and worship have evolved to reflect the values and beliefs of those gathered. We are responsible to our ancestors to honor traditions and responsibly steward those assets entrusted to us. At the same time, we are charged with ensuring a vibrant, vital church for future generations. This is our challenge as we move forward.

This is an exciting time for the church. We have the opportunity to create a church that answers to our deepest longings, that feeds our hunger for a divine presence, that nourishes our souls. One of the joys of the Congregational Church is that we are not beholden to any hierarchy or authority, other than God. We can respond to God's call as we hear it. We can create forms of worship that reflect our community, our beliefs, our values and our gifts.

I would ask that you prayerfully consider what God might be calling you to do for our church. Think about your own gifts and talents and how they might be used to help build up the Body of Christ. Let the nominating committee know where you might like to serve. I invite you to stop by my office this month to discuss your ideas for our church. Let me know if you have visited another church while travelling and found something particularly meaningful that we might try.

I want to take this opportunity to thank you for an extraordinary first year. I am humbled and honored to serve as your pastor and simply can not imagine doing anything else. You have welcomed my family and me with warm and generous hearts. I am profoundly grateful for the blessings that God has bestowed on my life and I look forward, with joy, to our year ahead.

Blessings for the New Year,

Pastor Diane

Email: pastor.diane@salisburycongregational.org

Pastor Diane's Letter to the Editor of the New York Times
Last month Pastor Diane submitted the following letter in response to Eric Weiner's OpEd piece, "Americans: Unsure About God?"

"I read with interest Eric Weiner's piece 'Americans: Undecided About God?' As is so often the case with those who decry 'organized religion,' his criticisms are based on an outdated and inaccurate picture of what is happening inside the church today. He has taken the distorted misrepresentation of church as depicted in the media and overgeneralized and oversimplified it to apply to all churches.

"The 'angry God, constantly judging and smiting' along with the 'raw superstition' and 'shouting church leaders' certainly do not represent the churches that I serve, nor those I am familiar with. What Mr. Weiner might be pleased to know is that within the church buildings of this country (some of which look antiquated) there is rich dialogue going on about 'new ways of being religious.' People are indeed finding ways, within a spiritual community, of being 'more loving and less angry.' People of different faiths are joining together to celebrate their commonalities and to learn from one another. There is an ongoing revitalization of church life as congregations work to meet the needs of their neighbors in today's world.

"While some politicians have been adept at hijacking religious language for their own purposes, most people can sense hypocrisy and exaggeration when they see or hear it.

"I would invite Mr. Weiner and all of those who identify themselves as 'Nones' to stop by a local church this Christmas season. You are likely to find preachers and congregants who are worshiping a loving God in a 'straight forward, unencumbered and absolutely intuitive way.' Indeed, you are likely to experience religious communities that 'celebrate doubt, encourage experimentation' and utter the word 'God' with joy and passion.

"Advent blessings,

Reverend Diane Monti-Catania
Salisbury Congregational Church
United Church of Christ"

THANKS FROM THE ESTABROOKS

On behalf of the entire family of Robert Estabrook, we wish to thank all who assisted with his memorial service and collation. Your attention to all the details helped turn a day of sorrow into a celebration of a life well lived.

John and Linda Estabrook



Here's the church
Here's the steeple
Open the Door and
See All The People!

A church is made up of the people! On **January 8th**, Pastor Diane will host a conversation with those interested in actively joining the church. Our church is built on the idea of covenant. We enter into a covenant with God and one another to work to bring the Good News of Jesus Christ to the world. If you would like to be a covenant partner with the people of Salisbury Congregational Church please plan to attend. Covenant partners will be affirmed at the worship service on **January 29th**.



World English Dictionary:

fellowship
noun

1. *the state of sharing mutual interests, experiences, activities*
2. *a society of people sharing mutual interests, experiences, activities*
3. *companionship; friendship*
4. *the state or relationship of being a fellow*
5. *a mutual trust and charitableness between Christians*



Fellowship is a word that we use often in our church community. As you can see from the definition above, it is an apt description of much that goes on in our life. On **Friday, January 12**, Pastor Diane will host a late-afternoon tea for the women of the congregation to discuss opportunities for Women's Fellowship.

Historically the women of the church came together to provide physical care for the building, outreach to the sick and lonely and Sunday school education. More recently, women have gathered for book discussion groups, exercise classes, life coaching, fundraising and a variety of other interests. Come and share your thoughts about what Women's Fellowship should look like in our church for 2012.



**IMPORTANT MEETING
MISSION TRIP 2012
INFORMATION SESSION**

Join Rev. Pete Allen from *Simply Smiles* on Sunday, January 8th following Fellowship Hour to learn more about our mission trip to Oaxaca, Mexico next summer. Rev. Allen will provide an overview of the projects we will be working on, as well as answers

to any questions you may have. This session is open to everyone interested in the trip (not just those going on the trip). The trip is scheduled for July 21-28, 2012. The cost is approximately \$1,400 per person and is limited to 15 people. Fundraising activities will begin in February to help defray the cost per person. If you would like to support the trip with a donation, please see Pastor Diane.



DAY OF DISCERNMENT UPDATE

On October 29th (the day of the legendary snow storm), a group of people gathered to discuss the life of our church. We worked at developing a mission statement. Below are some of the ideas we generated:

- We are a Christian Community. Our God-centered congregation provides us the opportunity to nurture our Christian values. Through weekly worship and inner reflection we can better serve our community and our outreach to the world.
- A congregational journey of faith centered in God, inspired by Christ while being led by the Holy Spirit to serve others.
- SCC is a spiritual community on a congregational journey of faith centered in God and Jesus Christ and led by the Holy Spirit to serve others.
- We gather as a community of Christians, God-centered, Christ-focused, led by the Spirit to walk with each other in God's ways.

As you can see, we are a work in progress. Our Still-Speaking God continues to help us discern the future of our church. We will gather again next month to continue our discussion. In the meantime, give some thought to the statements above and see if they adequately define your experience of our church. Jot down your ideas and bring them to our next gathering. (date to be announced).



CHILDREN IN THE BIBLE

Can you think of any Bible stories which feature children? Perhaps your first thought was the Christmas story with it's marvelous cast of angels, shepherds, kings, and animals, who celebrated the birth of a wondrous child.



There are many other Bible children:

- Those in troubled family situations (Cain and Abel, Isaac and Ishmael, Joseph and his coat of many colors),
- Those under threat (Baby Moses, Jairus' sick daughter, the deal-making mothers),
- Those who were chosen by God to be great leaders (David, Samuel, Josiah),
- Those who showed enterprise (Moses' sister Miriam, Naaman's slave girl, the boy who shared his lunch in the feeding of the 5,000), and
- Those who were welcomed into the circle by Jesus and who received his special blessing.

God used children in Bible times to proclaim the message of love and faithfulness. As the Sunday School explores some of these ancient stories during the winter term, we will be asking the question, "How can children be loving and faithful today?"

Barbara Collins, Coordinator of Christian Education

ALONG THE SALMON KILL

*Be doers of the word, and not merely hearers
who deceive themselves.*

James 1:22

Autumn Sunday alone biking in praise
of the golden mantle draping
this valley, cut and coursed
by the dark stream running
through my adopted town,
its pure waters offered in a white
marble drinking fountain next to town hall.

The kill borders the Scoville library
the oldest public library in the country
whose chimes honor my late wife.
Across the street, the Puritan church that founded
and centered Salisbury in 1744 where this morning
the sermon exemplified James's letter extolling action.

I think of the impossibility
of language capturing the color
and flare of the maples in this valley,
lined up like gaudy guard soldiers
for farm sugar bushes. Farms,
still demarcated by stonewalls
keeping cattle wandering green pastures,
dumbfounded by a cyclist, and slobbering
from drinking the same cold waters.
It hastens on by tumbled furnace ruins,
once stoked steel melt hot
by bellows turned by the branch,
spilling into a silver sheet
over a colonial constructed dam.

These townsfolk took action,
feared God, but not foreign overlords
who forbade their steel making.
They poured cannon, then rails that took their works
to Hartford and west to war.
Doers, not hearers leave stone walls.

Bruce McEver

"To read a poem in January is as lovely as to go for a walk in June."

- Jean-Paul Sartre

Ward Belcher

Carol Hart writes about her submission: "My mother clocked in on her 90th birthday in California. Since I could not be there, I celebrated her achievement in years of living by sitting quietly and recording this memory. She loved this 'gift' and told me to share it with other mothers, and I can't think of a better place to share it than in this newsletter for the many mothers of all ages in our congregation and community. Every daughter has such a memory. So, to honor her request, I enclose it here."

THE BUTTON

By Carolyn Grant Hart

Mother sat on the old threadbare couch
searching through the colorful assortment
of threads in her sewing box. She
and Dad had worked out the box's design,
and his sure hands had lovingly crafted
the box in his basement workshop.
Mother told me once that Dad, who often
seemed quiet and distant, showed his

love by making things for people.

Finding the right color of cotton thread,
she pulled a length off the spool, wound a
bit around her forefinger, and pulled,
snapping it free. She wet one end of the
thread by putting it on her tongue and
tasting it and then she pulled that damp
end between her forefinger and thumb-
nail to flatten it. Then she guided the tip of
the thread through the eye of the needle.

She pulled that end of the thread down
parallel to the tail until the both ends met.
She wound the ends together, three times
around her forefinger, rolled these over
each other with her thumb, and then slid
the rolled threads down to the tips with
her thumb and forefinger, finishing off
the operation with a tight knot which
secured the two threads in one double
thread for strength.

....continued on p.5

CAPITAL PROJECTS COMMITTEE

Since my presentation last spring, the Capital Projects Committee (CPC) has been hard at work completing Phase I and planning for Phase II improvements to our Parish Hall. There are two words that have guided us; "Obligation and Opportunity." We feel an "obligation" to develop the best design concepts for the future while adhering to the financial realities of the times. We also feel we have an "opportunity" to create a facility that will well serve this Congregation for many years to come.

As most of you remember, the Phase I program for the Parish Hall involved bringing the access and egress to and from the Hall up to code as indicated by the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA). The project is nearing completion as the new ramp, new steps, new rails, new automatic doors as well as a new slightly enlarged door going into the Meeting House are all in place or nearly so. Unfortunately, the automatic doors are still on order and probably won't arrive until January and the railings have to be slightly modified to meet code requirements. When completed, this will give all of us the opportunity to come to Church regardless of whether you are wheel chair bound or not.

The Phase II planning has been extensive and is ongoing. We are on our fourth "layout" concept and are nearing agreement. The thinking is that the current storage and meeting rooms that are in the south west corner of the Parish Hall will be developed into a large meeting room. We will be creating storage space as well as enlarging the Kitchen in part of the existing Parish Hall. There has and will be new tape on the floor to visually demonstrate the new spaces that are being created for storage, service and kitchen. A small Group of us have visited several other Congregational Churches to compare and contrast our ideas with other Parish Halls and Community Centers. Once the Committee has a representation that we feel comfortable in presenting, then we can all view it.

The members of the Committee are Jack Richie, Carol Magowan, Lee Collins, Tom Key, Larry Blades, Mike Fitting, Ted Sands, Barbara Collins, Linda Esterbrook, Diane Monti-Catania, Sue Morrill, John Arnold, Ward Belcher. Please feel free to speak to any of us with your concerns, ideas, or compliments (!).

A LETTER FROM THE DEACONS

Dear Friends,

This is the first in a series of articles/letters from the Deacons. In our monthly meeting with Pastor Diane, one of us remarked that we have been receiving questions about the meaning of parts of the Sunday service. So we decided to each write an article explaining each section of the service and describing any traditions associated with that section.

As I prepared myself to write this article, I realized that until I became a Deacon, my picture of a Deacon was extremely vague, and that might be true for some of you also.

Who can be a Deacon, and what the heck does a Deacon do anyway?

The Board of Deacons is composed of 12 spiritually grounded members of Salisbury Congregational Church charged with the spiritual well being and health of the church body. Hmhmhmhm. And what does that mean? How do the Deacons do that?

We pray for each other and for all of those who are friends and members of our community.

We meet once a month with Pastor Diane to share with each other who is in need of sustenance - physical, emotional or spiritual. We brainstorm ways of supporting those in need. It may be the family of someone who recently suffered a loss, someone who is housebound, recently fallen ill, struggling with an addiction or even someone who just wants a companion on his/her daily walk.

We find ways to enrich our weekly services (not all new ideas come from Pastor Diane directly, even though she takes responsibility for them). We find ways to support Pastor Diane so that she can continue joyfully ministering to our congregation.

We listen to you, our brothers and sisters in this family, to hear what you have noticed is working or not working and bring those observations to the monthly meeting. We continue to discuss the ideas and suggestions brought forth from our last "Coffee House" meeting.

We prepare and serve the communion meal. Did you know that the bread is baked by one of the Deacons? We help organize and serve at extraordinary services such as Tenebrae, weddings and

memorial services.

We live our lives as we understand Christ taught us.

I believe I speak for everyone on the Board when I say this. I do not feel entitled to such trust. I do not feel capable of fulfilling such responsibility. I am humbly honored to be serving my family in this way.

I do know that participating as a Deacon has moved me to be more fully human, and brought me to a deeper faith in myself, my fellow humans and in God.

I hope that each person reading this thinks about him or herself as a Deacon. No-one feels capable or worthy to serve God or the congregation in this way. Yet, when you read the "duties" of a Deacon, aren't you already doing this? Consider offering your name to the nominating committee in the spring.

Next month I will write the article I set out to write this month: A short description and explanation of the first three items in our order of Sunday service.

Blessings, Theresa Carroll

The Button (continued)

Mother was preparing to sew a button onto one of her children's garments. Buttons sometimes worked themselves off a blouse, shirt, or sweater when the thread that held them in place loosened with wear. They might also get torn off in rough play. In our early days in Tiburon, they also were broken when a garment was run through rollers to squeeze out the water after washing and rinsing clothing before hanging them on the clothesline in the back yard. Buttons often suffered casualty when stressed as they were run through those rollers.

My two sisters and myself, and perhaps our brother as well, learned this needle threading procedure for sewing on buttons by watching our mother, who I

assume learned it from her mother.

I remembered this yesterday, sixty plus years later, when I decided it was time to put a missing button back on a work shirt. The operation brought back the memory in a flash, as if no time had passed. I threaded the needle, chose the button, held it in place, and stitched it there, passed the threaded needle through the holes in the button, secured it with a crossing of thread between the four holes, wrapped the thread around the stitching, between the button and the cloth, so there would be room for the buttonholed additional layer of cloth. Finally, I ended it by passing the needle to the inside of the shirt and zigzagging the stitching under the knot so that it would

not slip or pull out.

When I finished, and admired my replaced button, in its purposeful position between the other buttons on the front of my shirt, I felt I had just been sitting next to my mother on that old couch, watching her hands, hearing her voice, sensing our family button stitching lineage, and a quiet peaceful moment imbued with the satisfaction of this simple repair, of sewing a button into its proper place. It is a testament to my mother that such a little operation would be such a big memory, for she often had a way of turning such projects into artful fun.

Thank you mother.
Love, Carol

POT LUCK SUPPER

There will be a potluck supper on Friday, January 20th, at 6:00 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.

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



January

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 10:00 - Worship, Communion. No church school; crib & toddler care available. OWL's Kitchen collection. New Year's Day	2	3	4 10:00 - Prayer Group 7:30- Choir Rehearsal	5	6 7:00 - Men's Interfaith Bible Study Epiphany	7
8 10:00 - Worship & Church School. 11:15 - Informational meeting about the Mission Trip* 11:30 - Board of Trustees Baptism of the Lord	9	10	11 7:30- Choir Rehearsal	12	13 7:00 - Men's Interfaith Bible Study	14
15 10:00 - Worship & Church School. 11:30 - Board of Christian Action	16 MLK Day	17	18 10:00 - Prayer Group 7:30- Choir Rehearsal	19	20 7:00 - Men's Interfaith Bible Study 6:00 - Potluck Supper*	21
22 10:00 - Worship & Church School. 11:30 - Church Council	23	24	25 7:30- Choir Rehearsal	26	27 7:00 - Men's Interfaith Bible Study	28
29 10:00 - Worship & Church School.	30	31 5:30 - 7:00- Board of Deacons	Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, January 18–25, 2012			

DEADLINE FOR THE FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER: MONDAY, JANUARY 10TH

* Article in this MHT



CONGREGATIONAL CHRISTMAS CAROLING CARAVAN

- 1st Don Mayland
- 2nd Joy Fitting
- 2nd Ron Jones
- 11th Alexander Visnapuu
- 15th Ashley Allyn
- 16th Owen Beck
- 19th Lee Collins
- 19th Constance Frost
- 20th Andre LaFosse
- 20th Jeanette Weber
- 21st Anna Beck
- 21st Dick Taber
- 23rd Janet Offensend
- 23rd Caleb May
- 27th Edith Blodgett
- 30th Rick Morrill
- 30th Bob Newman
- 31st Kate Pastore
- 31st Sam Pastore

It was another fine annual event this year. About 35 adults and a dozen youngsters (hard to count people - they moved around too much!) piled into two cars and a bus to carol for shut-in parishioners and at Geer Village and Noble Horizons. Linda Estabrook's elf hats for everyone brought smiles to all the faces, and for the first time we were joined by Santa Claus! We're pretty sure it was Kyle Good in back of the beard.

Back in the parish hall we consumed pots of spaghetti and 128 meat balls - all in all a very successful outing. Many thanks to all who took part!

But the more meaningful parts of the evening were the reactions of those we sang to - the smiles, the hugs, the handshakes, and some tears from memories of Christmases past. It's a very worthwhile thing that we do. If you missed it this year, plan to join us in the Christmas season 2012.

Lee Collins

NO-SEW FLEECE SCARF



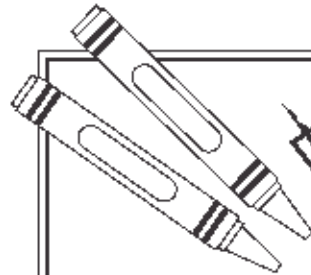
Winter is a difficult time for people in need, so make this scarf to help someone stay warm.

What you need:

- Medium-weight polar fleece, 60" standard width (a 9" portion will make one scarf)
- Scissors
- An adult to help

What you do:

1. Cut a piece of medium-weight polar fleece to the size of 60" x 9". Cut the fabric across its width so the material is stretchy.
2. Trim off the edge binding. To add "fringe" along each end, make a 6"-long cut every half inch.
3. For curly fringe, pull each strand and then let go sharply. Another attractive option is to tie an over-hand knot at the top of each strip.
4. Donate your scarf to a local group that helps people in need. For greater impact, encourage your Sunday school classmates or other friends to make scarves, too.
















PUZZLE

A caring disciple

In Acts 9, Peter tells of a woman who lived in Joppa. She performed good works and helped the poor. Solve the puzzle below to reveal this disciple's two names.

Instructions: Cross out the letters that spell each object and write the remaining letter on the blank.

___ adcltne			
___ rohmtae			
___ srgbape			
___ rbieda			
___ pehtshred			
___ rdhaenlca			
___ fadoo			
Her name in Greek			
___ pdeesh			
___ dchilnero			
___ drove			
___ acehtr			
___ sarcos			
___ nusoaatim			

Answers: Tabitha, Dorcas

*"new year's eve-
in the echo of fog horns
another voyage starts"
- Keiko Izawa*

A group of 2nd graders were given the first half of a proverb and they supplied the rest:

- You can't teach an old dog new.....math.
- If you lie down with dogs, you'll.....stink in the morning.
- An idle mind is.....the best way to relax.
- Where there's smoke there's.....pollution.
- A penny saved is.....not much.
- Two's company, three's.....the Musketeers.

