

The Messenger

March 2011



The United Methodist Church, Clinton, CT
Pastor M. Craig Fitzsimmons



A Peaceful Kingdom

Quilted by Elise Fitzsimmons



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Our mission statement

We celebrate the presence
of the Holy Spirit;
being and making disciples of Christ
by sharing God's gifts
through word and deed.



There was a good mood and a good attendance at our Church Conference on February 6th. We were once again pleased to have our District Superintendent, The Rev. Ken Kieffer, at worship to assist with communion as well as to lead the Conference. Our youth made a favorable impression with their collection for the Souper Bowl of Caring and providing the lunch afterwards. The proceeds from the donations to the lunch will be used toward their trip to Perdue this summer for Youth 2011.

While there was business to be done, electing Trustees and officers, and receiving the Annual Report, the meeting mostly focused on areas of celebration and concern. We were able to talk about significant accomplishments and celebrate our mission and ministry in the community and beyond. It takes a lot of people to recognize their gifts and use them for ministry.

Sometimes we think that the Nominating and Leadership Development Committee is just trying to fill the necessary slots for various committees and sometimes it feels like a chore to say yes to another meeting. It has always been my hope that we do not just have a list of names but rather a list of gifted people putting their talents to good use for the ministry of Jesus Christ through the United Methodist Church of Clinton. The purpose for our committees is to empower people to do the ministry to which they have been called through the church. Elsewhere I have spoken about not counting the “no’s.” What that means is if there is someone who has a passion for an aspect of mission, service, or a new ministry, as long as it fits with our core beliefs and mission, we should encourage them to go ahead, gather other people and move on, whether or not we personally are particularly interested or want to be involved.

Mickey Anders, in ‘The Beginning of Ministry’ wrote, “Someone has said there is a huge difference between having a job at church and having a ministry at church.

...If you are doing it because no one else will, it’s a job.

If you are doing it to serve the Lord, it’s a ministry.

...If you’re doing it just well enough to get by, it’s a job.

If you’re doing it to the best of your ability, it’s a ministry.

...If you'll do it only so long as it doesn't interfere with other activities, it's a job.

If you're committed to staying with it even when it means letting go of other things, it's a ministry.

...It's hard to get excited about a job.

It's almost impossible not to get excited about a ministry.

...An average church is filled with people doing jobs.

A great church is filled with people involved in ministry.

By this definition, I think we have a great church. Thank you to all who have taken the call to discipleship seriously. Even though what we do has real meaning, we do it in love and with great joy, and we even have some fun along the way! May God continue to bless our ministry together in the days and years ahead.

Shalom!

Craig



L E N T E N

Bible Study

Beginning on March 8 and every Tuesday during Lent, Pastor Craig will lead a lively discussion of the scriptures to be used in the following Sunday service. All are welcome at 7:00 PM in Fellowship Hall. The texts, *Blessings of the Cross*, by the Rev. Robert Martin Walker, are available from the church office.

Different translations and paraphrases of the Bible are used and each week's lesson stands alone. So come to all seven studies or two or three as your schedule permits. Through the readings, we hear the call to celebrate the blessings of new life offered through Jesus Christ.

The Rev. William Sloane Coffin said, "Too many Christians use the Bible the way a drunk uses a lamppost: more for support than illumination." Join the Lenten Bible Study to listen to God, to learn from God and to be enlightened by God.

Month of Sundays

March 6

**Last Sunday after Epiphany
Pretzel Sunday**

Greeters

Youth Group

Ushers

Rachel Benisvy, Haley Parent,
Jonas Thelin, Megan Lohutko

Acolytes

Infant/toddler care

Linda Symmes

Sound coordinator

Tammy Drena

Camera operator

Dan Attanasio

Worship leader

Dennis Dollahite

Lectionary scriptures

Exodus 24:12-18; Psalm 99;
2 Peter 1:16-21; Matthew 17:1-9

Sermon

Pastor Craig Fitzsimmons

Fellowship hosts

Youth Group

Pretzel Sunday

The Missions Committee will be giving the congregation fresh baked pretzels on Sunday, March 6.



March 13

First Sunday in Lent Time to
Holy Communion Spring Ahead

Greeters

The Wells Family

Ushers

Sally Cotter, Ginny Burr,
David Moore, Lyle Cubberly,
Drew Dupre

Acolytes

Infant/toddler care

Linda Symmes

Sound coordinator

Ally Gates

Camera operator

Lisa Sutherland

Worship leader

Mickey Brown

Lectionary scriptures

Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7; Psalm 32;
Romans 5:12-19; Matthew 4:1-11

Sermon

Pastor Craig Fitzsimmons

Communion steward

Evelyn Scaglione

Fellowship hosts

The Wells Family

Free daily meditations

In addition to *Our Daily Bread* and *The Upper Room*, there are several copies of *Renewed for Life*, a booklet of Lenten Meditations by Henri Nouwen provided for you at no cost. Deepen your sense of the presence of God and the possibilities for your life by spending a few minutes each day in reading and prayer.

March 20

Second Sunday in Lent

Greeters

Beverly Jones, Jessica Ryan

Ushers

Dennis Scaglione, Bob McLeod,

John Pope, Gerald Cotter, Dave Wahl

Acolytes

Infant/toddler care

Linda Symmes

Sound coordinator

Jonas Thelin

Camera operator

Mickey Brown

Worship leader

Lectionary scriptures

Genesis 12:1-4a; Psalm 121;

Romans 4:1-5, 13-17; John 3:1-17

Sermon

Pastor Craig Fitzsimmons

Fellowship hosts

Dennis and Evelyn Scaglione

March 27

Third Sunday in Lent

Greeters

Ushers

Rachel Benisvy, Haley Parent,

Justin Hauser, Alex Attanasio

Acolytes

Infant/toddler care

Linda Symmes

Sound coordinator

Lisa Sutherland

Camera operator

Dan Attanasio

Worship leader

Bev Bowen

Lectionary scriptures

Exodus 17:1-7; Psalm 95;

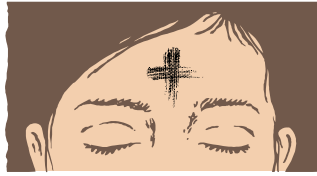
Romans 5:1-11; John 4:5-42

Sermon

Pastor Craig Fitzsimmons

Fellowship host

Ginny Burr



Ash Wednesday

The Ash Wednesday service begins at 7 pm, March 9 in the sanctuary.

Evelyn Scaglione, Sharon Minick, Gay McPhee, Lynda Larson and Ellen Hoyt will be ushering.



St Patrick's dinner

The Youth Group will serve a boiled dinner on Sunday, March 13 at 5 pm. Enjoy a delicious meal and contribute to the Youth trip to Perdue University for *Youth 2011*, a gathering of United Methodist Youth from around the world.

Lost and forgotten

A nice Dockers black jacket was hanging in the hall with our Found items for several months. This makes me think it was not left by a church member. When no one claimed it, it was taken to the Goodwill Store on East Main Street.

When you have a nice jacket or coat, it is a good idea to keep your business card in a pocket to identify it. If you don't have cards, we can laminate some for you in the office, just come in and let us know what you would like.



Free basic medical equipment available

If you live in Clinton or Killingworth and have a need for medical equipment, the First Church of Christ in Clinton is ready to help you!

Items available are: wheelchairs, shower seats, commodes, canes, walkers and crutches.

Contact the Congregational church office with your need at 860-669-5735 and your call will be returned within 24 hours.

Since much of this type of equipment, including 7 walkers, now resides in our church attic, we have offered them to this committee which has more convenient storage areas.

SAA

I discovered printed sermons

One would think my house would be very neat after all the sorting of papers I have been doing. Alas, this isn't so. I did find some old sermons that you might remember or perhaps there is a topic that interests you in the following:

From Ralph Lord Roy, pastor from 1970 to 1974
Peace, Reconciliation and Hope (2)

From Vincent W. Watson, pastor from 1974 to 1981
The Tongue (5)
Matthew, the Man (1)
The Feast (1)

Ask for any of these from the church office.

SAA

Middle School Class

Jeane Howard and Jackie Blomberg have a class of great children. They meet at 9 AM on Sunday in Room 205. Gabby and Rebecca Dollahite, Chase and Colby Pendleton, Skylar Riley and Stephen and Tyler Wahl.

If you know someone in grades 3, 4, or 5, tell them about this or bring them to learn more about Jesus, our faith and our church.

Thank you to our Sunday morning volunteers

The time you volunteer is very much appreciated. It makes our Sunday morning worship flow smoothly and be welcoming.

If you wish to participate, please sign up on the bulletin boards next to the church office door to greet, host Fellowship time, lead the opening part of worship or donate flowers.

If you would like to be an acolyte, see Jill Hale. To usher, please speak to Neal Sorensen. Linda Symmes is in charge of the communion stewards, who prepare the elements. Lisa Sutherland is the one to ask if you would like to learn to video tape or coordinate the sound system. Bob Hale welcomes all the singers that will fit on the chancel.

As you can see, there are jobs for every skill - from outgoing performers to shy persons who prefer the background. We would love to have you participate.

The video ministry grows

We have been sending DVDs of our Sunday services to some who cannot get to the church. A generous gift from a member will now allow us to mail the DVDs to others. Please tell the office if you know of people who are associated with our church but unable to attend.

The church bell

When the church was dedicated in 1855 there was a steeple, but no bell. In 1870, \$800 was paid to the West Troy Bell Foundry on account. Then the women went to work. With suppers at 10¢ per ticket, hand sewing shirts for men and an occasional quilt sold for \$25, the goal of \$319 was reached. The bell has a fine tone and when the wind is right, it can be heard for several miles. It was removed from the tower in 1996 and now awaits the building of a protective gazebo.

March is Women's History Month



Barbara Ruckle was born in Ireland in 1734. Her family was deeply influenced by the Wesleyan movement and Barbara was converted at age 18. In 1760 she married Paul Heck and they sailed with a group of Irish Palatines for New York City.

After their linen producing company failed, the group was discouraged and spiritually adrift. One day Barbara came upon a group of her friends playing cards. She grabbed the cards and threw them into the fireplace, saying “Now look at your idols, there are your gods.” She then went to Philip Embury and pleaded with him to preach the gospel lest they “all go to hell.” She argued him into a ministry and within two years they were ready to building a meeting house.

After a while the Hecks, Emburys and others were able to move out of the city to the upper Hudson valley. With the outbreak of the American Revolution they moved to Canada. Barbara died in 1804 and in 1904 Methodists from Canada and the United States erected a huge granite monument over her grave. It is inscribed:

*Barbara Heck put her brave soul
against the rugged possibilities of the future
and under God brought into existence
American and Canadian Methodism
and between these her memory
will always form a most hallowed link.*

Sue Alexander

excerpts from an article by Bill Lamb
of the Canadian Methodist Society

Photo by Roy Alexander

March Birthdays

Joanna Taczanowsky	1	Liam Bell	16
Justin Whitney	3	Sloane Peterson	16
Jeffry Bell	5	William Berlepsch	18
Christine Blomberg	5	Lindsey Griswold	23
Michael Blomberg	5	Lynda Larson	23
Wayne Hawes	10	Amanda Strukus	24
David Moore	10	Dorothy Capece	25
Gay McPhee	13	Barbara Hughes	25

Warm up to 211

If you are struggling to pay for your winter heat, call 211. They will help you to understand your options and get connected to the resources you need. In 2010, 211 received over 50,000 requests for information on energy assistance from those needing help with heat and utility bills. 211 operates 24 hours a day, every day of the year.

Abraham's Tent

Mission outreach in New Haven

Many thanks to all who helped make our mission outreach in New Haven a big success this year! The cooks included Nan Hawes, Dottie Sprague, Ellen Hoyt, Beverly Bowen, Beverly Jones, Barbara Cubberly, Carolyn Berlepsch and Dennis Scaglione.

The servers at First and Summerfield UMC included Beverly Jones, Ellen Hoyt, Debbie Anderson, Drew Dupre, Ginny Burr and Fern Pope. Oven baked chicken, baked potatoes, mashed potatoes, dilled carrots, coleslaw, cranberry sauce, baked beans, Italian bread, brownies and cookies were served.

For a grace, we recited the lyrics to Daniel Damon's song *Together We Serve*. Although I did not count them, I estimate there were ten people from the community, four members of the church, who otherwise would have eaten alone, Christopher and Pastor Sara Lamar-Sterling and the six from our church. I know none of the 24 pieces of chicken were left!

Debbie brought a basket of hand knitted hats for anyone who wanted one plus a bag full that was sent to the Columbus House shelter. Thanks to all the knitters.

Everyone enjoyed the food, fellowship and the beautiful hats!

Fern Pope

Will you be ready?

There will be a training session for Emergency Response Teams (ERT) on Saturday, March 19 from 8:30 to 5:00 in Fellowship Hall. This training is for anyone interested in possibly being a part of a local church, district or annual conference ERT as well as those who might travel to Haiti during the next two years with our New York Conference Volunteer in Mission teams.

The cost is \$10 to defray the cost of a manual and food. The deadline for registration is March 13. You may register by email to: pastor@clintonumc.org or by calling the church office at 860-669-8396.

Membercare/Evangelism Committee to meet March 13

The Membercare & Evangelism Committee will meet in the Pastor's Office following the morning service on Sunday, March 13. The newly elected committee is Debbie Anderson, Fern Pope, Mickey Brown, Nan Hawes, Barbara Archer, Bob Hale, Barbara Cubberly, Carol Bell, Sharon Minick, Sue Alexander and Karin Thelin.

Soup Kitchen, 2010

Being part of the Shoreline Soup Kitchen and Pantries (SSKP) family this year and in years past has been wonderful. All the faith communities and civic groups of Clinton work to plan, prepare and serve the meals. Many people contribute foods for the meals and the remaining staples are supplied by SSKP. Everyone works well and "gets the job done" without complaints. We are very fortunate ecumenically in Clinton even when the meals served vary from 35 to 100. Our guests tell us they are pleased with the food and fellowship.

In addition to the communal meals like the ones served in our church every Wednesday, SSKP's six drivers deliver heat-n-eat meals to ten towns. Also five pantries each week give those in need enough fresh and nonperishable groceries to feed their families for three days.

The soup kitchen garden is located behind Grace Church in Old Saybrook. It and produce from six farm stands provided 37,000 pounds of fresh vegetables last year.

Charge Conference for 2010

The Charge Conference on February 6 went well, as they say. You may read about all the items of substance on the Pastor's page.

But this church has priorities and first, we had to eat the delicious buffet prepared and served by the Youth Group. Tommie Peterson and Beverly Jones brought crock pots of great soup and all the makings for sandwiches were there.

District Superintendent Kenneth Kieffer had to depart at one o'clock so the meeting agenda was covered with dispatch.

Below you can see Johanna taste testing the chips, followed by her friend, Leslie Stephenson.



A luncheon to benefit the Youth trip to Perdue

Oops...

That's the headline for a section of *The Newsletter Newsletter* that repeats a church typo with a comment. In clearing out unneeded papers in the church office, I will share a few with you before putting them in the circular (or in our case, rectangular) file. From Sunday bulletin elements—

Go forth in joy to love and serve Cod in all that you do.

We bet they're still carping about that one.

Hymn #395 Ushers will eat the latecomers

At least they would never be tardy again.

Sermon: Starting Oven

No one can call it "half-baked."

Prayer hymn: Lord Lay Some Soup upon My Heart

Chicken noodle, perhaps?

From announcements—

You may place a lily in honor of a fiend or loved one.

Depending on who you would lift up.

According to church officials, up to 375 people can be seated in the building, which has removable walls to accommodate overflow crows.

They're tired of sitting in the trees.

Come back to church this evening and participate in our Singles Grope.

It's more fun in a crowd.

Pam is a nationally known speaker on the subject of absence being the only effective form of birth control before marriage.

It works for everyone.

We have reserved 8 - 14 sties at the camp in upstate New York for July 30 to August 1.

Those who get there first hog the sites.

A coffee hour will follow the service. Host and hostage will be Mr. and Mrs. Charles Sprang.

She can leave when the dishes are washed.

There is a sheet on the bulletin board to sign up if you are willing to furnish bookies for Vacation Bible School.

Do bookies come in oatmeal?

Each prospective new member is photographed then mounted for display on New Member Sunday.

It gives a whole new meaning to wall trophies.

Sunday School - how times have changed!

In 1971 June Malloy (Dave Wahl's mother) was the Sunday School Superintendent. Mildred Day Clements and Ralph Lord Roy led the song assemblies and Vacation Bible School had 110 children, 10 teachers and 8 youth helpers.

Will we see a crowd like that again? Perhaps. Our Sunday School is again growing. We have six teachers and two youths leading the children each week.

Currently there is one class on Sunday mornings for adults. The material used is called *Adult Bible Studies* and has the same scriptures and topics that are used by 450,000 people weekly. Please see Lyle Cubberly for a textbook and join the class at 9 AM in Room 103.

Do you have difficulty with English?

I take it you already know

of *tough* and *bough* and *cough* and *dough*?

Others may stumble, but not you

on *hiccough*, *thorough*, *laugh* and *through*.

Well done! And now you wish, perhaps,

to learn of less familiar traps?

Beware of *heard*, a dreadful word

that looks like *beard* and sounds like *bird*.

And *dead*: it's said like *bed*, not *bead*—

for goodness' sake, don't call it "*deed*"!

Watch for *meat* and *great* and *threat*.

They rhyme with *suite* and *straight* and *debt*.

A *moth* is not a moth in *mother*,

Nor *both* in *bother*, *broth* in *brother*,

And *here* is not a match for *there*,

Nor *dear* and *fear* for *bear* and *pear*,

And then there's *dose* and *rose* and *lose*

Just look them up—and *goose* and *choose*,

And *cork* and *work* and *card* and *ward*

And *font* and *front* and *word* and *sword*,

And *do* and *go* and *thwart* and *cart*—

Come, come, I've hardly made a start!

A dreadful language? Man alive!

I'd mastered it when I was five.

And yet to write it, the more I tried,

I hadn't learned at fifty-five.

Joyce Snyder

After a lengthy battle with cancer, Joyce Snyder, went home to her Maker on February 5. Joyce left the Simsbury United Methodist Church to become a part of our church family on February 24, 1974.

She graduated from Simsbury High School and the Grace-New Haven School of Nursing. She then worked as a head operating room nurse at Yale-New Haven Hospital, where Peter worked in research.

Joyce was very active in church life - preparing dinners in the kitchen, making paraments and putting up seasonal decorations within and without the church. She and Peter cochaired the Couples Club and she made longtime friends in the Rebekah Circle of United Methodist Women.

Joyce also worked at Saybrook Convalescent Hospital and Gladeview Health Care and was a Life Member of the Girl Scouts of America. She is survived by her husband of 44 years, Peter. Their daughter Dr. Lori Ann Snyder and granddaughters, Amber and Wilhelmina live in Walton on the Thames, England.

A memorial service will be held in the church on Saturday, April 2. Donations may be made to Connecticut Hospice, 100 Double Beach Road, Branford.

Anne DeNicholas

Anne Suzanne DeNicholas was one of our favorite people to work with at the Thrift Mart. On the day when we all came to sort and make needed repairs to the merchandise, Anne was always there singing her favorite tunes from Broadway as she worked. A talented pianist, she gave her sheet music to our Music Director when she moved to West Hartford to be near her daughter.

Anne graduated from Yonkers High School and was in the first female graduating class of Drew University with a B.A. Degree in 1946. She earned a Masters in Education from Manhattan College in 1973 after her husband died. She taught two years in Hallowell, Maine and Yonkers, NY for 25 years. She died on January 9, 2011 and is survived by a sister, three children and nine grandchildren.

Anne came from Asbury-Crestwood UMC in Tuckahoe, New York and joined our church on November 16, 1997. She served in our Soup Kitchen and wherever she could be helpful in doing the work of the church. She was 86 on her last birthday, December 29th. A funeral service was held in Asbury-Crestwood UMC on January 14.

Church family notes

Last month I hurriedly wrote about Eleanor Stevens Wahle's life. Afterward I was reminded that she was our very first church secretary when the Rev. Robert Fell was the pastor. I-95 was finished through Clinton and church membership doubled. She was also very active in the Friendship Club and when Fellowship Hall was closed for asbestos tile removal and redecorating, she hosted the club in her home.

Her family has suggested that donations be made to The United Methodist Church of Clinton in her memory.

Sue Alexander

We are grateful for the hand knit hats that you have so generously shared with us. We pledge to honor the intent of your donation for our ministry of supportive housing.

Your support validates what we do, encourages us and enables us to continue to care for our neighbors in need. We are all blessed because of it. Thank you!

Ron Krom

Saint Vincent de Paul, Middletown

Dear Clinton UMC,

On behalf of the Connecticut District Mission and Church Extension Society (DIMCHEX), I want to thank you for your generous contribution of \$727.65 to our program.

Contributions like yours are so very helpful in allowing us to assist congregations in the Connecticut District meet special needs and to support specific local mission projects that might not be possible without the financial assistance provided by DIMCHEX.

Thank you, again, for the support of Clinton UMC.

Very truly yours,

Kevin

Kevin J. Buckley, Treasurer

I wanted to use the neat wall hanging from Pastor Craig's office on this month's Messenger cover because it is colorful and we often read and talk about lions and lambs in church.

Editor's Corner

The Peaceful Kingdom is described in Isaiah's 11th Chapter. There is much art work inspired by this dream of loving relationships between the animals. Lions are featured big time throughout the Old Testament — they must have been more common in the Mideast then. Just the word "lion" is mentioned ninety-eight times; then there are "lionesses" and "lions" which I didn't count. Young David killed lions whenever they threatened his father's flocks.

Sheep are more often mentioned in our bible, written in a time when sheep constituted livelihoods for many. We don't see either animal that often in Clinton, but they remain symbols of strength and obedience. Who said, "The lion can lie down with the sheep, but the sheep won't get much sleep"?

Well this is the March issue of *The Messenger* and we will learn if the old saying about our weather is true - *In like a lion; out like a lamb*. Our picket fence - a victim of snow plowing will be repaired and we will again be able to find sidewalks to walk on. Look for signs of spring and take a few pictures - The Messenger has been short of photos lately!

The book of Isaiah continues on to proclaim a peaceable day in the future when the Lord will gather his people from the four corners of the earth and they will live without jealousy and hostility. Travel does bring people together and that is much easier now than in Isaiah's time—it's up to us to provide the Peaceful Kingdom!

SAA

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