

The Meeting House Times



The Congregational Church of Salisbury, United Church of Christ

March 2010



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

Pamela Wyeth, Editor

What's Inside....

Pastor's Letter	2
Email Addresses	3
Musical Cantata	3
OGHS	4
Search Cmte. Update	4
Changin' Times	5
Potluck Supper	5
St. Mary's Lenten Series	5
Calendar & Birthdays	6
Palm Sunday	6
Kid's Corner	7

World Day of Prayer Friday, March 5th ~ 2:00pm Salisbury Congregational Church

World Day of Prayer is a worldwide ecumenical movement of many traditions that come together to observe a common day of prayer each year on the first Friday in March. This year's World Day of Prayer service will begin at the first sunrise on March 5th in the Pacific region and will follow the earth's orbit, shining its light on Papua New Guinea, the Americas, the Atlantic ocean, Europe, the coast of West Africa and the rest of the world. You are invited to share the same service of worship with 170 countries. Hundreds of thousands of women, men, youth and children from around the world will gather collectively to worship on **Friday, March 5th**. Please join us for this special service.

Ruth Tyrol and Heather Schaufele

2010 World Day of Prayer ~ The Women of Cameroon "Let Everything That Has Breath Praise God"

Every year, the World Day of Prayer focuses its informed prayer and prayerful action on a particular country. This year it's Cameroon. The women of Cameroon tell us, "In the Cameroonian context people praise God even in and especially during difficult times in their lives. This is because generally we consider life to be God's greatest gift to us. As long as one has breath, there is hope. So we sing in the hope that things will be better."

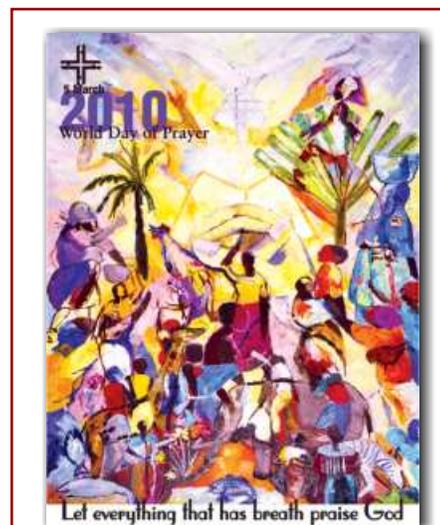
In this statement we become aware of the inseparable connection and creative interplay between two key words of the theme: breath and praise. While the mechanisms will vary among all the species that inhabit the earth, nonetheless, everything that is alive breathes.

Mostly we do not notice our breathing until we have difficulties. Then we say, "I need to catch my breath." When we sing we use our breath to make music. When we are in acute pain, we cry out. Whatever sound we make, it is linked to our breath, to our very life which is a gift from God. In English the word praise has its root in the verb to prize, to value. Our sisters from Cameroon remind us that with every breath we renew the gift of life and for this we praise God.

As we begin our journey with the women of Cameroon, we learn about the social challenges that include the trafficking of children, particularly girls for sexual exploitation and slavery, gender issues that allow the perpetuation of violence against women and women losing their land rights. We will ask and seek answers to questions about possibility and justice in Cameroon. On Friday, March 5, 2010, we welcome the Worshipping Community to join the women of Cameroon.

Let's turn our prayers into action.

To learn more visit the World Day of Prayer website: www.worlddayofprayer.net.



THE MATTER OF PATHS



It is no secret or revelation that our choices not only make us who we are; they help, in some major or minor ways, to form and shape those around us. To a certain extent, they also determine who and what we will *not* become. This fact, of course, creates that moment of crisis specifically for those of us

supposedly entering that emotional black hole of “midlife.” All that we are, all that we are not – and some aspect of what others become – are impacted by the paths we take and what we choose to do on those paths.

“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” (Psalm 119: 105)

The reference to the word of God as being a light and lamp in the Scriptures has several contexts.

- A brace against sin and temptation;
- An avoidance of foolishness and poor choices of behavior;
- A curbing of our less-than-godly human nature, as light is shown on areas in which we need to enact discipline;
- A source of direction for moving forward in both godliness and intentional living.

It is the fourth purpose above that holds my interest in this particular reflection.

When discussing the aspects of effective decision-making, the issue of making choices between apparently good options is almost always raised. In other words, when one is posed with making decisions as to the investment of time, money, energy or passion, there are often several options that will appear to have their own list of advantages. The question, then, is more refined than simply a matter of determining what is good vs. what is bad for us, and poses the more important issue of what is better.

Paul brings this up with candor in I Corinthians, when speaking of the impact Jewish religious law still had on the activities of Christians, as well as on their behavior toward each other. In chapter 6:12 he states clearly that there are decisions and options that, while available to us without the intrusion of sin, they may not be for the best. “*All things are lawful*”, he says, “*but not all things are expedient.*” He reiterates this sentiment in chapter 10:23 when stating that ...[*While*] “*all things are lawful, not all things edify.*”

The Greek word here translated “expedient” in the first verse is “*sunpheros*,” which literally means “to bring profit with it.” In other words, all things are allowable, but they don't necessarily

present the greatest benefit. If one were to divide up the translated word *expedient*, it would prove to mean “to free up one's feet” – to remove hindrances in order to make their steps more deliberate, more firm.

Continuing with this mini-Greek lesson, the word that has been translated “edify” – *oikodomeo* – literally means “to build upon or add to a structure, in order to make it more secure, strong, or stable.” In a metaphoric or spiritual context, this would refer to promoting one's spiritual growth and development of character. *These* are the concerns behind discerning what is *better*; these are the considerations we should be giving when posed with choices that, while perhaps equally viable options, may not be equal in their potential for promoting our stability, our personal growth, our walk with the Lord, and our ability to impact others for their betterment as well.

Psalm 119 implies that the word and law of God acts as a dually-illuminating device. The *lamp* is for our feet – to keep their individual steps firm, solid, and clear of obstacles. The *light*, however, is for our path, and this plays out a very different function. This kind of lighting is provided for the view of what is ahead, for the future, for where our feet are meant to take us – and, possibly, to reveal some of what we can expect to find when we arrive. When our future – individual or corporate – is the issue at stake, we are pressed to lean more heavily on the word and promises of God for clear, indeed *clearer*, direction. The folly of depending solely on our ability to discern the circumstances in front of us is repeatedly warned against in the book of Proverbs, and with good reason. No matter how good our intentions, our perceptions, or our motivations, we cannot see all that is relevant ahead of us, unless there is a light being shone down on it...and that, from our Lord.

The roads – the paths – that we choose to take do make all the difference. The question is... where will they take us? What will we gain by taking one or the other? And what will we lose? Will that path be the best for us? Will it, in the end, bring us to a better place? And just as important, will it enable us to serve and interact with those in our lives more effectively?

The responsibility for those answers lies on our shoulders; but thankfully, also within our grasp - if we are leaning on a source of light beyond ourselves to help reveal them. And that remains the issue, and the challenge, of *paths* – the ones we choose, and choose not, to take.

Pastor Steve

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



Do we have your e-mail address?

Our email list has roughly 70 addresses on it out of a general mailing list of more than 250 people. Surely there must be some who aren't being included in our occasional emailed notices, reminders and invitations. Don't be left out!

If you have an email address and you're not receiving emails from the church, the best way to get connected is to send an email to: salisburyucc@salisburycongregational.org, with "email sign up" in the subject line. This will ensure that you receive all future email messages.

Please be assured that your email address will never be shared with anyone outside the church.

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

Three trees high on a hill, dreaming what they'll be one day

"The Tale of The Three Trees," a musical cantata, will be presented during morning worship on **Sunday, March 21st**, by the children of the church school and some adult friends. This moving legend tells the Easter story from an unusual point of view. Mark your calendar and plan to make this part of your Lenten experience this year. You'll be glad you did.



Why every day should be Palm Sunday

Jesus was all about giving. He gave of himself. He who was rich became poor that we might be rich. He gave until there was no more to give.

He was all about goodness. The essential goodness of Jesus, unparalleled by anyone before him or after him, testifies to the life to which we are called. When he saw the crowds as sheep not having a shepherd, he was moved with compassion - he became almost physically sick, so great was his love.

Let's give Jesus the palm branch treatment, but let's not make this a one-Sunday wonder. His grace, his giving and his goodness compel us to change our behavior, not just pat him on the back, or complain behind his back.



The Kids Really Scored!

SOUPer Bowl Sunday, February 7th, the Church School collected 64 cans of soup for OWL's Kitchen on SOUPer Bowl Sunday. Folks who voted for their favorite team at fellowship hour with change from their pockets were accurate in their prediction: \$11.52 for the Saints and \$10.35 for the Colts. In case you have forgotten, the Saints were victorious over the Colts later in the day as well, with a final score of 31-17. The Church School used some of its collection money to bring the total score for OWL's Kitchen to 64(soups)-64(dollars). Thanks to all who helped us with this drive.



One Great Hour of Sharing - Palm Sunday, March 28th

Sharing Resources, Changing Lives Feed my Sheep



In his final moments with his disciples, the Good Shepherd asks Peter, "Do you love me?" "Yes," Peter replies. Then, "Feed my lambs," Jesus tells him. "Tend my sheep." Three times, Jesus passionately repeats his instruction, pressing his followers: If you love me, take care of the people I love. (John 21:15-19)

The members of the family of God including those in parts of the world we may never visit, are God's flock, the sheep of God's pasture (Ezekiel 34:31). Yet God's flock is often forcefully scattered as people are chased from their homes and livelihoods by brutal expressions of war, or as communities are blasted by natural disasters, or as societies and countries are ground down by unrelenting hunger, disease, and poverty.

Soon you'll have an opportunity to offer your gift to **One Great Hour of Sharing**, empowering the United Church of Christ to offer disaster relief and refugee aid, meeting basic needs in Christ's name throughout the world. Soon each of us will have the opportunity to decide how to participate in an offering that helps strengthen people to improve their own lives and communities.

Through **One Great Hour of Sharing**:

- disaster victims quickly receive shelter, food, water, and medical supplies
- local communities develop secure sources of food and clean water
- minds and bodies grow stronger with new schools and medical clinics
- refugees receive housing and long-term help to construct new lives
- women and communities are empowered through micro-credit loans and community development opportunities.

In challenging times, we often wonder how much we can afford to sacrifice to help feed Jesus' beloved sheep, when our needs remain pressing. Perhaps only through prayer can we decide how to respond to Jesus' call to feed His Sheep. Remember the feeding of the 5,000: when Jesus asked the disciples to feed the hungry crowd, the disciples despaired (Mark 6:34-44). The five loaves and two fish seemed insignificant compared to the massive need. Yet when each gave sacrificially from what they had, through God's blessing, their gifts turned into a miracle of compassion for all.

Through **One Great Hour of Sharing**, our gifts meet compelling needs, while also bringing the blessing of compassion into our own lives. The current economic situation is challenging for many of us. For many others, it has pushed beyond challenging to be life-threatening. If you are able to do so, consider increasing your gift this year. Heed Jesus' call to feed his sheep with a generous, even sacrificial, gift to **One Great Hour of Sharing**. Sharing your resources, you'll change lives — including your own.

Deadline for the April Newsletter is Saturday, March 20th

Search Committee Update

As of February 18th, the Search Committee has met three times since being commissioned: once with CT Conference Regional Minister, Mike Ciba, and then we were off on our own.

Our co-chairs are Sarah Zarbock and Cynthia LaPier. Recording Secretary is Theresa Carroll, and Corresponding Secretary is Carol McGowan. Alden Tyrol is the committee's chaplain. Additional members are Malcolm Brown, Mary Davidson, and John Arnold.

We are in the process of getting to know each other and the task before us.

We will meet every week and keep you updated when there is progress to report.

- We will hang a **Progress Poster in the parish hall. (You may remember a similar poster from the last search.)**
- Updates will be placed in the **The Meeting House Times.**
- We will make announcements in **Sunday services at least once a month.**

Your continued prayers for the committee, for our congregation, for Rev. Steve Austin, and for our as yet unknown pastor are deeply appreciated.



Theresa Carroll for the Search Committee

The Times They Are A-Changin'!

Theresa Carroll and Missy Hanlon (Board of Religious Education), Steve Austin, and I recently attended a special day of conversation and workshops presented by the Connecticut Association of United Church Educators (CAUCE).

The event was held in Naugatuck on February 6th and the theme was "The Times They Are A-Changin'!" The keynote speaker was Debbie Gline Allen, a Christian educator from New Hampshire who serves on the national board of the Association of United Church Educators (AUCE) and is also involved in writing the new UCC church school curriculum, "Faith Practices."

Ms. Allen reflected on the loss of support for the "school" model of Christian Education. She pointed to cultural changes which have greatly affected Sunday School as we have known it. Families are making choices for their children's time, with church activities often coming in second. Those families with children who do attend worship and/or Sunday School have become a cultural minority. Confirmation of teenagers is too often viewed as graduation from the church and our youth disappear from the scene.

Ms. Allen challenges us to examine why we are doing what we have always done. She reminds us that one's spiritual formation takes place over a life-long continuum. The stories of our biblical heritage speak to everyone of every age and level of spiritual maturity. Children "catch" the faith from their elders (and vice versa!) and learning is heightened and remembered through the five senses, through artistic expression, and by practicing the faith together with the whole community present.

Intergenerational worship and other intergenerational opportunities are to be strongly encouraged.

It was a thought-provoking day and stimulated some interesting conversation on the drive home!

Barbara Collins, Coordinator of Christian Education



2010 "Soup and ..."

Lenten Wednesdays at St. Mary's Church

March 3: Jason Gappa, Berkshire School, "Faith and Youth in 2010"

March 10: **Rev. Steve Austin, Salisbury Congregational**, (Topic to be decided)

March 17: Ron Afzal, Professor of Religion at Sarah Lawrence College & Hartford Seminary, (Topic to be decided)

March 24: Mary Lou Tanner, St. Joseph College & Hartford Seminary, "Muslim Women in America"

All evenings begin at 5:30 with home-made soups and... in the church hall. The speaker will begin at 6:30p.m., also in the church hall. Most evenings will conclude between 7:30 - 8:00p.m. Please call St. Mary's for further information at 860-435-2659 or email at churchofstmary@snet.net

Church of St. Mary, 76 Sharon Rd., Lakeville

Submitted by Father Joseph Kurnath

Join Us For Supper

There will be a potluck supper on Friday, March 19th, 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.



After supper there will be a rehearsal for "The Tale of the Three Trees" from 6:15-7:00.

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).



March



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2 9:30am - Lenten Study Group 7:00pm - Lenten Study Group	3 10:00 - Prayer Group 7:30 - Choir Rehearsal	4 5:15 - Bell Choir Rehearsal	5 World Day of Prayer 2:00 - Service	6
10:00 - Worship & Communion and Church School 11:15 - Board of Trustees 5:00-7:30 Confirmation Class at Collins' house <i>Girl Scout Sunday</i> <i>3rd Sunday in Lent</i>	7	8	9 9:30am - Lenten Study Group 7:00pm - Lenten Study Group	10 7:30 - Choir Rehearsal	11 5:15 - Bell Choir Rehearsal	12 13
10:00 - Worship & Church School 11:15 - Board of Christian Action <i>Daylight-Saving Time begins</i> <i>4th Sunday in Lent</i>	14	15	16 9:30am - Lenten Study Group 7:00pm - Lenten Study Group	17 10:00 - Prayer Group 7:30 - Choir Rehearsal	18 5:15 - Bell Choir Rehearsal	19 20 <i>First Day of Spring</i>
10:00 - Worship & Church School 11:15 - Church Council <i>5th Sunday in Lent</i>	21	22	23 9:30am - Lenten Study Group 7:00pm - Lenten Study Group	24 7:30 - Choir Rehearsal	25 5:15 - Bell Choir Rehearsal	26 27
10:00 - Worship & Church School 11:15 - Board of Deacons 5:00-7:30 - Confirmation Class <i>Passion/Palm Sunday</i> <i>Holy Week Begins</i>	28	29	30 9:30am - Lenten Study Group 7:00pm - Lenten Study Group	31 10:00 - Prayer Group 7:30 - Choir Rehearsal	Holy Week - March 28th - April 3rd	



MARCH BIRTHDAYS

- 1st Robert Weber
- 4th Desean Taber
- 6th Olivia May
- 9th Katrina Martin
- 9th George Kellogg
- 10th Dave Heck
- 13th Carrie Babigian
- 13th Hawk Blumert
- 13th Michelle Kinzinger
- 14th Lester Lipton
- 14th Debra Palmer
- 17th Leanne LaFosse
- 18th Hawk Blumert
- 18th Samantha Wilson
- 21st Rebecca Offensend
- 23rd Barbara Branchina
- 23rd Karin Noyes
- 27th Bill Fox
- 31st Lauren Hanlon
- 31st Sarah Zarbock



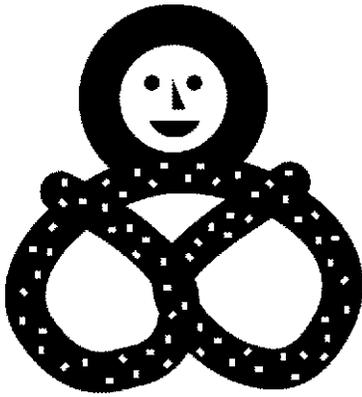
PALM SUNDAY - MARCH 28TH

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.



Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

This year the **One Great Hour of Sharing** offering will 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, March 28th.



Pretzels for Lent

The common pretzel was originally designed for use during Lent. Sometime during the Middle Ages, when Lent was accompanied by strict bans on dairy products and meat, people subsisted largely on breads, pastries, soups and vegetables. Bakers in Germany decided to create a food that would even look religious — the pretzel. The crossed arms of a pretzel represent a Christian in prayer. Place the palm of each hand on the opposite shoulder, so that your forearms cross. That's the shape of a pretzel.

How do you fix a broken tomato?
With tomato paste!

What is small, red and whispers?
A hoarse radish!

What do you say to spoiled lettuce?
You should have your head examined.

What do you call a fly without wings?
A walk!

How do you catch a rabbit?
Hide behind a tree and make a sound like
a carrot.

What kind of shoes are made out of
banana peels?
Slippers!

Dust to Dust

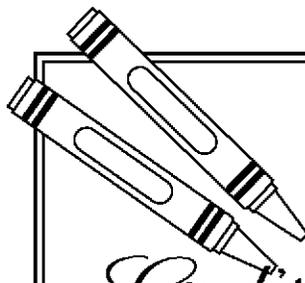
On their way home from attending an Ash Wednesday service, little Johnny asked his mother, "Is it true, Mommy, that we are made of dust like the minister said tonight?"

"Yes, darling," his mother answered.

"And is it true that we go back to dust again when we die?"

"Yes, dear," his mother replied.

"Well, Mommy, when I said my prayers last night and looked under the bed, I saw someone who is either coming or going."



Just for KIDS

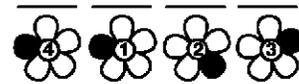
God's teaching is like....

In Deuteronomy, Moses' words to the children of Israel remind us of spring, which brings growth and new life.

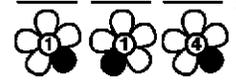
Use the flower code below to fill in the blanks, revealing Deuteronomy 32:2, NIV.



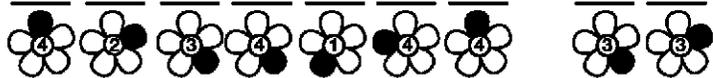
"Let my teaching fall like



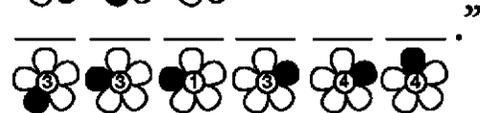
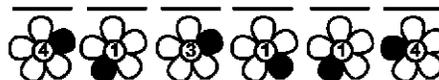
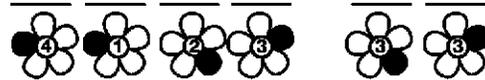
and my words descend like



like



like abundant



Answers: rain, dew, showers on new grass, rain on tender plants

