



ConnTact

**United
Church
News**

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Pictured front row, left to right: Kent Sistare, the Rev. Lee Ireland, Chair and the Rev. Sam Dexter. Back row: Bill Cassidy, Sue Waldron, Mary-Lawrence Sinclair, the Rev. Gordon Bates and Deborah Blood.

Enabling Justice Ministries

JIM MORGAN

the support of kidnapped Amistad people from Sierra Leone up to the U.S. Supreme Court, to the endorsement of previously forbidden roles for women in ministry and the affirmation of homosexual people as gifts of God, the desire to promote reconciliation between individuals and nations is clear. *Continued on page 5*

The historic commitment of the United Church of Christ to working for justice is well known. From the work of the Deaconess Movement to help the poor and elderly and

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Managing Consecrated Dollars



One of my many commitments to you as your Conference Minister is that we will be open and forthright with you about financial matters. There are no secrets, no hidden pockets, and we do not spend what we do not have. We use endowment income as much as possible for administrative costs, in part so that we can be effective and faith-

ful in our stewardship of the resources you entrust us with. These convictions derive from our faith commitment and from a belief that we need to model healthy behavior for our churches.

As the Rev. Dr. Nathanael Guptill, our beloved Conference Minister Emeritus, said to me when I asked for his counsel as I began my conference ministry in Southern California, "Just remember that every dollar you manage and spend was consecrated

in an offering plate in one of our churches." Good advice, Nat, and I have taken it to heart now for twelve years!

I want to apprise you of the challenge we have been working with for the past four months and tell you how we are handling it. As you and your church may be experiencing as well, the economic climate has had a significant impact on our investment income. Giving from the churches through Our Church's Wider Mission Basic Support declined in 2002, and while some churches have made generous increases this year, others have reduced their giving. In both the market and the receipt of gifts, your Conference shares the same experience as many of you are having.

Our situation was made more difficult, however, when we identified a substantive error in the formula used to project endowment income for the year. Despite multiple persons carefully reviewing the data, it wasn't caught until late last year. We've been working ever since to adjust the budget for this year so that it is more realistic. The combination of all three factors is yielding difficult results.

Here is what we are doing: virtually every line of the budget has been cut, except those that are not controllable by our effort; part-time positions that are open will not be filled; grants to various organizations and support for all programs are being

reduced, in some cases on the order of forty percent; cost controls will be even more strict, and every staff person is under a mandate to select the least costly way to accomplish things; Silver Lake will continue to be supported, of course, but we will be unable to absorb shortfalls as we have in the past.

Needless to say, it's been a tough four months! Yet, as I reflect, I find that, as always, God is opening doors. This moment challenges us not only to deal with a tough financial picture, but to ask ourselves some foundational questions about the mission and priorities of our life together. Our priority is still effective service to our churches, support for our pastors, and engagement of the mission field that is Connecticut. We need to ask deeper questions about how we serve, about what we will no longer do, and what we must address in this state in the name of Jesus Christ. We need to be in dialogue with you about your sense of the mission and your vision of the wider church. For now, I am satisfied that with the good work of our staff, especially Charlie Kuchenbrod, ACM for Administration, and with the careful attention of the Board of Directors, we have addressed the immediate challenge faithfully and effectively.

Our prayers continue for each of our churches as you face similar challenges. May you also find ways to discover what new things God is doing through a struggle!

FROM THE BOARD • THE REV. DONALD KETCHAM, CHAIR

Our United Church of Christ Polity

I have received several letters that indicate a misunderstanding of our polity as a denomination. We believe that wherever the church is gathered, it is the church in all its fullness. Therefore, the church in its fullness is present in a local church meeting, in a Conference Annual Meeting and in the General Synod Meeting.

Christ's Spirit is present at such meetings and works through the "meeting" to guide decisions and resolutions that are passed. So when you read the "Connecticut Conference Annual Meeting said," or "the General Synod Meeting held in Cleveland said," this means that those who were at the meeting, guided by the Spirit of Christ, made certain statements or resolutions. It does not mean that the whole United Church of Christ says or thinks such and such. In order to mean that, all of the local churches would have to meet, discern the

Spirit of Christ and vote to accept such statements or resolutions.

Our votes at Annual Meeting form a policy base that guides our Conference staff (just as the votes

of General Synod guide the national staff). They do all they can to make it clear that they are representing a position adopted by the delegates, not one that necessarily represents the opinions of all the members of our churches. On other occasions they may speak from their own moral and spiritual perspective, which should be taken seriously by the whole church, but may or may not represent the position of the state or national United Church of Christ. At these times, they also try to make it clear that they are speaking for themselves as leaders, not on behalf of others.

When a resolution is to be presented at a Conference Annual Meeting, the delegates should not go with directions from their church to vote in a particular way. Each delegate may find it helpful to have discussed a resolution with members of their church, but such discussion should not mandate that they vote in a par-

ticular way. They go to the meeting with a free and open conscience. This is important because no one who has not been at the "meeting" knows the Spirit's call at that meeting.

It is this polity that has enabled the United Church of Christ in its various settings to take well-considered positions without having to gain unanimity from the entire church. There are numerous examples. In our present structure, the Association makes decisions regarding ordination. Therefore, a California Association, after much thoughtful study, debate and prayer, voted in 1972 to ordain the first openly gay minister in all of Christendom. This action does not in any way mandate that another Association in another state must vote in the same way. However, any future votes on the issue will be informed by this groundbreaking vote.

Our polity allows us to take actions first, while not being limited by the necessity for unanimity in the whole church. This is the result of our belief that Christ works best through the "meeting" in the local setting.

The Rev. Donald Ketcham is pastor of the West Avon Congregational Church.

• United Church News •

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Now for the Future Campaign Update

HUGH & KATE MCLEAN

The Planning Committee for the proposed *Now for the Future* Capital Campaign has been meeting with and listening to many people these last few months. We have heard widespread affirmation of the needs that are addressed by the elements and goals of the proposed campaign. We have also heard great concern regarding the timing of the campaign. Some churches have had difficulty in meeting their own budgets, and many of us have reason to feel less financially secure and uncertain about when there will be a recovery in the future.

After much discussion, and after talking with our fundraising counsel, the Planning Committee has decided that this is not the time to undertake a feasibility study for the campaign. This postponement is an opportunity for us to lay the groundwork for a truly church-based campaign that will enhance the

ministry of Jesus Christ in local churches acting in their individual capacity and as covenanting members in the Connecticut Conference.

The Planning Committee remains committed to the vision of *Now for the Future*. We will continue to meet with congregations and other ministry groups within the Conference. We will report to you at the Annual Meeting of the Conference in October, but will not be asking you to adopt a financial goal for the *Now for the Future* Campaign at that time.

Please contact us (Kate and Hugh McLean at 860-688-0660 or Diane Ciba at 866-367-2822 toll free in CT) with any questions. We especially want to hear from you if you are planning or beginning to talk about a capital campaign in your own church.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR:

The Rev. Dr. Davida Foy Crabtree's editorial in the March issue of *ConnTact* did a fairly good job of presenting one side, but only one side, of the Title IX controversy.

No sensible person denies that Title IX has transformed women's athletics, for the better, in this country. There are now 600 more women's teams than men's teams in the NCAA. But sometimes, progress comes with a price. Such is the case with Title IX, a fact that Mrs. Crabtree chose to blow off in part of a sentence: "men being deprived."

...It's true that in America today, about 1.1 million more boys than girls play high school varsity sports. No doubt Mrs. Crabtree sees this as evil discrimination. So what's the explanation for the fact that in virtually every other major extracurricular activity (band, chorus, dance, debate, theater, student government) girls enjoy majority status? Evil discrimination?

... No reasonable person wants to go back to the pre-1972 days before Title IX. ... Certainly, girls and young women were being discriminated

against back then, and discrimination is wrong. Despite her assertion, the underlying principle of Title IX is not "under attack" by anyone.

What is being questioned is its perhaps unintended side effect, the decimation of many high school and college sports for boys and young men. Equality was, is, and will be the goal. What's needed is a way to keep the substantial gains that have been made in women's sports while not lessening men's participation in athletics. Isn't it far better to achieve parity by bringing female sports UP to the level of male sports, rather than by knocking male sports DOWN to the pre-1972 level of female sports?

Teams are being eliminated all over the country because of a quota that we would tolerate nowhere else in American public life. Equity should mean fairness for everyone. The people Mrs. Crabtree incorrectly labels as trying to "undermine" Title IX seek only to rid it of one element, the quota, which was never a part of the original intent of Title IX.

Sincerely yours,
Edward M. Luft

Save The Date!

The 136th Annual Meeting

of the Connecticut Conference United Church of Christ

Friday, Saturday and Sunday
October 17-19, 2003

Saxe Middle School
in New Canaan

KEYNOTE SPEAKER:
The Honorable Frederica
Brenneman, second woman
to be appointed a judge
in the State of Connecticut
(see story on page 8)

Remembering the Good Steward



William A. Jones was 86 years old at the time of his death. For more than sixteen of those years he served as Business Manager and Treasurer of the Connecticut Conference. He had been prepared for the position by a wide expanse of experiences; the love of wife and children, the discipline of secular work, the disaster of war. He brought much with him when he entered the portals of 125 Sherman Street.

Especially, he carried in his heart a faith which had been fed by his pilgrimage. Faith Church, where he served abundantly and well, in times of adversity as well as times of joy, had contributed to his talent and spirit. He could give so much, because, religiously speaking, he had received so much. Paul wrote in *Colossians* that we should thank God, "who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light." He was thankful to be given the opportunity of serving the Conference. He was proud of his calling.

This devoted churchman was an accomplished workman. It has been said that each of us writes two ledgers as we travel life's way, that which is seen by humanity, and the other that is seen by God. In Bill's case, that which is seen by God contains the greater accounts.

When we remember the richness of his character, and thoughts of fairness, kindness, warmth, and discipline come to mind, we have to be careful not to elevate Bill to saint-

hood. This humble man would not relish that for he was very human. When matters demanded it, he could be quite stern. He needed to be, after all he was the one to whom we carried our parsonage complaints, our expense vouchers, and mileage account sheets.

His tasks were many, and there were very few areas of the Conference which did not share his input. He worked closely with the Department of Church Development as he helped to monitor the health of our aided churches. Often we would drive to a faraway place, where it became dark at night, and there was little but the North Star to guide us. He brought to such meetings unique gifts of patience and understanding. He was good at it. Perhaps he would counsel a riled up laity to be patient a little longer, or perhaps he would be challenged as to a specific budget item or other stewardship concern.

He was our ambassador to the Wider Church. His reputation was such that he was often sought out for advice and support, and his laughter was a comforting balm in many an unpromising situation.

Every so often there is a moment when we can look into the soul of another and discover the guiding vision of that person's life. One evening, he invited me to attend a gathering at Warburton Chapel to celebrate some urban programs and to give some personal recognitions for challenging accomplishments. During the evening, James Seldon Johnson's great anthem was sung. Bill had a great voice. I was standing beside him, watching and hearing him sing. He did not need the aid of printed works. From his memory and heart the words sang out:

*Lift ev'ry voice and sing,
Til earth and heaven ring -*

The verses continued:

*We have come over a way
That with tears has been watered.*

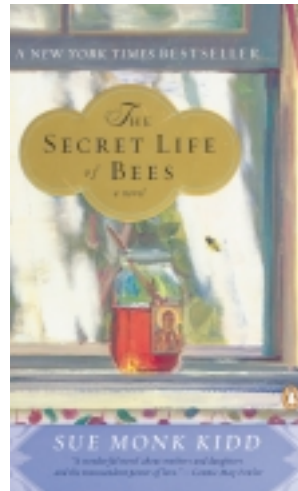
Bill's eyes were closed and his cheeks were wet.

Bill was a great steward who took what history gave him and used his endowments to the good of the Conference and the Glory of God.

The Rev. Allen Tinkham served as the Minister of Church Development for the Connecticut Conference, UCC, was the Archivist for the Conference and served as Interim Minister in a number of churches.

The Secret Life of Bees, A Novel

Sue Monk Kidd
Viking Penguin 2002



Lily Owens is 14. She has lived all of her years on a South Carolina peach farm under the control of her harsh, unyielding father and a fierce-hearted black woman, Rosaleen, who has served as her stand-in mother since she was four. Set in the civil rights era of 1964, this novel tells the story of a young woman's journey to adulthood and awareness. Haunted by a vague memory of her mother's untimely death, Lily and Rosaleen leave home in a hurry when Rosaleen unsuccessfully tries to register to vote. Lily is drawn to Tiburon, South Carolina by a memento left by her mother. There, Lily and Rosaleen are taken in by three black women beekeepers. In this home, dominated by a black Madonna matriarch, Lily finds the love and support she needs to unravel the mystery of her mother's death and her role in that death.

She learns about discrimination and acceptance. At one point Lily reflects, "Up until then I'd thought that white people and colored people getting along was the big aim, but after that I decided everybody being colorless together was a better plan."

This novel is deeply compelling. It is a story of hope and of the sacredness of living in the world. The Black Madonna, who presides over the house of the three eccentric black sisters, provides a unique perspective of the divine, the matriarch. The story celebrates the divine power of women and the transforming power of love. The hum of the bees that flows through the story gives a sense of life ongoing, of continual support and caring.

Sue Monk Kidd reflects that Lily "found a sanctuary of women where she could tell her story, and have it heard and validated—an act that allowed her not only to bear her sorrow but to transform it." What a wonderful affirmation of the divine female power.



Dye Job Helps Youths Raise Money

How did local teenagers convince their conservative church pastor to dye his hair pink? It was pretty simple, really. The Rev. Sheldon Smith said if it helped raise money for the youth group, he would do it. The colorful contest raised money to send 12 members of the Senior High Youth Group at the First Congregational Church of Bethel on a summer mission trip. "They were very surprised when I walked in," said Smith, who donned one of his wardrobe staples, a gray suit, to contrast his pink locks. This was excerpted from an article written by Donna Christopher DANBURY NEWS-TIMES CORRESPONDENT

Maybe Ministry

THE REV. KRISTEN KLEIMAN

As the United Church of Christ meets in Minnesota this summer, the Maybe Ministry conference will be gathering to talk about young adults in lay and ordained ministry. The shortage of pastors is becoming obvious to our churches, but perhaps you were not aware that less than 7% of UCC clergy are under the age of 40. And every year the number decreases!

The Maybe Ministry conference – a first of its kind – will seek to engage young adults (18-30 years of age) in discernment about how they are called to minister in the United Church of Christ.

At General Synod 23 in Kansas City, the Rev. Mark Diters and the Rev. Kristen Kleiman, a young pastor herself, began to formulate the idea for Maybe Ministry. At an event for the United Church of Christ and Disciples of Christ clergy 35 and younger, Rev. Kleiman realized that other young clergy were feeling exactly what she was feeling – a need for colleagues of her age to share the joys and tribulations of ministry. "Frankly, I started thinking about this conference as a way to get more colleagues for myself. I love being a pastor, and I would love for other young adults to see that God could be calling them as well!" Rev. Kleiman shared.

Truly inspired by the Holy Spirit, Rev. Diters and Rev. Kleiman have been planning and meeting with Rev. Kathy Peters, the Associate Conference Minister for Local Church, ever since they returned from Synod in July 2001. "We really cannot believe that no one thought of this before. The more we planned and looked for problems or downsides, the more we found there weren't any – that there seemed only to be exciting possibilities for engaging young adults in ministry," Rev. Diters said. After six months of writing letters to pastors and association moderators, as well as recruiting at Annual Meeting, seven young women applied to the conference and all were accepted. Sarah Annis from the Poquonock Community Church; Jennifer Gringas from the Trumbull Congregational Church; Theresa Howell from the Church of the Redeemer in New Haven; Claudia Muro from the Saugatuck Congregational Church in Westport; Missy Sturtevant from the Enfield Congregational Church; Florence Mae Waldron from the First Congregational Church in Woodstock; and Amy York from the South Congregational Church in Granby will all participate this summer.

With the background of General Synod, the Maybe Ministry conference participants will discuss the polity and ministries of the United Church of Christ, as well as their own personal calls to ministry. The conference also will take time to discuss the realities of being a young adult in ministry, as well as being a woman in ministry. There will be plenty of time during this week-long conference to worship with General Synod, observe its proceedings, engage in fellowship with the Connecticut Conference delegation, and prayerfully consider where God is calling each one of them.

If you would like to financially support the Maybe Ministry conference or are interested in participating in the future, please contact Rev. Mark Diters at (860) 653-7289 or Rev. Kristen Kleiman at (860) 644-0833.

Recent Pastoral Transitions in Connecticut

New Calls

Schmidt, Greg
 from Pastor Shelton Congregational to Pastor Evangelical Congregational Harvard, MA, August 24, 2003

LeBar, Ruth
 from In-Care, New Haven to Pastor Union Congregational Church of Oakville, CT, August 11, 2003

Retirements

Stiers, Tom
 from First Congregational Church of Greenwich, August 31, 2003

Exploring faith, call and the Mall of America? Yes, that is exactly what the seven participants in the Maybe Ministry conference may do this July at General Synod in Minneapolis.

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Ministry conference will be gathering to talk about young adults in lay and ordained ministry. The shortage of pastors is becoming obvious to our churches, but perhaps you were not aware that less than 7% of UCC clergy are under the age of 40. And every year the number decreases!

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Resignations

Bickel, Robin
 Associate Pastor, Storrs Congregational Church seeking a new call, April 3, 2003

Bartholomew, Bill
 Pastor First Congregational Church South Windham seeking a new call in Vermont, August 31, 2003

Connecticut Women Name Board Members

The following women will comprise the State Board of Connecticut Women of the United Church of Christ for the 2003-2004 year.

PRESIDENT
 Susan S. Waldron
FIRST VICE PRESIDENT
 Betsy Work
SECOND VICE PRESIDENT
 Norma Comins
RECORDING SECRETARY
 Donna Kidwell
REGISTRAR
 Marybeth March
TREASURER
 Doris Andrews
HISTORIAN
 Jeanne Middlemass
EDITOR
 "COMMUNICATOR"
 Angela Powell

WORSHIP TEAM
 The Rev. Charlotte White
 Natalie Phillips
 The Rev. Linda Higgins

STUDY TEAM
 Lois Harwick
 Margaret Kreidler
 Irene Choi

SERVICE TEAM
 Marjorie Mc Cafferty
 Pat Williams
 Pam Selders
 Barbara Wiggins

CHURCH WORLD SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE
 Kathy Burton

PROGRAM RESOURCES
 Paula Lazeski
 Leona Dunham
 The Rev. Ruth Martz

NONIMATING COMMITTEE
 Carole Fanslow

Pam DiDio will continue as Secretary to CT Women and can be reached at 1-866-367-2822, ext 101. The President can be reached at the same number, ext 118.

Enabling Justice Ministries *continued from page 1*

Today, that commitment finds expression in the Connecticut Conference through the Justice and Witness Ministry Team (JWMT). The J&W's 20 lay and clergy team members meet regularly to share their concerns and passions, developing strategies and tactics to engage with and serve our local churches and to provide leadership when asked.

"Our goal has been to discover what local churches discern to be their justice activities, help them to celebrate it, and to enable those activities to be as faithful and productive as possible," says the Rev. Gordon Bates, Associate Conference Minister for Justice and Witness Ministries.

Encouraging the local churches to be active in issues related to justice and peace takes on many forms. The JWMT finds its calling in addressing issues such as homelessness, fair employment contracts, domestic violence, women's and children's issues, racial injustices, economic injustices, drug policies and environmental issues. The JWMT also engages in advocacy efforts on these and other issues through Kim Harrison, the Conference's legislative lobbying representative.

"Many people see Justice & Witness issues and workshops as political," says the Rev. Lee Ireland, Chair of the JWMT. "Politics is about how we relate to one another. Our goal is to make it so that all people can have their basic needs fulfilled. We'd like to see all people thriving, not just surviving... That's why it would be helpful to have more local churches involved in JW issues."

"The J&W team is one way to keep speaking to all our members, calling them to live their faith," says the Rev. Tom McMillan. "I would summarize that mission as being

something of an irritant to keep us from sliding into complacency. Whether we like it or not, it's never been easy to be a Christian. Justice and Witness can provide a much needed reminder and challenge."

Sue Waldron has been a member of the JWMT for six years and currently serves as its secretary. "The kind of work that we do is really long term," she notes. "It's changing people's minds, it's changing the way we look at things, and you can't do that overnight."

JWMT members know that justice work can be lonely unless there is some kind of supporting community from which individuals can draw strength and encouragement.

"The closer (a supporting) community is to the local church the better. The local church should be, in this area as in the UCC generally, the basic unit in the life of the church," says McMillan.

Recent JWMT successes include a grant to help with low-income housing in New Haven, the formation of a Domestic Violence Support Group, and a candlelight vigil that successfully called attention to drug dealers and led to their removal from an inner-city neighborhood.

Part of the team's work is to try to be in dialogue with the churches through the 15 Associations, with the goal of identifying a "point person" in each

church and building a relationship with them. That contact can be called on "so that information and resources can flow between the local church and the JWMT," says the Rev. Denise Esslinger. "It can help the team learn what is going on in the local church, such as programs they are offering, or if they would like to know more about a specific issue."

"We would like someday to be able to connect churches that have similar interests, or if one church has developed a program to have them go out and teach other interested churches about such a program," says Ireland. But, "we struggle with wanting to offer programming, and listening to what the individual churches want or are already doing," she adds.

Over the years, the JWMT has developed a variety of resources that local churches and pastors can use to support their work on justice issues, including participation in the recent Spring Plantings event at First Church, Newington, where workshops on topics such as Just Peace Churches, refugee resettlement, disaster planning and helping the homeless and hungry were offered; a bibliography of materials explaining how to talk to children about war and peace; three post-9/11 packets on non-violence, resources in time of war and peacemaking; and a "speakers bureau" brochure listing the names of JWMT members available to speak with expertise on a wide range of topics.

While waiting for the "point person" strategy to take hold, the team currently assesses what's happening through an ongoing accumulation of data from occasional surveys, phone calls to local churches, conversations with social action committees where they exist and information from our Cleveland and Washington Justice/Witness offices about direct contact they have had with individuals of churches within our Conference.

What they have learned is perhaps not surprising. "Churches in Litchfield and Putnam, Mystic and Fairfield, Orange and Hartford all face the same social problems outside their doors," says Bates. "They may differ a little in the *Continued on page 8*

PILGRIMS & PARISHES

EDITED BY JEAN HAMILTON

New Britain

The CYF of First Church raised over \$1000 during a 30-Hour Famine Sleepover. Rev. Steven Crabtree promised to dye his hair any color they chose if they went over the \$1000 and he kept his promise.

South Britain

Congregational Church held a film festival of home made videos and other entertainment. Awards were given and a potluck dinner preceded the video showcase.

Bethel

The Board of Outreach and the Church School of The First Congregational Church has been collecting items to include in "Boodle Boxes and Bags" to send to U.S. troops stationed overseas.

Glastonbury

First Church has organized a display of all church members who are currently serving in the military. Pictures and other information were displayed to help remember the service people.

Somers

Congregational Church held its 10th annual Anything Chocolate Baked and Homemade Goodies Sale. The all-you-can-eat brunch and bake sale was a huge success.

Middletown

First Church of Christ held a second hour of readings of favorite poems. The poems were read by those who were willing to read their suggestions or by other presenters. Reflections were shared as well.

Hamden

Dunbar United Church of Christ church school students built bird-houses and created a bird sanctuary in the churchyard.

Bristol

First Congregational Church held a healthy evening entitled "How to Live to be 100 - Aging with Grace and 'Healthy' Potluck dinner." Cholesterol and diabetes screening appointments were offered, as well as sample foods that are healthy and information about foods that are not. The evening ended with a guest speaker who shared her ideas of the practical and spiritual aspects of our journey in life.

Storrs

Congregational Church is planning a different approach to their All-Church Sunday, a full day of church service, luncheon and afternoon activities. Also planned are clean-up and maintenance activities, plus fun activities for all ages.

Watertown

First Congregational Church students collected items for baby packs to be used at the Family Life Center at St. Mary's Hospital. The bags are given to first-time mothers to ensure they will have some of the basics when they leave the hospital.

Windsor

Wilson Congregational Church had a pictorial display for the month of June of weddings that have been performed in their sanctuary.

Manchester

Second Congregational Church decorated a 7-foot blossoming cross on Easter Sunday with freshly cut flowers brought in by parishioners. The freshly-cut flowers symbolized new life earned through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Suffield

First Church of Christ filled Teacher Appreciation Bags for their teachers and youth assistants. The bags were filled with notes, pictures and other items from the congregation to thank them for their service.

Roxbury

Congregational Church gathered unused bikes for Pedals for Progress. This project takes un-used bikes, reconditions them and ships them to Central America for use by local people. Each bike was accompanied with a \$10 donation for shipping and refurbishing.

Manchester

Center Congregational Church held a Medical Ethics seminar. This seminar focused on Christian ethics and medical issues given the advances of health care technology.

Andover

First Congregational Church had an Easter Potluck supper for those who wished to celebrate with the church family.

North Guilford

Congregational Church has a take-out service for those who don't want to cook dinner. Heaven's Kitchen has frozen dinners for sale. They range from chicken pies and lasagna to chili.

Ledyard

First Congregational Church had a Lent tree at church. At the beginning of Lent, the bare tree appeared. Church members were invited to do some of the good things they had been intending to do and add bright colored leaves to the tree for each act they did. By Easter the tree was blossoming with many blessings.

Silver Lake Cabin Profile #2

CHRISTINE PALM

In the woods of Sharon, a cluster of cabins at Silver Lake is breathing new life into the beloved conference center and gathering place. Many United Church of Christ churches from throughout the state are teaming up to sponsor the building of these cabins. The "village" of cabins is a perfect example of how help can come in many forms; financial support, volunteer hours, expertise and elbow grease all play their part.

One cabin nearing completion is the double cabin known as No.7&8. It's being named for the Rev. Lemuel Haynes, the first African-American to be ordained in America (1785) in Torrington, CT, and abolitionist author Harriet Beecher Stowe. This double cabin is the combined project of several churches in the Middlesex Association, particularly South Church in Middletown and First Congregational Church in Essex, with help from the West Avon Congregational Church.

"Our experience at Silver Lake started on April 19th, 2002," recalls First Congregational Church in Essex member Bob Marshall, who serves as his church's project coordinator. "Building the cabin was a lot of hard work and required many weekends away from home and family. But it has been a great experience for all of us, and as it nears completion there's some real excitement building."

Such a vast undertaking requires the energy and vision of many people, but Marshall is quick to credit Bette Anne Crowell, who retired recently as Associate Pastor of the Essex church.

"Bette Ann started this, and followed all the way through," Marshall says. "That's the way she is. She brought together the five churches in the Middlesex Association — Chester, Killingworth, South Church in Middletown,

"Building the cabin was a lot of hard work and required many weekends away from home and family. But it has been a great experience for all of us, and as it nears completion there's some real excitement building." — Bob Marshall

Portland and Essex — and really got her vision put into action."

Deborah Blood, Acting Associate Minister in Essex, agrees. "Bette Ann deserves enormous credit for getting the ball rolling. I was there when she stood up at the Association meeting and challenged us to undertake this. Our church seems to like building projects, and this has been a great one. It's involved our youth and we happen to have among our members several skilled carpenters who have been willing to volunteer considerable time. The result has been that we, as a congregation, now have a connection to Silver Lake Conference Center that we might otherwise not have had."

In addition to Crowell and Marshall, Essex members who were particularly active include John Bogaert, Ken Carson, Tim Doherty, Jim Ehle-Meyer, Mark Foster, Scott Harger, Bob Johnson, Bill and Mellicent Hawke, Ken Kells, Allan MacGregor, Delcie Mosley, Peter Tibbits, Peter Nilsen and George and Grace Sohn.

But like all truly great undertakings, Cabin 7&8 is by no means the work of one group alone.

"We weren't able to supply a lot of volunteer workers, but we were able to contribute rather substantially in financial support," says Mary Klaaren, pastor of South Church in Middletown. "Because of an unexpected bequest from a woman named Edith Maynard, we were able to contribute about \$8,000. It was an opportunity for us to think creatively about how to take what was unexpected and invest it in a way that brings great vitality and joy to the world. We felt the best way to do that was through young people. There's been a history of loyalty to Silver Lake here at South Church and so we voted to give the \$8,000 to the building of the cabin." *continued on page 7*

CLASSIFIEDS

Positions

BETHANY — Part-time Director of Christian Education needed, starting September 2003. Primarily responsible for Sunday School, but input on areas of adult ed, confirmation, and youth programming are encouraged. ACE graduate preferred. Competitive salary commensurate with experience and within conference guidelines. Deadline for applications is June 30. • Contact: Mail resume and three letters of recommendation to Board of Christian Education, First Church of Christ, Congregational, UCC, 511 Amity Road, Bethany, CT 06524. christianed@bethanyfirstchurch.org [8/03]

ESSEX — First Congregational Church in Essex, CT seeks part time (10-15 hrs/wk) Youth Choir/Music Director to lead three youth choirs (ages 3-18), as well as to support, foster and coordinate a well-established music program. The church also has a 25+ member Senior Choir, and three bell/chime choirs. The Music Ministry of the church plays a vital role in attracting and keeping new members and friends and is a high priority for the church. Creative and enthusiastic leadership skills are crucial, as is the ability to work collaboratively with a varied group of staff and lay people. Knowledge of a broad range of liturgically appropriate music is essential. While the church would prefer to have one candidate possess the qualities of both Music Director and Youth Choir Director, consideration will be given to responses for separate positions. Compensation commensurate with experience. • Contact: Deborah Jones, 9 Cedar Street, Centerbrook, CT 06409 or e-mail to: sue@firstcongessex.org [7/03]

GLASTONBURY — Vibrant Glastonbury UCC congregation seeks committed, creative Director of Christian Education. Responsibilities include coordinating Church School and special seasonal programs, training and supporting Church School teachers, assisting with adult education opportunities and overseeing the Church library, all with the assistance of the Board of Christian Education. Part-time (20 hours) per week. Commitment and enthusiasm important. Experience desired. • Contact: First Church of Christ, 2183 Main Street, Glastonbury, CT 06033, (860) 633-4641, firstchurch@glastonburyfirst.org [8/03]

HARTFORD — Part-Time Church Musician sought for Christian Congregation in Hartford. Must have advanced facility with keyboards, strong ability directing choirs, and experience with traditional and contemporary worship music in the African-American context. • Contact: Send resume to Warburton Community Church, Attention: Music & Worship Ministry, 420 Brookfield Street, Hartford, CT 06105 (860) 951-0058 [8/03]

Silver Lake Cabin *continued from page 6*

At West Avon Congregational, which donated about \$10,000 to the cabin project, there are several young people geared up to paint and varnish the building as soon as the final nail is banged into place.

"I would give the kids a lot of credit for raising in excess of \$3,000 of the total we gave," says West Avon coordinator Bill Vibert. "We have about 12 kids in our Senior High Youth Group who did a 30-hour famine pledge and about 20 young people from the Middle School Youth group who staged a "Rock-a-thon," in which they rocked in rocking chairs for 12 hours at a stretch. People from our

MADISON — The North Madison Congregational Church seeks an enthusiastic youth leader for middle school and high school group. Part time position starting in Sept. 2003, beginning with 20 hrs per month. Responsibilities include developing and implementing of program that fulfills mission of Youth Group and leading and supervising youth group activities. • Contact: For more information, contact Lyndia Haff at nmcc.ce@cshore.com or (203) 421-3241, or mail resume to North Madison Congregational Church, 1271 Durham Road, Madison, CT 06443. [7/03]

MILFORD — The First United Church of Christ Congregational of Milford seeks a full-time, creative and energetic Minister of Christian Education for our highly programmed church. The ideal candidate would have experience in working with diverse age groups, be open, approachable and have excellent communication skills. Membership is 900+ with a church school enrollment of 175+. Job responsibilities include, but are not limited to: supervision of church school, supervision/training of church school staff, weekly children's sermons, elementary and middle school youth groups, VBS, leadership of special worship services, and intergenerational programming. In addition, there are a variety of other collaborative efforts with Senior and Associate Pastors and CE board. Salary range is highly competitive. • Contact: Please send inquires to Christian Education Search Committee, First United Church of Christ, 34 West Main ST., Milford, CT 06460 [6/03]

MONTCLAIR, NJ — Union Congregational Church UCC is seeking a half-time director of music and organist for 650 member suburban church, (12 miles west of New York City) with history of fine music, congregation with eclectic musical interests, strong worship/pastoral team, and beautiful and acoustically sound sanctuary. Recently reconditioned 50 rank Austin organ, Steinway grand and harpsichord in the sanctuary. Children's choir and bell choir directors in place. Compensation commensurate with AGO guidelines. Position available September 1, 2003. • Contact: Stephanie Weiner, Union Congregational Church UCC 176 Cooper Avenue, Montclair, NJ 07043, (973) 744-7424 or sweiner@unioncong.org [7/03]

NEW LONDON — The Second Congregational Church of New London seeks dedicated, motivated and enthusiastic Director of Christian Education to help build church community. The responsibilities of this part-time position (10-15 hours) include supervision of Sunday School enrollment (30-40 students and 9 teachers), special programs, and Safe-Church policy, in addition to guidance of youth group with the aid of the Christian Education Committee and Interim Minister. •

Contact: Julia Kushigian Secor, Chair, Christian Education Committee, at 2ndconglucc@earthlink.net

PROSPECT — The Prospect Congregational Church is seeking an organist/choir director to lead our choir/congregation in the joy of music. Skills needed: Keyboard (piano and organ), choral directing, music planning, creativity and enthusiasm! We have one Senior Choir and a Children's Choir. Additional experience in leading a Bell Choir also a plus. • Contact: Prospect Congregational Church, 25 Center Street Prospect, CT 06712 (203) 758-4872 e-mail: pccucc@snet.net [7/03]

Sell or Give

AVON — Free-4 unit Nursery Main Crib. 15 years old, very good condition. Take it away as a gift, or make a donation to the new nursery. • Contact: West Avon Congregational Church, 860-673-3996 or e-mail Bill Vibert at vibertw@snet.net [7/03]

CANTON CENTER — Free for the taking - Communion ware. Six bread trays, two bread covers, three Artistic brand communion trays with 40 glasses each and cover, three communion trays with 40 glasses each, three communion trays with 25 glasses each, cover, additional 30 communion glasses. • Contact: 860-693-4581 [7/03]

WATERBURY — FREE! Children's size tables (for 2 and 3-year-olds), older models, wood, but in very good condition, two each hexagonal, two round and four rectangular. Also some children's size wood chairs. Yours for the taking • Contact: Business Administrator, First Congregational Church of Waterbury, 222 West Main St, Waterbury CT 06702-1286 fchurch02@snet.net fccmalbano@snet.net (203) 757-0331 [7/03]

Sites

NORTHEAST HARBOR, MAINE — Youth groups, retreat groups, church hiking/biking groups: The Union Church is a small church located on beautiful Mount Desert Island, near Bar Harbor and Acadia National Park on the coast of Maine. The church is within walking distance of hiking trails, and the harbor. The church house features a large, bright meeting/dining room, a fully equipped kitchen, carpeted rooms for sleeping areas, and four bathrooms, two with showers. Small groups are preferred but up to 50 can be accommodated. Rates \$15/person/first night, \$12/person each night thereafter. • Contact: (207) 276-5521, The Union Church of Northeast Harbor, UCC, PO Box 555, Northeast Harbor, Maine, 04662 [7/03]

According to Marshall, West Avon member Jack Kochanowski "was out there every weekend and coordinated things with us and was very dedicated. Spending so many weekends together has not only furthered old friendships, but has created new friendships that might not have happened without this opportunity. The bottom line is that this is what a congregation is all about — having a good time together and doing good for others."

At press time, all that remained on this double cabin was some shingling, some painting, some beds to be assembled and a knee wall to be constructed. Bring on the summer!

EVENTS

Sunday June 8, 7 PM • North Guilford Congregational Church • Benefit Concert • The North Guilford Congregational Church Senior Choir will perform a benefit concert to support World Missions for the United Church of Christ. The concert is at the Country School, 341 Opening Hill Road, Madison. Tickets may be purchased at the door. • Cost: Suggested donation \$10 • Contact: 203-457-0581, Church Office

Saturday, June 14, 7 PM • Immanuel Congregational Church, 10 Woodland St. Hartford • Odds Bodkin: A One Man Symphony of Story • The man Billboard calls "A modern-day Orpheus..." has been commissioned by Immanuel Congregational Church to perform the story

of David and Goliath. Odds Bodkin's music-filled storytelling has been mesmerizing listeners for 21 years. Celtic harp and grand piano bring his stories to life. • Cost: \$10 per adult, \$5 Children 12 and under • Contact: 860-527-8121

Saturday, June 28, 6-9 PM • Mill Plain Union Church, 242 Southmayd Road, Waterbury • Fellowship for All Ice Cream Social • Join Mill Plain Union Church for a 50-item Ice Cream Sunday bar with fresh fruit, lots of toppings, and, you guessed it, ice cream. Music by "The House Band" and fun for all ages. • Contact: 203-757-1211

Saturday, July 19, 9 AM - 3 PM • The United Congregational Church of Bridgeport, at the corners of Park Avenue and State Street • Flea Market/Antiques Sale • Spaces are available at \$20 outdoors or \$25 indoors. Tables are available on a first-come, first-serve basis at a cost of \$5 per table. All spaces are reserved and must be paid for in advance and received at the church no later than July 11th. Vendors may begin setting up at 7 AM. Coffee and doughnuts will be available in the morning and hot dogs, hamburgers, coffee, soda and snacks later. • Contact: Dee Wust Forman 203-335-3107

Enabling Justice Ministries *continued from page 5*

form those problems take, but the issues and the solutions remain the same across Connecticut, indeed across the U.S. and the world."

Wherever possible, the attempt is made to foster linkages on all levels. The JWMT encourages local churches to work with other UCC churches in their immediate region or neighborhood, and strives to connect our Conference with the national UCC, ecumenical and interfaith justice organizations.

The most recent example of such connection is support given to the Hartford Association in May 2003 to sponsor a major speaker and presentation on Connecticut's social problems through a new map project, CenterEdge, done by a national demographics agency. Over 100 members of the Association gathered in the Asylum Hill Congregational Church to hear Myron Orfield of Minnesota and Heather Crawford of UConn spell out the need for regional solutions for a range of issues from urban sprawl to teenage pregnancies.

"One of our goals at this time, on the JWMT, is to acquaint Associations and churches with the CenterEdge Project," says Bates. "The overall message of CenterEdge is that all communities in the state are faced with similar justice issues, and that consequently, there is no place to hide from them."

No place to hide, but JWMT members know that it can be a long process, working for change. Ireland notes that "the time it takes for changes to occur publicly" has been the greatest surprise to her about her work in the Justice Ministry.

"Right now one of the blessings of the Team is the great number of issues and passions of the team members," says Esslinger. "This, however, also leads to a lot of fragmentation and people working in many different areas. I'm hoping as a team that we might select an issue or two which we can all work on and have a larger impact in the conference with educational and action opportunities."

"We would certainly welcome anyone who is curious

to attend one of our meetings and introduce us to their vision... It would be nice if suddenly we had many churches calling the Conference Office asking for one of us to come and speak," says Ireland.

"My greatest satisfaction has simply come from being reminded that there are people in our conference who take justice issues seriously and who do witness to their faith through their actions," says McMillan. "Working for justice, after all, should be the mission of all Christians, not just individuals. Anyone interested in Justice & Witness work should be able to look first at his or her local church and find there a way to get involved."

To learn more about Justice & Witness issues, please contact Rev. Gordon Bates toll-free at (866) 367-2822 or by e-mail at gordonb@ctucc.org, or Rev. Lee Ireland at (860) 445-7409 or e-mail at revleei@xnet.net, or visit the CT Conference web site at www.ctucc.org

Annual Meeting

The 2003 Annual Meeting of the Connecticut Conference will feature a keynote address

on Saturday morning by the Honorable Frederica Brenneman, member of Saugatuck Congregational Church in Westport. Judge Brenneman served for 29 years on the bench of the Juvenile and Superior Courts of Connecticut, where she was known for her candor and wisdom in addressing the issues of

juvenile justice and the needs of young people and their families.

"I have long admired Judge Brenneman from afar and am thrilled that she has agreed to be our keynoter this year. It was a special and memorable moment for me when I met her and her husband, Russell, to issue this invitation," said Conference Minister Davida Foy Crabtree. "Her leadership on the bench and her commitment to the vision of the United Church of Christ mean that this will be a great Annual Meeting."

The meeting will be held at Saxe Middle School in

New Canaan, just off the Merritt Parkway. Worship, with the guidance of Conference Preacher, Rev. Dwight Juliani of Madison, is expected to be dynamic and moving. Other features will be the Conference Minister's address on Friday evening, multiple workshops on Saturday, and the presence of several special guests.

Annual Meeting welcomes not only delegates but visitors as well. And this year for the first time, every church will have the opportunity to send a youth delegate (under age 22) in addition to their other elected delegates. Several special activities for their participation will also be featured.