

The Meeting House Times

The Congregational Church of Salisbury, United Church of Christ

January 2013

Services: Sundays at 10:00 a.m.

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



Pamela Wyeth, Editor

30 Main Street, P.O. Box 392, Salisbury, Connecticut 06068 ~ 860.435.2442 ~ www.salisburycongregational.org

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



A CELEBRATION OF SONG LIEDER, MÉLODIE, & OPERA ARIAS

Rebecca Palmer, Soprano; Nicholas Place, Piano

Saturday, January 12 at 7:00 p.m.

Please join us for an evening recital by Soprano Rebecca Palmer. Rebecca is a church member and seeks support to fund her vocal and language studies in Berlin, Germany. She has obtained degrees from San Francisco Conservatory of Music (BM) and The Boston Conservatory (MM). This past summer, she had the pleasure of studying German for seven weeks at Middlebury College. At the end of January, she will begin her twelve-month stay abroad. We invite you to share in her farewell performance.



Rebecca Palmer

MENS BIBLE STUDY



The group's Friday gathering has evolved from a 7:00 breakfast into a "coffee and muffins" meeting from 8:00 to 9:00. During Dick Taber's temporary absence dealing with medical issues, Leo Gafney, a member

of St. Mary's Church in Lakeville has kindly agreed to lead us. We will meet on Friday, January 11th, for a series of four Fridays to explore "Faith in the New Testament." All men from the community are welcome to what is always an interesting and wide-ranging discussion.

- Lee Collins

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THANKS!



THANK YOU TO OUR
SUNDAY SCHOOL
TEACHERS

Who's been upstairs and backstage helping with the Christian faith formation and education of our children this fall? TWENTY wonderful people, that's who! When you see them, say "THANKS!" - Jennifer Kronholm Clark; Jane Elwood; Linda Estabrook; Jennifer Good; Caitlin, Lauren, and Missy Hanlon; Janet Kaufman; Kathy Mera; Christy Olson; Colin and Olivia May and Mary O'Neill; Erik, Orrin, and Sarah Rydingsword; Emma and Carrie Smith, Judy Stewart; and Stephanie Tierney. Contact Barbara Collins to find out how your name can be added to this list.

~ Barbara Collins, Coordinator Religious Education





"Testimony reminds us of where we have been, helps us see where we are and directs us toward unanticipated paths." (Diana Butler Bass in Christianity For the Rest of Us, p.139)

At the November Deacon's meeting we decided to focus on *Faith Stories* for the New Year. We discussed how important it is for people to examine their own faith journeys, as well as hearing the stories of their neighbors. I agreed to share my own story in this edition of the newsletter. I was certainly unaware at the time that my faith would be tested in the weeks ahead by the loss of a loved one and the horrific acts of violence that took place in the elementary school in Newtown.

Christian tradition has long included the sharing of faith stories. People in the early church shared their personal stories of God's presence in their lives as a way of explaining their faith to newcomers. Pilgrims along the journey have always shared stories with one another about their experiences. We are our stories. We cannot fully know one another without sharing. The psalms represent someone's testimony at the time of writing. The entire New Testament is the individual writer's testimony of their experience of Jesus Christ and the transformative power of God.

Sharing our faith stories with one another is a gift. By articulating our own experience we invite other people to reflect on their own and recognize God's presence in their lives.

The deacons and I would like to start a

FAITH STORIES

practice of sharing faith stories in the congregation. We will start with the Deacons sharing their stories each month in the newsletter (See Ron Jones story on page 3). During Lent, we will invite members of the congregation to share their faith stories during worship.

A faith story is simply your answers to these simple questions:

- How do I experience God's presence in my life?
- How does the church, or this particular congregation, help me to recognize God's presence in my life?
- How do I live out my faith, my call to ministry, in my daily life?
- How did I get to this point on my faith journey?

Here are my answers to these questions:

The parable of the mustard seed aptly describes my faith journey. I started out slow, with an inkling of faith about 20 years ago. My faith has been nurtured and supported by many wonderful people over the years. I learned how to pray from people who prayed without ceasing. I learned how to worship from priests and pastors who embodied their beliefs. I learned compassion from people who seemed to be naturals. I learned about scripture from people who loved the Bible since childhood. I have been blessed with remarkable people along my journey, encouraging me to open my heart and my mind to let God in. And now, for me, God is a constant companion. I live my life in the presence of God, watching for the movement of the Holy Spirit throughout my day.

My faith is continually reinforced by the

remarkable people in this congregation. The selfless acts of kindness that I am witness to testify to the presence of the Spirit in everything we do. I take to heart the ancient prayer that says that Jesus has no hands but ours, no eyes but ours, no one to carry out his mission, but us. I try to live each day in response to God's call.

I followed a non-traditional path to ministry. I was raised in the Catholic Church, which I left for twenty years after high school. I ventured back into the church when I had children and wanted them to have a sense of God. After a personal medical crisis in 2000 I found my way to Yale Divinity School and the United Church of Christ. My studies helped me to develop a personal theology – one of loving God and neighbor with my whole heart, mind and soul. I heard God's call to ministry in 2005, after preaching a sermon on the day after Christmas. (I was a deacon and the minister needed a day off). From that moment, I have responded to that call and have found that my faith grows exponentially with each new day.

Events such as the loss of a loved one or the tragedy in Newtown remind me how much I depend on my faith for support and guidance in my life. For me, the words of John 1:5 inform my response to hardship: *The light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not overcome it.*

I am a child of a loving God and for that I am eternally grateful.

I look forward to hearing your faith stories in the months ahead.

Blessings,

Pastor Diane

**AND THEY WILL KNOW WE ARE
CHRISTIANS BY OUR LOVE!**

From Reverend Sara Smith at Bridgeport United Congregational Church:

Thank you so much. Your support of us in food, clothing, money and now blankets has done something so special to all of us here in the trenches. It has helped us believe in our mission again – and given us hope it can continue. We are proud to be your covenant mission partner.

Peace, friend - Sara

We will continue collecting food, clothing and toiletries for the people served by the Bridgeport church throughout the winter. Collection boxes are in the vestibule of the Meeting House. We will formally covenant with the Bridgeport church this month.

Watch for a date in February for Salisbury Congregational's sponsorship of a "Feel the Warmth" Community dinner in Bridgeport.

OUR CONGREGATION'S GENEROSITY

A week before Christmas, three members of the Board of Christian Action collected and delivered over 140 presents to the Grace Smith House and the Astor Head Start Program in Millerton. All beautifully wrapped, the gifts included a toddler bed, dishes, pots and pans, toys, games, gift cards and gas cards, Christmas decorations, Lego sets, children's boots, jeans and shirts, blankets, sheets, kitchen utensils, towels, underwear and socks, a new bike, and much more. Our gifts will help make Christmas much happier for mothers and children who have fled abusive relationships and for needy families in our area. Thank you for your great generosity.

We also thank you for supporting the Global Crafts boutique which opened in October for the Salisbury Fall Festival, continued after church for several weeks, and was open again during the Hometown Holidays weekend in December. This year our total sales were \$5,447.45. The breakout was: Ten Thousand Villages--\$3,304.45, SERRV--\$905.00, Center for Amazon Community Ecology--\$859.00, and Nondybo Linens--\$379.00. The many artisans in countries around the world will benefit from our efforts and our purchases.

- Jeanette Weber, Board of Christian Action

FROM THE DEACONS

A SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

"Jesus loves me, Mommy, we sang about him in Sunday School." As my mother loved to tell her friends, these were my words after coming home from the Kindergarten Sunday School at the First Methodist Church in Oneida, New York. The happy realization was welcome as, with my father's debilitating illness, we were seeing hard times during the depression years of the mid-1930's. I grew up in the Church, attending Sunday School through High School years, participating with the Church-sponsored Boy Scouts and basketball team, and attending week long Church camps at ages 12 and 15. By the time I headed off to college I knew that the Church was a special place, a place that carried an atmosphere of reverence and realization.

Graduating from college early in the Korean War and joining the Navy, after months of training I found myself guiding my Navy Destroyer on the seas surrounding Korea. Our occasional stops in Japan, still recovering from World War II, opened a new world of sights and people, an awareness of other religions all searching for God. At sea, whether spotting the moons of Jupiter on a dark mid-watch or standing on the open Bridge as we pitched and rolled through Typhoon Lola, I saw how we tie with nature, the world of God's creation. Real experience had brought to life those stories from the Sunday School days.

Through all of this I developed faith, a force that provides perspective and stimulation, something beyond the ordinary random run of things. As the author Chamoiseau phrased it "faith is wonderful, it brings a momentum from inside when everything is petrified". I realized that all people carry the potential for both good and evil, and that the force of faith is a constant weapon to expand the good side and suppress the evil. This faith also recognizes a sense of permanence, a sense embellished while standing in the Nave of one of the great cathedrals of Europe. I drew on this sense in coping with the loss of Hildegard, my wife, this past winter.

My spiritual world is one of both seeking to understand and recognizing that many things will never be understood. Were we limited to our rational minds, this would be a frustrating experience. As a lawyer, I constantly strove to be sure I knew all the nuances of my cases and dreaded any uncertainty. Fortunately, if we let them, our minds can broaden, can open up to accept that we do not have all the answers but can look to the force that is our faith for guidance.

~ Ron Jones

*This is the first in a series of articles
written by Deacons of the church*

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!



Be sure to welcome our newest members: Amy and Michael Clulow and their children, Eleanor, Charlotte and Frances; Cammile and James Hussey and their daughter Cammie; and Sarah Sprague.

REMEMBER OWL'S KITCHEN

Please remember those in our communities in need of the basics. Non-perishable food is always welcome, and can be left in the baskets in the narthex.



Dear Mary,

On behalf of St. John's family, I send you our heartfelt thanks for such a joyous and festive concert!. The handbell concert surely was the high-light of this year's first Winter Walk in the hamlet of Copake Falls. I hope you will convey our deepest appreciation to your wonderful choir and wish you and them, our very best wishes for a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!



Best regards,
Lucy



CONSTRUCTION BEGINS!

On January 7th United Construction will begin work on renovating our Parish Hall. The construction project will undoubtedly create some inconvenience for us over the next few months, but I am confident that the outcome will be well worth it. Several adjustments to note:

For the duration of the project we will have a revised coffee hour enjoying each other's company in the Meeting House after worship – and sometimes on the stage. Refreshments may be limited.

There will be only two bathrooms available – one upstairs across from the nursery and one in the vestibule of the Meeting House.

Access through the Library Street entrance to the lift will be open every Sunday, but may not be available during the week.

The Meeting House doors will be unlocked during the day for access to the offices.

All meetings will be held in the upstairs Council Room.

There will be a construction foreman on site throughout the project. Ward Belcher is our Building Project supervisor and he will be the sole contact with the construction personnel. If you have any questions or concerns about the project, please contact Ward. Let's make a commitment to be flexible, innovative, creative and joyful!

Pastor Diane

And a note from Ward: "We are hoping to have almost all aspects of the project completed by Easter Sunday, March 31st.

From time to time, I will be giving you updates on the progress of the project and the associated costs. This is an exciting time for our church. I personally want to thank all who have pledged so generously allowing the project to go forward. If there are those who still wish to give – no amount is too small – please consider the importance of this project for the future of our church."

For the New Year

- H**old fast to your faith (Hebrews 4:14)
- A**ssemble with the saints (Hebrews 10:25)
- P**ray earnestly every day (1 Thessalonians 5:17-18)
- P**ray for great blessings (Malachi 3:10)
- Y**ield not to temptation (1 Thessalonians 5:22)

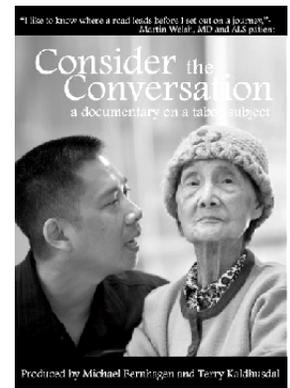
- N**eglect not your talents and opportunities (Galatians 6:10)
- E**xamine yourself daily (2 Corinthians 13:5)
- W**ork diligently for the Lord (1 Corinthians 15:58)

- Y**ield your members to righteousness (Romans 6:11, 16)
- E**xercise yourself in godliness (1 Timothy 4:7)
- A**im for a perfect, mature faith (Hebrews 6:1)
- R**edeem the time (Ephesians 5:15-16)

— Gus Nichols

"COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS"

The Scoville Memorial Library, Salisbury Visiting Nurse Association, and Salisbury Congregational Church have joined to develop "Community Conversations," a series of educational presentations and discussions scheduled throughout the year that focus on important topics.



The first in this series, "**End-of-Life: Dialogues and Decisions**," is divided into three sessions and relates to a topic many find difficult to tackle. It includes a viewing of "Consider the Conversation," an award-winning documentary, comprised of interviews with patients, family members, doctors, nurses, social workers, clergy, and national end-of-life experts who provide perspectives on what it means to die in 21st century America. Not surprisingly, what they learned was that people find it extremely hard to communicate about and prepare for the end of their life.

The series also includes guidance from the "Conversation Project," a program dedicated to helping people talk about their wishes for end-of-life care and to supporting families with making these often difficult conversations easier. The sessions will be facilitated by representatives from each of the sponsoring organizations. They will meet on **Sunday, January 27th, February 10th, and February 24th from 3:00 to 5:00 at the Scoville Memorial Library.**

From the Salisbury Sampler, January/February

Writer M. Scott Peck said "The whole course of human history may depend on a change of heart in one solitary and even humble individual--for it is in the solitary mind and soul of the individual that the battle between good and evil is waged and ultimately won or lost."

THE PEACE OF WILD THINGS

When despair for the world grows in me
and I wake in the night at the least sound
in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,
I go and lie down where the wood drake
rests in his beauty on the water,
and the great heron feeds.
I come into the peace of wild things
who do not tax their lives with forethought
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.
And I feel above me the day-blind stars
waiting with their light. For a time
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.

~ Wendell Berry



JESUS CALLS DISCIPLES

The Sunday School will begin a new rotation unit, Jesus Calls Disciples, on Sunday, January 13th. The rotation style of learning allows children to experience the theme in different learning stations each week. Jesus Calls Disciples explores the heart of what it means for us to be Christian.

We often think of "the disciples" as the 12 who were first called by Jesus. In reality, the 12 original disciples were just the beginning of a network of believers who are linked across time and space in a wondrous relationship that Jesus has with all followers, including us.

- Barbara Collins, Coordinator of Religious Education

FALL FESTIVAL WRAP-UP

The financial figures for our church's Fall Festival activities are complete, thanks to our Treasurer John Estabrook. The net proceeds (after expenses) are:



- Country Kitchen - \$644.66
- Cafe - \$307.00
- Hot Dog Tent - \$1,540.65
- Treasure Trove - \$3,332.67
- Youth Activities - \$1,637.11
- Totals: \$7,462.09

Our share of overall expenses (mostly publicity and traffic control) shared with other churches = \$544.12, for a bottom line of \$6,917.97 net.

Thanks again to everyone who was a part of the Fall Festival!

- Lee Collins, Chair

TECH TALK

Reminder: our Sunday service is shown several times a week in a slightly edited version on CATV6 - our local cable access channel. Go to <http://www.catv6.com> and click on each day's schedule to find actual times (which do vary).

You can view the services, as well as other local meetings and events, any time on YouTube at:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/MMilesWHDD?feature=mhee>

You also can find links to services on our website. Under "Pastor's Pages", select "Sermons 2012" for a YouTube link to each Sunday's service and for links to text versions of sermons:

http://www.salisburycongregational.org/sermons_2012.htm



James deBoer, whose parents attend our church, will be joining our service on **Sunday, January 27th** and will talk about his work in South America. This article written by James and his wife might peak your interest.

Ubuntu in Argentina

Written by Marian Thorpe and James deBoer

Marian Thorpe and James deBoer serve as long-term volunteers with the Round Table for Mission Development of the Disciples of Christ Church in Argentina and Paraguay, as consultants for mission development. This is their mission reflection:

We were leading a workshop in which we asked people what they thought were the basic human needs. After food, shelter, clothing, we moved to purpose, community, and identity. Then someone mentioned "maté", and we paused to think about whether maté was properly a physical or emotional/spiritual need, eventually settling on both. So, we think that maté serves as a living expression of the togetherness implicit in Ubuntu.

One of Argentina's favorite beverages is maté ("MAH-tay"), a tea-like beverage made from a South American relative of the holly plant. It's a little bit like a very strong green tea. We've seen all kinds of people drinking maté in every possible setting: the cashier was drinking it when I bought vegetables at the corner store. A few days ago we saw a woman drinking maté on the back of a moving motorcycle. And of course we drink lots of maté at church meetings.

Drinking maté has certain rules. We definitely don't know all the rules yet, but here's what we've figured out so far.

First, maté requires special equipment. You need a special cup, also called a maté, to hold the maté leaves. You also need a metal straw, called a bombilla that has a strainer on the end to filter the tea. And you need a thermos, or termo, to carry your hot water around with you, on your motorcycle or wherever.

Second, when you're with a group, maté should be shared. The entire group uses one maté cup and one bombilla, with each person drinking their own cupful in turn. One person self-designates as the server, preparing the maté cup, pouring the hot water carefully over the leaves, and making sure that everyone gets a chance to drink.

Third, if you want more maté, it doesn't pay to be polite. Saying "gracias" when someone hands you the maté cup means that you're done drinking. So when someone offers you the cup just accept it and sip away.

Maté seems to be an essential part of church meetings. It has a little bit of caffeine to keep everyone awake, and the process of passing the cup offers just enough distraction for folks who get bored easily. But best of all, at least for us, is that it reminds us that even in the minutiae of church business, we can always find opportunities for sharing and collaboration.

James deBoer and Marian Thorpe, Long-Term Volunteers with the Round Table for Mission Development of the Disciples of Christ Church in Argentina and Paraguay

Free for the taking

The ping pong table on stage is yours for the taking. We no longer have room or need for it. See or call Lee Collins - 860-436-0051

"We will open the book. Its pages are blank. We are going to put words on them ourselves. The book is called Opportunity and its first chapter is New Year's Day."

—Edith Lovejoy Pierce

JANUARY

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--|--|----------------------------|---|------------------------------|---|---|
| Week of Prayer for Christian Unity January 18-25, 2013 | | 1 <i>New Year's Day</i> | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6 10:00 - Intergenerational Worship & Communion. Special Epiphany presentation. No church school; crib/toddler care available. OWL's Kitchen food collection. 11:30 - Board of Trustees <i>Epiphany</i> | 7 Construction starts on Parish Hall Renovation | 8 | 9 7:30 - Choir Rehearsal | 10 | 11 8:00 - Men's Inter-faith Bible Study* | 12 7:00 p.m. - Rebecca Palmer concert* |
| 13 10:00 - Worship & church school | 14 | 15 | 16 7:30 - Choir Rehearsal | 17 | 18 8:00 - Men's Inter-faith Bible Study* | 19 |
| 20 10:00 - Worship & church school; Salisbury School Student presentation <i>Martin Luther King Sunday</i> | 21 <i>Martin Luther King's Birthday (Observed)</i> | 22 | 23 10:00 - Knitting Group at Harriet Morrill's house 7:30 - Choir Rehearsal | 24 | 25 8:00 - Men's Inter-faith Bible Study* | 26 |
| 27 10:00 - Worship & church school; James deBoer, UCC Mission Partner visit* 4:00 - Consider the Conversation (at the library) | 28 12:00 - Brown Bag Lunch in the upstairs meeting room | 29 | 30 7:30 - Choir Rehearsal | 31 5:30 - Deacons meeting | * Article in this MHT | |

DEADLINE FOR THE FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER: SATURDAY, JANUARY 19TH



Happy
January
Birthdays

- 1st Don Mayland
- 2nd Joy Fitting
- 2nd Ron Jones
- 6th Tim Hughes
- 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
- 29th Van Liott
- 30th Rick Morrill
- 30th Bob Newman
- 31st Kate Pastore
- 31st Sam Pastore

CELEBRATING EPIPHANY

Epiphany, from the Greek word epiphaneia, means an appearance or manifestation. Christians celebrate this festival each year on January 6, the 12th day after Christmas. Epiphany ends on Ash Wednesday, when Lent begins.

Epiphany marks the coming of the Magi, or wise men, to worship the baby Jesus. Because the Magi were Gentiles, Epiphany symbolizes the first recognition of Christ by non-Jews. It's a reminder that Christ came as the light — and Savior — of the whole world.

The traditional color for Epiphany is green, indicating life, growth, hope and eternity. Symbols for the season include a light, candle or star; a crown or three crowns; three gifts; and a globe. In the modern church, Epiphany has become a time to focus on reaching out and "showing" Jesus as the Savior of all people. It's also a reminder to engage in Christian community and to heal divisions among God's children.



EPIPHANY

ACTUAL ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM CHURCH BULLETINS

- Coming Up—Theological Open House. We discuss thought-provoking topics. Your opinions are hardy welcome.
- All singles are invited to join us Friday at 7 p.m. for the annula Christmas Sing-alone."
- Thursday night – potluck supper. Prayer and medication to follow.
- Remember in prayer the many who are sick of our church and the community.
- For those of you who have children and don't know it, we have a nursery downstairs.
- The rosebud on the altar this morning is to announce the birth of David Alan Belzer, the sin of Rev. and Mrs. Julius Belzer.



As you head into 2013, create a special journal for the new year.

What you need:

- Spiral notebook (with a plain-colored cover)
- Foam letters, numbers and shapes
- Stickers
- Jewels and glue (optional)

What you do:

- Decorate the notebook cover with letters and numbers. Options include "2013," "Journal" or your name.
- Decorate with foam shapes, stickers or jewels.
- Write in the journal daily – or whenever possible – recording life events, thoughts, prayer requests and more.
- Keep the journal private or share it with your friends and family.



PLANS FOR THE NEW YEAR

Want to start the new year off right? Remember to always ask God for guidance.

Directions: Write each word (or word part) in the correct numbered box to complete Proverbs 16:3, NIV.

| JANUARY 2013 | | | | | | |
|--------------|--------|---------|-----------|----------|--------|----------|
| SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY |
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 |
| 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 |
| 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | | |

14 – tab 18 – Pro 7 – ever 6 – what 15 – lish 8 – you 4 – the
 21 – :3 16 – your 9 – do 1 – Com 20 – 16 11 – he 10 – and 22 – NIV
 3 – to 12 – will 19 – verbs 13 – es 2 – mit 17 – plans 5 – LORD

Answer: "Commit to the LORD whatever you do and he will establish your plans." Proverbs 16:3, NIV

One Sunday morning, the pastor noticed little Alex was staring up at the large plaque that hung in the foyer of the church. The plaque was covered with names, and small American flags were mounted on either side of it.

The seven-year old had been staring at the plaque for some time, so the pastor walked up, stood beside the boy, and said quietly, "Good morning Alex."

"Good morning pastor," replied the young man, still focused on the plaque.

"Pastor McGhee, what is this?" Alex asked.

"Well, son, it's a memorial to all the young men and women who died in the service."

Soberly, they stood together, staring at the large plaque. Little Alex's voice was barely audible when he asked, "Which service, the 8:30 or the 11:00?"

