

May 2008

Dear Friends,

“For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven. . . .” So starts the most famous passage from Ecclesiastes (3:1). The simple truth of these ancient words continues to resonate – whether from the pages of the Bible or the refrain of a popular song.

For as long as we human beings have walked the face of the earth, the changing of the seasons has captured our attention. Even in our highly industrialized, post-modern society, you can hardly help but notice the budding of the trees, the lengthening of the days, the greening of the grass.

Here at United Church on the Green, the changing of the seasons has been no less remarkable. A few short months ago, we began a season of sabbatical together. Since then, winter has given way to spring. Meanwhile, the light of Epiphany prepared us for the reflective season of Lent, which in turn led us into the joy of Eastertide.

And now we are on the verge of entering into a new season, both in the liturgical calendar of the church and in the natural world around us. Summer and Pentecost are expansive, hope-filled times to rejoice in the abundant gifts of light, growth, and Spirit.

Pentecost Sunday (May 11) will also usher in the beginning of a new season of post-sabbatical time for you all and your very gifted settled senior minister, the Rev. John MacIver Gage. As you come together again, you will have much to share with each other about the sabbaticals (John's sabbatical and the church's sabbatical) that are now drawing to a close.

For my part, I am more grateful than I can say for the opportunity to walk with you through this sabbatical time. As we prepare to take leave of one another, I give thanks for all that has been life-giving and good about this season that we have shared together, and pray that the Spirit may continue to guide you in the ways of justice, love, and peace.

The writer of Ecclesiastes goes on to say (in 3:14): ***“I know that whatever God does endures forever; nothing can be added to it, nor anything taken from it; God has done this, so that all should stand in awe before God.”***

As we prepare to transition out of this sabbatical time and into the future, let us look with awe and thanks to the One who – season in and season out – holds us with infinite tenderness in the palm of God's own hand.

Blessings to each and all of you,

Pentecost

The word Pentecost (from the Greek, meaning “the fiftieth day”) celebrates the gift of the Holy Spirit – both to the apostles gathered in Jerusalem fifty days after the first Easter and to us today. As the Book of Acts tells the story, Jesus’ followers were suddenly filled with the Holy Spirit, and were emboldened to share the Gospel with courage and conviction – even reaching across the usual boundaries of language and culture. Something so powerful happened that day that the Christian church was brought into being! Ever since, Pentecost has been celebrated as a day of new beginnings. Sometimes it is even referred to as “the birthday of the church.”

This year, the celebration of Pentecost at United Church on the Green, on Sunday, May 11, coincides with our celebration of John Gage’s return from his time of sabbatical and with the reception of some new members into the church. In honor of all this, our monthly potluck will take place that evening (rather than on the usual first Sunday of the month). It promises to be a joyful, Spirit-filled day.

May the Holy Spirit be poured out on each one of us this Pentecost, awakening our hearts and refreshing our souls!

Picture Directory

United Church on the Green has finally taken the plunge to have a much needed picture directory created! Many people have been asking why we don’t have a picture directory. We are working with a company called Olan Mills to create our directory at no cost to our church or to the members and friends of our church. Olan Mills provides all the materials for us to use in this process (signs, postcards, sample directories, signup sheets, etc); they come on 4 different days to take digital pictures of all interested individuals and families; they provide a free 8x10 photo and directory to those individuals and families; they provide enough directories for us to send to all members and friends of United; they provide an online version of the directory accessible thru a ‘members only’ link we can add to our web site; finally, they provide a process to redo the directory every so many years (usually 3 to 4 years).

So, do not hesitate if you have not already signed up for a photo appointment!!! It will be fast and it will be painless! Please contact Colleen at the church office or see Colleen or Elaine Phillips on Sunday. Our photo days are **Monday, May 12 – Wednesday, May 14** in the Bradley Room, and another day on **Tuesday, June 10**. The appointment times range from **3:00 to around 9:15 p.m.** on each of those days. We estimate that we have about 100 family “units” at United Church and 35 have already signed up! Won’t it be fantastic to put names and faces together – just another way to build up our fellowship and mutual support in our community of faith here at United Church on the Green.

Wednesday Night Meditation

7:30 – 8:15 p.m. in the Parish House Lounge

Join us for quiet meditation mid-week. We sit together from 7:30 p.m. to 8:15 p.m. each Wednesday night. We offer quiet music and candlelight, and some sung prayers in the Taizé tradition. You bring your own intentions and join as you feel moved. It is a moment of peace in a busy week. For more information contact Kathleen Rooney at 203-785-1356 or kak@scribblers.us. We meet at the Parish House at 323 Temple Street. Sorry, we won't be able to answer the door after we begin at 7:30 p.m.



Monthly Potluck Supper and Spring Congregational

Meeting

Sunday, May 11, in the Bradley Room, 6:00 p.m.



Our monthly potluck supper this month will take place on the second Sunday of the month – John Gage's first Sunday back with us! Come join us for a relaxed evening of shared food and fellowship, conversation, laughter, and post-sabbatical reconnecting!



Downtown Lunch

May 21, 12:30 p.m., at the Graduate Club, 155 Elm Street

Members and friends of United gather for lunch on the third Wednesday of each month at the Graduate Club (across Elm Street from the Meeting House) for the best conversation and popovers in town. Downtown Lunch is a great way to get to know folks you share the pew with on Sunday mornings in a more informal setting. Suggested donation for the all-you-can eat lunch buffet is \$5.00/person (though you are of course welcome to throw in more, to cover the actual cost of approximately \$16.00/person). Call Colleen in the church office (203-787-4195) by 10:00 a.m. on Wednesday to make a reservation.

[Brahms p. 1]

[Brahms p. 2]



Notes From Our
United Community Nursery School
Betty Baisden, Director

When our ladybugs arrived last week, we were all pretty excited. The 5 Day kids shrieked with glee as the teachers and I opened the plastic habitat to divide up the beetles for each classroom. Ladybugs were everywhere, but we safely returned most of them to their new temporary homes. Then everyone gathered around to observe and talk about the insects. There were easily a hundred of them. We asked the children: "How many do you think there are?" Without hesitation, a few children guessed "five." Others tried to count, then agreed that five was probably right, even though they had counted more. Later on, I asked the two year olds the same question, and they responded "five." I think when you are two or three or four, the idea of FIVE is very impressive. Five is all the fingers on one hand. Five means you can go to kindergarten. Five is big, and ladybugs are wonderful. We teachers are blessed with the opportunity to learn not to take anything for granted, while we experience the wonders of the world in new ways year after year.

Thanks to all who were able to participate in our Great Spring Plant Sale and the Giving Hands project. Your love and support make it possible for lots of children to begin to develop the thinking skills, the sense of wonder, and the joy of community that may just last a lifetime.

Editor's Note: Many thanks to Betty and her puppet friend, Roxi Fox, for their wonderful contributions to our Earth Day worship on April 20 and their puppet show for the kids afterwards!

Connecticut Conference Annual Meeting, Spring Session

South Congregational Church, Middletown
Saturday, May 10, 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

The Rev. Clifford Aerie, the UCC's Minister for Creativity and the Arts, will be the keynote presenter for the first part of the Conference's 141st Annual Meeting.

Cliff is a jazz saxophonist, storyteller, composer, playwright, actor, director, photographer and media producer. Cliff coordinated the commemorative publication, "UCC@50: Our Future" and produced the 50th anniversary bash at General Synod 26. Cliff has written several award winning UCC annual reports including the children's story "Natty's Homemade Apple Walnut Friendship Bread."

A part of the Ministry of Imagination, Creativity and the Arts has been the creation of "Oikos," a world music jazz ensemble that performs at many UCC events and leads jazz vesper services around the country.

Outreach Updates

Support the **Walk Against Hunger** on **Sunday, May 4!** Walk with the United Church team. Make a contribution!

Our contribution of \$500 to the **Christian Community Action Hunger Challenge** will be matched by the Alan Shawn Feinstein Foundation. What a great opportunity to maximize the gift.

The **Environmental Task Force** has been allocated \$500 start-up money from the Outreach budget.

Stay tuned for information about the upcoming **Book Drive** to benefit **Read to Grow**.

Updates on our Spring Fundraising Walks

~ AIDS WALK

"The **United Church AIDS Walk** 2008 team raised a total of Thirty Five Hundred and Forty Nine dollars (\$3,549) and came in First Place in team fundraising for this year's event! After the march we were called up on stage (with our new banner), where I had the opportunity to thank the Dwight Hall/Aids Walk Committee for their hard work the past four years. I was then able to thank the assemblage and proclaim that "God Loves EVERYONE" and that "ALL are welcome at United Church on the Green!"

"My deep gratitude and appreciation goes out to our team of fundraisers and walkers, Tim Byrnes, Al Forino, Jean Goodnow, Scott and Julia Hawkins, Jason Kekak, Caroline Murphy, Helen O'Brien, Colleen and Raymond O'Connor, Peggy Shorey, and of course our wonderful congregation, friends, and families for their outstanding support and generosity!" – *Jamie Rude*

Editor's Note: Many thanks to Jamie for his enthusiastic dedication to this effort – and also for his wonderful banner, which we look forward to using on future occasions!

~ WALK AGAINST HUNGER

Sunday, May 4 is the date for the **32nd Annual Walk Against Hunger** to benefit the Connecticut Food Bank. You can make a donation and/or register to walk online at www.ctfoodbank.org. Just go to "Donate to a Team" or "Register to Walk" and look for our team under United Church. Every dollar you raise helps provide food – and hope – to someone in need. Hanna Peterman (467-1424) is helping coordinate our efforts.

Notes from the Environmental Taskforce (ETF)

United Church on the Green celebrated **Earth Day** on Sunday, April 20, with a special service planned by the Rev. Caroline Murphy and Dr. Mark Brombaugh with the assistance of United's Environmental Task Force. There were liturgical readings, prayers, and hymns singing the praises of creation, reminding us of the fragility of the world in which we live, and calling us to become better stewards of the earth. An "earth ball" was suspended in the sanctuary and local spring flowers decorated the altar. Artist David French displayed his sculpture "Neptune's Lament" in the narthex as a reminder of our misdeeds.

Immediately after the service we enjoyed a "sustainable lunch" of pasta, salad and cake prepared by Claire's Corner Copia (a vegetarian, organic and sustainable and Kosher restaurant) and rolls donated by Chabaso Bakery. Both Claire's and Chabaso are New Haven businesses, and the owners are known in the community for their charitable donations and their activism in the food movement. The paper goods were newly purchased recycled paper products, a first step towards reaffirming our commitment to the Environmental Resolution passed in 1990. Helen O'Brien (who also lent the earth ball) and the New Lights had decorated the Bradley Room with a "Touch the Earth Lightly" theme. On each table there were materials from City Seed, New Haven's Farmers' Market, which emphasized the importance of supporting local farmers and eating food grown nearby.

After lunch children and their parents and grandparents walked up the street to the parish house, where puppeteer/nursery school director Betty Baisden and Roxi Fox and friends were waiting. Roxi and Betty presented a puppet show, "Roxi and the Trash Mystery," which taught the youngest among us (and reminded the grownups) about why we need to recycle.

Those who remained in the Bradley Room listened to a presentation by Pam Hasegawa, a representative of the American Friends of the Asian Rural Institute (ARI), an international training center where participants from developing countries are invited to study sustainable, organic agriculture techniques, leadership and community development. ARI will be the beneficiary of a joint Branford/United Church concert on May 18.

On Earth Day (April 22), the ETF screened "Renewal," the first feature-length documentary to capture the breadth and vitality of America's religious-environmental movement, and hosted a group discussion afterwards. Those who attended felt two segments in particular were most relevant to the work of United Church on the Green. The congregation in Highland Park, NJ, seemed most like our faith community. The group GreenFaith had introduced several exercises for raising awareness about how each person uses the earth's resources and had helped the congregation to implement a number of steps for recycling which we could easily adopt. The congregation's decision to install solar panels and others energy-saving options for their facilities gave us much to consider as we begin to contemplate major renovations to our parish house and continued improvements to our historic meetinghouse. The other group that resonated to some was Green Sangha, which works towards reducing cutting of virgin timber. They, too, had implemented a number of programs around use of recycled paper products and raising consciousness about these issues that our congregation could easily adopt.

There is a copy of "Renewal" in the church office. Those of you who missed the screening may arrange to borrow it from Colleen. It might make for good viewing with a small group of friends (perhaps after an Earth dinner?). If there is a demand, we may purchase more copies. It is an important film.

The ETF has already implemented a few new practices:

1. United is making better paper purchases; we have purchased both paper goods and office paper with a higher recycled content.
2. We have procured some new recycling bins and have implemented better recycling practices at both the meetinghouse and the parish house.
3. We are including a different environmental tip in each Sunday bulletin.

The ETF currently consists of: Geary Corves, Don Holevoet, Elaine Piraino-Holevoet, Jennifer Pugh, and Pam Stanton. We would welcome new members as we continue our work.

We are currently brainstorming the next steps for the group. We are considering a number of visible "actions" to take place in the month of May. We are discussing future educational opportunities and hands-on activities. We also plan to revisit the language of the 1990 resolution before introducing a revised resolution at the October 2008 congregational meeting. Please feel free to share any thoughts and concerns with any of us.

And we thank everyone who helped make Earth Day 2008 a success.

Silver Lake



It's not too late to include Silver Lake in your summer plans!

Silver Lake is a welcoming, safe, and spiritually nourishing camp and conference center operated by the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ, located in Sharon, Connecticut. There are still plenty of spaces left in many conferences for youth entering 4th through 12th grades for this summer.

You can register online at silverlake.ctucc.org, and see all the conference descriptions for your age group. This year a \$25 discount is being offered when you sign up for a second summer conference. Bring a friend and get a free Silver Lake t-shirt, too.

For more information, see the poster on the bulletin board in the Bradley Room, or ask Colleen in the church office for a copy. Some scholarship money is available from the church on an as-needed basis.

May 2008

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 7:30 p.m. United Choir	2	3
4 10:30 a.m. Worship (Communion) 2:00 p.m. Walk against Hunger	5	6 5:30 p.m. Handbells 5:30 p.m. UCNS family dinner (PH) 7:00 p.m. Deacons	7 7:30 p.m. Meditation (PH)	8 7:30 p.m. United Choir (Branford)	9	10
11 10:30 a.m. Worship: Pentecost; J. Gage back 6:00 p.m. Monthly Potluck	12 3:00-9:15 p.m. Photo Directory 12:00 ETF (Judie's)	13 3:00-9:15 p.m. Photo Directory 5:30 p.m. Handbells 7:30 p.m. Stewards	14 3:00-9:15 p.m. Photo Directory 7:30 p.m. Meditation (PH) 7:30 p.m. PHAT	15 7:30 p.m. United Choir (Branford)	16	17 9:30-12:00 United Choir (Branford)
18 10:30 a.m. Worship: Trinity Sunday; C. Murphy farewell 4:00 p.m. Brahms Requiem concert (Branford)	19	20 5:30 p.m. Handbells 7:30 p.m. Outreach	21 12:30 p.m. Downtown Lunch (Grad. Club) 7:30 p.m. Meditation (PH)	22 7:30 p.m. United Choir	23	24
25 10:30 a.m. Worship; peace pole planting	26 Memorial Day – office closed	27 5:30 p.m. Handbells 7:30 p.m. UCNS Board (PH)	28 7:30 p.m. Meditation (PH)	29 7:30 p.m. United Choir	30	31

Also Taking Place This Month:

Sat. 5/10	4:00 p.m.	wedding (Worms / Donroe)	MH (sanctuary)
Mon. 5/12	6:30 p.m.	Elm City Girls' Choir concert	MH (sanctuary)
Fri. 5/16	7:30 p.m.	Elm City Girls' Choir concert	MH (sanctuary)
Thu. 5/29	11:00 a.m.	Disability & Inclusion Ministry Team	PH

Regularly Scheduled Groups at United:

Sundays	4:00 p.m.	Vineyard church service	MH (Bradley Room)
	4:00 p.m.	AA	PH (Great Hall)
	6:00 p.m.	AA	PH (Great Hall)
Mondays	12:00 p.m.	AA	MH (Bradley Room)
	7:00 p.m.	AA	PH (Great Hall)
Tuesdays	6:00 p.m.	Nicaraguan prayer group	PH (Lounge)
Wednesdays	12:00 p.m.	AA	MH (Bradley Room)
	3:30 p.m.	Focus on Children	PH (Lounge)
Thursdays	12:00 p.m.	AA	MH (Bradley Room)
	7:30 p.m.	NA	PH (Great Hall & Lounge)
Fridays	7:00 p.m.	AA	PH (Great Hall)
Saturdays	10:00 a.m.	Transgender Youth Group (every 4 th Sat.)	PH (Lounge)
	9:30 a.m.	Stonewall Foundation (every 2 nd Sat.)	PH (Lounge)

MH = Meeting House (corner of Temple and Elm Streets)

PH = Parish House (323 Temple Street)

All events listed on the grid calendar will take place in the Meeting House, unless otherwise noted.

Monthly Witness at the New Haven Cairn

Every first Monday of the month **Reclaiming the Prophetic Voice** sponsors a vigil at the Iraq War Memorial Cairn, located at intersection of Park, Elm, and Broadway streets in New Haven. The Cairn is made up of a stone for each month that the Iraq War has gone on. Each stone is marked with the number of US military people who died that month and the approximate number of Iraqi civilians.

Each month that this war continues, a stone will be added to this cairn, marked with the date and the number of our sons and daughters lost this month to a senseless war. We have invited different New Haven area congregations to participate each month by blessing the stone in their worship service and then placing it on the cairn in the context of a liturgy created with their particular theology and religious language.

The next gathering is on **Monday, May 5, at 6:00 p.m.** The liturgy this month will be led by the Church of the Redeemer (UCC) in New Haven.

Peace Pole Planting

United Church's Peace Pole, which was dedicated last November on Armistice / Veterans' Day, will migrate from its temporary lodgings in the narthex to its permanent location outside the Meeting House on **Memorial Day Sunday, May 25**. Please join us following worship that morning for the planting of this visible symbol of United Church's commitment to peace and justice.

The Peace Pole Project is an international effort sponsored by the World Peace Prayer Society; our Peace Pole links us with communities of faith around the world that are working and praying together for peace. For more information, go to <http://www.worldpeace.org/peacepoles.html>. We are grateful to Jamie Rude for donating our Peace Pole in memory of his father.



Spring Congregational Meeting

April 8, 2008

The congregation met in the evening in the Bradley Room, after the first-Sunday potluck.

Roger Adams called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. He proposed questions for discussion of “our” sabbatical:

1. What are our impressions of the sabbatical so far?

- amazingly seamless;
- really helped that Caroline was here before John left so we got to know her
- John prepared us well, long ahead; all the boards and committees have done their job very well, continuing the business of the church;
- The congregation has been busy, calendar is full, Easter went very well;
- No one has ever said, “Oh, we can’t do that because John’s not here.”
- Caroline was a very good choice. She’s terrific.
- Congregation to be congratulated for sticking together, supporting one another;
- There was some anxiety in advance, unwarranted as it turned out.
- We were relying too much on John, particularly in financial matters; but the stewards stepped forward, learned something about our weaknesses and made us stronger.
- “Our sabbatical” was a good conceptual framework for us, pushed us to think about our own learning.

2. What have we learned?

- A church is not one person; we see now that church is all of us.
- Good seasonal changes to the musical elements of the service (sung response after the assurance and the doxology after the offering)
- Multiple voices in scripture makes it come alive, more dramatic.
- People like “God in your mercy” in the prayers.
- We have learned to be more flexible.
- Marvelous second-hour book discussions during Lent, with good participation.
- Good use of the side room for second hour without interfering with coffee hour

3. What about the next 5 weeks? What do we want to accomplish?

- Retreat: Growing in the Spirit, at Killam’s Point
- We want to resurrect the Visioning Report, but probably should wait for John to be here, for planning purposes, to bring together all our learnings from our mutual sabbaticals.
- Guest preachers, Earth Day, walk for Aids, for hunger, new-member orientations, congregational-care seminar, pizza/clean-up evening, Mark’s organ recital, Brahms Requiem in May.

4. What about next transition?

- It will be hard to say goodbye to Caroline – bitter-sweet.
- There will be a one-week overlap again.

- There is some anxiety again, but . . . there is a fellowship that binds us together, and we will be able to weather this change too. We don't gossip meanly, we aren't determined by our pastor; we can appreciate what they offer us, which gives them freedom as well.
- John had confidence in us, and now we realize that he was right; he should be pleased with us and with himself because of this.
- Roger has done a very good job; kudos to him.
- Kudos also to the visioning committee; we are living that vision now: getting new people involved, growing through vitality. (Several requests for a copy; Caroline will see about sending it out with "This week at . . .")
- Danger of falling back into old habits, especially because we're heading into summer doldrums; how do we prepare now to not have that happen? But we've grown as a congregation, and John will have grown; so it's not likely that we'll backslide.

Caroline expressed her gratitude for bringing her here, for our openness, for our graciousness and welcoming. It will be bitter-sweet for her as well. She seconded our growing sense of ourselves as a community, as church. She observed that a church with a strong, gifted pastor can run the risk of losing sight of their core identity as a community of people gathered by God.

The meeting closed with prayer and adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jane Jervis, Clerk

Words of Thanks from John Thomas

Thank you for your church's generous gift of \$500.00 to help tell the story of the United Church of Christ in a full-page ad in the New York Times and USA Today.

People are looking at the UCC, in this moment in history, like they never have before. They are eager to learn more about the UCC and what the UCC stands for. Your gift allows us to tell the church's story and to raise the level of civil discourse about faith in the public square.

Thank you for your generosity.

Sincerely,

The Rev. John H. Thomas
General Minister and President
United Church of Christ

Summary of the Board of Stewards Meeting

April 8, 2008

Gathering and Opening Prayer

The meeting opened with introductions and a prayer.

Moderator's Report

- Davida Foy Crabtree will be preaching next Sunday (April 13).
- Sound system for the Bradley Room should be ready soon.
- Request for periodic meeting space at UCG requested by National Association of Mental Illness (NAMI).

There was discussion about this particular request and need to assess requests for UCG facilities use in general. An examination of April 2008 *New Light* newsletter revealed an existing schedule of outside groups using UCG facilities. Final decisions about granting groups a regular slot should take into consideration sexton availability and payments, scheduling conflicts, explicit concern for suitable use while nursery school is in session, other direct and indirect costs (like extra hours of meeting house heating to keep organ ready for practice), ability of group to pay, group's alignment with stated UCG missions. The Board of Stewards did not assume any exclusive jurisdiction over facilities use; Board of Deacons and Outreach Committee have equal interest in the matter. In general, low, or no cost access to UCG facilities by worthy groups was deemed consistent with the church's mission.

The sense of the meeting was supportive of the NAMI request. Roger agreed to get back to NAMI to collect more specific information about their query.

Pastor's Report

- **Church Retreat** will take place at beautiful Killam's Point in Branford on Saturday, April 19, 2008. A catered lunch will be provided.
- **Earth Day** will serve as the theme for worship on Sunday April 20, 2008. A vegetarian lunch catered by Claire's Cornercopia [sic] will be served. Suggested donation \$8.00/adults, \$5.00 children. Second hour will include information about Asian Rural Institute (ARI), an organization concerned with sustainable farming. (Brahms Requiem Concert on May 18 will take offering to benefit ARI). Roxi Fox, Betty Baisden's well known puppet, will put on an Earth Day themed performance at the Parish House Sunday April 20, 2008.
- **Spring Congregational Meeting** was held previous Sunday April 6, 2008. Caroline reported that the "conversation for the good of the church" was a success.

Treasurer's Report

Church Finances' Seminar Report

Tim and Scott attended a workshop held at the Orange Congregational Church. (Caroline had notified and invited all Stewards.) Workshop emphasized value of narrative budgets (especially those that relate mission to expenditures) and graphic

presentations (like pie charts). Scott presented UCG finances in graphic form and was enthusiastic about relating UCG finances to important stated missions spelled out in several documents; Visioning Statement, Environmental Task Force resolution, Open and Affirming resolution, Peace Resolution. Discussion emphasized maintenance of a beautiful meeting house, continued presentation of wonderful music, and providing vibrant worship as foundations of the church's mission.

- **UCG financial specifics** were provided in print, but not reviewed in detail. 2008 expenses are close to budget for the first quarter ending March 31, 2008. Tim highlighted that performance of the endowment investments has led to a real loss of equity. Recently over \$6,800,000, the value of the endowment has slipped under \$6,000,000. Tim predicted this downturn will have a significant impact on the 2009 budget and that the church will need to make some difficult choices.
 - Tim is in communication with the auditors for the upcoming (Summer '08) audit.

United Church Nursery School (UCNS)

- Jeff reported finances remain good for the UCNS. The State of Connecticut Care for Kids funding is new this year and is keeping the UCNS from running a deficit.
- Fundraising Flower and Plant sale is going on.

Building Update/Report

Building subcommittee (John Sawyer, Mark Brombaugh, Jeffery Hopper, Peter O'Connell) met and reviewed Dahill's proposal for restoration of Meeting House South Elevation. Information provided on paper copies to committee.

John Sawyer made a **motion** to accept Dahill's proposal for renovations to include replacing storm windows, repairing sashes and broken panes, and two coats of paint (including cornice) at \$41,000 plus \$3,000 for second coat. This is well within amount budgeted for 2008. Jean Blue seconded. **Motion accepted unanimously.** Roger Adams plans to sign agreement and get on Dahill's summer schedule.

As work begins, Dahill will be asked to inspect base of columns on West elevation; it is likely some additional partial painting and caulking will be recommended and undertaken at that time. The board of stewards will, of course, be asked to approve any additional large expenditure.

A person who has recently been attending worship services has offered to do some interior painting on a *pro bono* basis. His exterior painting and restoration work is known to Westville residents as very good quality. After consulting Nancy Lupi about church's liability, Mark will contact the painter and ask him to present a work plan to paint in the choir room and the peeling ceiling of the Narthex. Materials would be provided.

There was discussion, but no recommendation, about the dishwasher in the kitchen of the Bradley Room; some additional utensil racks, or a higher grade washer might be considered; Environment Task Force eschews plastic utensils.

Personnel Subcommittee

Caroline, Roger Adams, Jean Blue, David Heath and Mark Brombaugh met. Research on job descriptions for non-professional staff has been conducted.

Advertising

- The Outreach Committee recently made a \$500.00 contribution in support of national UCC ad placed in the NY Times. The ad was in response to the Jeremiah Wright controversy.
- Since Fred Walker's term on the Stewards' committee has expired, there has been a lack of clarity and initiative regarding church advertising. Fred will be invited to participate on an *ad hoc* basis. It was recognized that on-line advertising, You Tube videos, papers like the New Haven Advocate, and cable television commercials are more effective than traditional newspaper ads.

Closing Prayer was led by Caroline Murphy.

Meeting adjourned at 9:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter O'Connell

Summary of the Board of Deacons Meeting

April 1, 2008

1. Check-in for pastoral concerns and personal up-dates was shortened somewhat due to time restrictions. We did hear from the pastor.
2. Minutes for the March 4, 2008, meeting were accepted as presented. (Hopper, Smith)
3. Moderator's Report – Roger announced that Outreach had sent \$500 to National UCC toward the NY Times Ad, which will appear April 3, 2008.

The Congregational Meeting will be held April 6, after the monthly potluck supper. Some questions were raised about the expectations of a good attendance because of the change of the meeting to the evening. The Audio Committee (composed of Jenni, Philip and Mark) has met and will be reporting.

4. Music Director's Report – The big musical event for the month was Easter. Mark

announced that the date of the Brahms Requiem, for benefit of the Asian Rural Institute, will be May 18, 2008, in Branford. April 20th is Mark's organ recital here.

5. Minister's Report – Echoing Mark, Caroline said, “We did Easter,” and it was, indeed, a great event.

ICM representatives are going to a meeting tomorrow. May 10th is the first of the two annual meetings of the Connecticut Conference of the UCC, being held in Middletown. Our representatives will attend, and any members are also welcome, if interested. Ask Caroline for the details.

Caroline has prepared a calendar of events for the month so that the congregation can have a better perspective of the schedule. It will be included in the newsletter and will also be posted; Jenni offered to have Jeff enlarge and print one for the church bulletin board.

Further discussion was on Palm Sunday, Holy Week, and Easter. Palm Sunday: Should we have more emphasis on the palms, as we did this year? Suggestion that we consider having children process with their palms earlier in the service or else sit with their families during the opening. Colleen may have some thoughts on that. The Easter egg hunt produced positive reactions, and seems to have increased attendance on Easter Sunday. Slight break during the season in changing the usual doxology during Eastertide. Most seemed to like the substitution. Caroline will write a note about the doxology for the Sunday bulletin. Lenten Series was discussed and received favorable reactions. Suggestion that the Deacons look at the communion service for Easter at a future time: Should we serve communion that day?

6. Head Deacon – Elaine presented her discussion with Outreach, inquiring about “Where is Community involvement? Can we be more active in our outreach?”
7. Regarding New Members' classes – there has been no conclusion. After discussion it was decided that the schedule for classes will be: April 27, 7 PM – first session, and May 4, 5 PM – second session (UCC 101). Several deacons will be present, along with the Moderator.
8. Communications – The picture directory group will talk with the company in charge of same, on April 8, 6:30 PM. Congregational Care meeting will be April 13. For Adult Education on April 22 there will be a Renewal video. Other requested programs, i.e. Bible Study, will have a Priority Listing for fall; we need to plan early and know our options.
9. Audio Group – Jenni reported that they have discussed making long-term changes. The group does want to get some more receivers, evaluate their use and may eventually do a survey of the congregation. Erwin Steward and Philip Smith are also serving on that committee. Jenni did suggest that the DOD make a point of checking the main mikes before the service to be sure that they are working.

Our Chair was “good to her word” and the meeting adjourned at 8:45 P.M.

Scribe: Lucy Hutchinson

Sabbatical Nuts & Bolts

During John's sabbatical, please keep Interim Senior Minister Caroline Murphy (787-4195 x 11) apprised of any pastoral concerns. (Bear in mind that, because of HIPAA regulations, hospitals no longer inform churches of congregants' hospitalizations.) John returns from his sabbatical on Pentecost Sunday, May 11; Caroline will be with us through Sunday, May 18.

Prayers of Joy and Concern

We pray for **Michelle Nagy**, who was hospitalized in late April, while on vacation in Mississippi.



We rejoice that **Ruth Crockett** is back in her own apartment at Whitney Center, following a stint in Wellness Center.

We are in sympathy with the family and friends of **Dr. Gordon Reid**, a member of the North Haven Congregational Church for whom we hosted a service of remembrance and thanksgiving on April 23.

We also continue to pray for **John Gage** as he winds up his time of sabbatical.

Recent and Upcoming Birthdays



05/02 Gail Ann Redding

05/19 Kate Reynolds

05/06 David French

05/20 Jonathan Tomkin

05/07 George Peterman

05/21 Roberta Thornton

05/08 Jesse Balkcom

05/22 Luann McInnes

05/11 Richard Morgan

05/23 Jon Bloch

05/12 Christine Maursky

05/24 Judith Carlson

05/17 Jean Blue

05/26 Sam Russell

05/18 Eleanor Wilkinson
Elizabeth Dreyer

05/27 Jessica Bialecki

05/28 Tristan Blakeman

Jo Buchanan

05/31 Catharine Walker
Fred Walker



Did you know that sermons and other information about United Church on the Green are posted on our website at www.UnitedChurchontheGreen.org? It's a great way to let friends know about our congregation. Also, if you haven't checked out the wider United Church of Christ online lately, go to www.ucc.org for lots of interesting news, information, and ways to connect to the wider church.

