



The Congregationalist

Volume 17 Issue 9

May, 2017

The Newsletter of the First Congregational Church of Westfield, NJ

Senior Minister's Message Rev. Dr. Mark Boyea

Hi...

"This Is Us".

That's the title of one of the highest rated and most highly acclaimed new television shows this season. It's also a fitting title for the day of Sunday, March 26 here at FCC.

Sunday, March 26 was a day that, from start to finish, defined who we are and what we are about as much as any day in recent memory for me. That day, in the middle of Lent - the most sacred season of the year for Christians - began with a morning Worship celebration which featured our annual Festival Chorus Lenten Music Program. This year, the Festival Chorus, under Dr. Thomson's typically outstanding leadership, performed John Rutter's oratorio, "Feel the Spirit". And we did.

Immediately after that, a sizable crowd from ages 3-93 headed to Patton Auditorium for another of our celebrated traditions during Lent - the annual Cake Auction to benefit Heifer International. The creativity exhibited in the cakes was remarkable, and in true generosity of spirit, those who won more than one cake gladly offered to give one to someone else or put it back into the raffle pool.

Less than two hours later, our Sanctuary, Patton and Coe Hall were converted into a "conference center", as we hosted a forum titled, "Preserving Safety, Sanity and Soul in Turbulent Times: Legal, Psychological and Spiritual Considerations for Advocacy and Activism". This combination of discussion and presentations from myself and FCC members, attorney Tom Jardim and psychologist Dr. Peggy Rothbaum, was formulated in response to the challenges and stresses which many in our community and surrounding area have expressed in relation to their increased involvement in political activism over the past several months. It was a strictly non-partisan event intended to address the needs of all people engaged in political activity, regardless of party affiliation or candidate preference.

Then lastly, shortly after our forum ended, the Youth Fellowship gathered for an examination and discussion of the issue of bullying. Lead by Rev. Mounts, the session approached this critical topic from research, social, emotional and spiritual perspectives. Our students demonstrated enormous honesty, insight and compassion throughout.

(continued on page 2)

Welcome to Worship

Saturday, May 6 - "First Saturday"

Our monthly "First Saturday" worship takes place in the Sanctuary at 5:30pm. "First Saturday" is intended for those who find it difficult to be with us regularly on Sunday, or who desire a quieter, more contemplative worship experience on occasion.

Sunday, May 7

We share in the Sacrament of Communion, as well as recognize another year of our WaySharers ministry for developmentally challenged young adults. WaySharers parent Sheila Wiggins will offer a few thoughts this day. Then following Worship, there will be an information session regarding the status of the Patton renovation project at 11:30 in the Sanctuary (see more on this on p. 5).

Sunday, May 14

Join us as we celebrate Mother's Day and the Festival of the Christian Home.

Sunday, May 21

Our Church School children will perform their annual song under the direction of Joe Regan during Worship. Then, afterwards, the Board of Outreach will host their annual "Thank You Coffee Hour" in appreciation of all the time, talent and treasure the members of our community have offered in service to God's people this year.

Sunday, May 28

On this Memorial Day weekend, we will hold one of our periodic "Family Worship" Sundays, allowing our children the opportunity to learn about and participate in our full worship practices.

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It's A Mystery to Me!

Rev. Joy Mounts, Associate Pastor

In my last column, I said that I would tell you about a mystery that happened when I was writing it. Well, here it is. When I went to find the poem I wanted to share I looked in a copy of my poetry book, Come with Me and Touch the Sky. I have several copies at my house and picked one up to find it. It happened to be the one I had given my Reed grandparents and which was given back to me after they died. When I opened it, much to my surprise out fell a little booklet. It was small and on the faded blue front cover it said – "Poems" by Joel E Reavis.

The booklet was printed in 1947 and inside was a picture of Joel Reavis. The booklet had been printed by his wife. I'm guessing it was a memorial, but I don't know. It was a beautiful booklet and the poems were lovely. Many were about the sea. From his picture, it looked like Joel Reavis was in the Navy. I wondered who he was, but not why my Grandma had put this in with my poems. Whoever he is, I am related to him. Reavis is a made-up last name that first appears here in the United States in the early 1700's and I am related to anyone who has that last name through my Grandma's side of the family. We don't know why the first Reavis changed his name – that is another mystery for another time.

However, I was moved when I found the booklet inside my poetry book. Not just in discovering a long-lost distant cousin but in that my Grandma Reed had put the two family "poets" together. We never really talked about my poems but I felt somehow, she was telling me through this action, she was proud of me. I just wish we had had the time to talk so she could tell me about Joel and his connection and the poems. Still, finding the booklet meant a lot.

How often do we let a moment pass or leave a word unsaid or fail to reach out? It can be difficult. Maybe we don't think we can find the words. Maybe we don't feel it's the right moment. What I love about poetry is that in writing I can often find the words I might scramble for otherwise. That doesn't mean I don't miss the moment or let it pass. It happens plenty of times.

It is then that I turn to prayer because that is one conversation that often does not require words at all. I can speak from my heart and God knows and understands. How wonderful that we have that gift. And that it is always accessible to us. Prayer can help us find the words we need to speak to others. The words we need to speak to ourselves. God is always listening and ready to enter into divine conversation even when, perhaps especially when, the moment does not feel right. God is always there.

And that is no mystery at all.

Peace,

Joy

Senior Minister's Message

(continued from page 1)

On Sunday, March 26, we engaged in a day of soul-stirring, spirit-lifting worship and music, fun and internal community building, service to both our own members and the wider community, and the moral and emotional growth and well-being of our youth.

What a day. What a place we are a part of.

That is FCC.

"This Is Us".

Blessings,

Mark

Save the Date! - Trivia Night, Dinner and Silent Auction



Friday, May 5, 7:00 pm – 10:00 pm at the Italian American Club, 1976 Valley Avenue in Scotch Plains, NJ.

Come and match your wits against other teams to win valuable prizes and bragging rights!

Enjoy dinner and bid on many worthy auction items to benefit the First Congregational Church Summer Youth Mission Trip to Denver, Colorado.

Doors open at 7:00 pm and the Trivia Quiz, hosted by a professional quizmaster, will begin promptly at 7:45 pm.

Dinner is salad, baked ziti, pizza, bread and desserts. Water and soda will be provided. BYOB.

Your wait staff for the evening will be the Mission Trip youth. Price is \$35 per person, or teams (up to 10 people) for \$325. Checks made out to FCC and in the memo note Trivia – Mission Trip.

To register, donate to the silent auction, or if you have questions, please contact Nancy Elkin at nancyelkin@comcast.net or 908-451-1977.

Come one, come all to help make this a fundraiser that isn't trivial!



Adult Studies

Our final Adult Studies unit for the year continues:

"Sacred Journeys"

Tuesdays: May 2, 9, 23 and 30
Coe Hall, 7:30-8:30pm

Based on the PBS series hosted by best-selling author Bruce Feiler, this five-week video and discussion unit will follow the footsteps of American pilgrims searching for spiritual understanding and transformation in places such as Lourdes, France; Jerusalem; Mecca, Saudi Arabia; Shikoku, Japan, and India.

Adult Studies For 2017-2018

Give us your ideas!

Plans are already underway for next year's Adult Studies program, and we hope you'll help us move them along.

Please consider providing us with any suggestions you have for new courses, formats, day/times, or anything else you think might improve our efforts in the vital aspect of our community's spiritual life.

While the implementation of any suggestions will obviously be dependent on time, space and staff resource issues, we do promise that all ideas will be given serious and prayerful consideration.

Please contact Mark with any thoughts at your earliest convenience.

Board of Christian Invitation

Please Check-In

We want to share with the community that FCC is a welcoming place to worship. One way we can do this is by taking a moment to "Check-In" to our FCC Facebook page.



To check into a nearby location:

- Scroll to the top of your News Feed or Profile and click What's on your mind?
- Click to select or search for a nearby location.
- When you check in, you can also:
- Select an audience for your post (Friends, Public).
- Click Post.

In this spirit of making connections, we invite you to "Check-In" on Facebook every Sunday morning.

Moving Meditation

Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith...



Hebrews 10:22

Monday Evening Classes

May 1, 8, 15, 22, 29
from 6:30-7:15 pm

Classes in Patton Auditorium (look for signs on doors). Simple gentle, graceful movement. Stress reduction based on ancient Asian Qigong wellness systems.

Questions? Call Laura Berzofsky at (908) 232-0169.

Donations welcome. We are raising funds for FCC's Youth Mission Trip 2017.

Save the date! All-Church Picnic

On June 11, immediately following Worship, please join us for the Annual All-Church Picnic!

It will be a wonderful afternoon of food, fun and fellowship! Watch the Sunday Announcements for information!

We can't wait to see you all there!



Readers and Riders

All Aboard! Sunday, May 7 at 2 pm.



Men and women are invited to join Readers and Riders at the Fanwood Train Station North (at North and Martine) for "How Trains First Came to the Westfield Area," a visual presentation and tour of historic memorabilia by the Fanwood volunteer town historian, Joe Nagy. Optional lunch at Charlie Brown's beforehand. Please call Laura Berzofsky at (908) 232-6516 to sign up for this special outing.

Board of Outreach - Thank You

The Board of Outreach Missions wishes to express our gratitude to everyone who donated food to the FCC Food Pantry during the Lenten Food Drive. Every time we open the pantry door, we are amazed at how fast it is emptied. The food donations truly help our mission to continue supporting those in need in our community.

Once again, Thank you.



Food Collection

Readers and Riders Visit Historic Newark Church

In April, the Readers and Riders visited the First Presbyterian Church, the oldest church in Newark. One early minister who had a profound influence on the Church was Aaron Burr, father of Aaron Burr Jr. (of Alexander Hamilton dueling fame). Perhaps Burr's most significant achievement was to be a founder and president of Princeton University. Burr married Esther Edwards, daughter of Jonathan Edwards, the great American theologian of the First Awakening. When Burr Sr. died at the age of 41, followed by his wife, shortly after, Aaron Burr Jr., who was born in the parsonage, was left orphaned at the age of one.



The original settlement was actually created in 1666, by a congregation of early Puritans, who, contrary to a founding principle of separation of church and state, believed in the primacy of religious over civil life. Church membership was a prerequisite to owning land, holding public office, and voting. This theocracy soon eroded and the Congregational church became a Presbyterian Church.



After an informative and enjoyable tour of the Church, the Readers and Riders had a delicious lunch at Don Pepe's!

FCC Adult Retreat

From late afternoon Friday, April 21 to late afternoon on Saturday, April 22, several FCC women and men went to the Stony Point Center in Stony Point, NY for our fourth annual All-Adult Retreat.

The theme of this year's retreat was "Recognizing God's Gifts", and over the course of the two days, the group, led by Mark and Joy, explored in depth our awareness of and attention to the Personal, Relationship, Situational and Natural gifts which God makes available to each of us individually and collectively; shared meals; and had opportunities for social and private time as well as nature exploration.

The All-Adult Retreat has become a valued part of our community's Adult Studies efforts.

Please consider taking part in this opportunity next Spring. The dates have already been tentatively set for Friday and Saturday, April 20 & 21, 2018.



Attendees at the 2017 FCC All-Adult Retreat

A night at the opera



On April 20, Dr. Barbara Thompson led a group of 13 FCC members and friends to see Aida at the Metropolitan Opera.

Patton Update

After Worship on May 7th, there will be a Congregational Meeting in the Sanctuary to vote on the revised expenditures for the Patton Renovation Project. The Meeting Warrant has been posted in the Narthex. Plans, proposals and cost information will be reviewed and discussed. Please Join us.

WaySharers



The next meeting of WaySharers will be on Friday May 5, 7-9 pm for Cookie Making & Karaoke. They will serve the cookies at Coffee Hour on WaySharers Sunday, May 7th, after the 10:00 am Worship time.

WaySharers celebrates 14 years as an Outreach Program for Developmentally Disabled Adults. Come and celebrate with us on Sunday May 7th

Then on Friday May 12, 7-9pm we will meet for Yoga.

Interested in becoming a mentor? Stop by and see what it's all about! Cynthia Mathis (908) 233-0180.

A Trip to The Cloisters!

A trip to The Cloisters is being planned for Saturday, May 6. We will head to The Cloisters in the morning, see "Small Wonders - Gothic Boxwood Miniatures", have lunch and be back in NJ in the afternoon.

From The Cloisters website - Small in scale, yet teeming with life, miniature boxwood carvings have been a source of wonder since their creation in the Netherlands in the 16th century. On these intricately carved objects—some measuring a mere two inches (five centimeters) in diameter—the miracles and drama of the Bible unfold on a tiny stage. The execution of these prayer beads and diminutive altarpieces is as miraculous as the stories they tell. This exhibition, the first of its kind, features nearly 50 of these tiny treasures. Among the highlights is a complete carved boxwood rosary made for King Henry VIII of England and his first wife, Katherine of Aragon, before his notorious efforts to dissolve the marriage and his break from the Catholic Church. We will have lunch at the Tryon Public House. The cost of the trip is \$62, which includes, bus, Cloister tickets and lunch. Alcoholic beverages are extra.

If you are interested in attending, please call or email the Church Office at 908-233-2494, uccfcc@verizon.net or contact Rev. Mounts.



Summer 2017 Mission Trip Update



Our second fundraiser for the Summer Mission Trip at the Westfield Diner on April 3,4,5 raised \$575. See the pictures and article on page 8 & 9. Our next fundraiser is a Trivia Night and Silent Auction on Friday, May 5. Details about that event can be found on page 2.

There are twenty-nine confirmed for to Denver in July. Besides working on the fundraisers, we are busy with all the other Mission Trip details - logistics, airlines, designing a team shirt and more. The trip will be here before we know it! If you have any questions, please see Rev. Mounts.



Compass SchoolHouse Kindergarteners recently welcomed Joy Mounts as their guest reader. Coinciding with their theme on People In The Community, Joy spoke to the class about her job as a minister and her passion for helping people. Joy read The Sandwich Swap by Queen Rania, a book about how friendship is far more powerful than difference.



COMPASS CARNIVAL

Compass SchoolHouse would like to invite FCC families to their annual Compass Carnival on Saturday, May 20th from 10am-2pm. The carnival is held on the playground and parking lot and there will be music, games, dancing, 2 bouncy houses, pizza, Philly pretzels, ice cream, cotton candy and FUN!! Cost is \$5 per person (ALL ages since it is a fundraiser) and \$1 per food ticket (food items cost 1 or 2 tickets). Responses are very much appreciated since it helps for food planning! RSVP to events@compassschoolhouse.com with your family name and number of attendees. We look forward to spending the day together.

May Confirmation Schedule

Sunday, May 7
11:30am Class in Dr. Boyea's Office

Friday, May 12 & Saturday, May 13 **Confirmation Retreat**
Details to be emailed

Sunday, May 14 **Mother's Day**
No Class

Sunday, May 21
11:30am Class in Dr, Boyea's Office

Sunday, May 28
11:30am Class in Dr. Boyea's office

Wednesday, May 31
4:00pm Confirmation Rehearsal - Sanctuary
6:00pm Confirmation Dinner - Patton

Youth Fellowship Update

In April, the Youth Fellowship started off the month with a wonderful treat – Wally and Linda Parker came and showed pictures from their recent African photo safari. The YF appreciated the Parkers taking the time to share their pictures and some stories from their trip with us. After their presentation, we had a rousing round of Family Feud designed and lead by YF Leaders, Erin Baily Rae and Natalie Mikula.

Also in April, we had the Great YF Easter Egg Hunt in which the YF searched for plastic and chocolate eggs all over FCC buildings and grounds. Congrats to our big winner, Sophia Andersen, for finding the most eggs. The rest of April was just as busy with a regular meeting on April 23, a Bridges Run to Newark on Saturday, April 29 and the Senior High Off-Site Dinner on April 30. In May, we will have the last regular meeting of this semester and our End of the Year Picnic. Location to be determined. If you have any questions about YF or ideas about our 2017-2018 year, please see Rev. Mounts.



Confirmand/Mentor Luncheon at Westfield Diner



Youth Fellowship Easter Egg Hunt



May Youth Fellowship Schedule

Sunday, May 7
5pm YF Meeting

Sunday, May 14 **Mother's Day**
No Meeting

Sunday, May 21 **End of year Picnic**



Wally & Linda Parker sharing African Safari photos with Youth Fellowship members.

Church School News

May 21 - Church School Sunday - Church School Musical Presentation

The children, 3 years old through Middle High, will be singing the *Lord of the Dance* under the direction of our Assistant Music Director, Joe Regan. As the children will be practicing every week until then, we hope your children will attend all classes.

Come and hear this special performance during the Worship service on May 21. It will truly be a treat!

A final rehearsal for this musical presentation will be held in Patton Auditorium on May 21st at 9:30am sharp!

Teacher Appreciation and Recognition Sunday

Please come and join us on May 21 as we recognize one of our most important ministries - our Church School teachers, Assistants and Substitutes, for their indispensable contribution to our community through their ministry.

May 28 – Family Worship Service

A special Family Worship Service will be offered on May 28 as we look to provide regular opportunities throughout the year for families to worship together. We welcome children in Grades 1 and older to remain in worship. The Crib Room will be provided for infants through five years old.

Fun and educational activity bags/clip boards will be provided to the youth when they arrive in church. The activity sheets and bags are a gift to the children, but we ask that the clip boards be left in the pews.

Teachers Are Needed!

It is that time of the year when we begin to plan for the next Church School year. During the coming weeks the Church School Committee will be recruiting teachers. Get involved as a teacher or helper. Show your children your commitment to their Christian education. We would love to hear from you. If you are interested, please call Alida Woods, (908)322-5030.



18th Annual Cake Auction – A Special Thank You!

Thanks to everyone who baked and bought tickets for the 18th Annual Cake Auction to raise money for Heifer International. It was a great success. A special thank you to Ellen Hollis and the Middle High class for organizing this much-loved event; and to Lori Bierman and the good ladies of Women’s Unlimited for their artistic creations! We were blessed to have the contribution of 41 cakes, and the auction raised \$967.00. Many, many thanks!

The Heifer International Arks and Read To Feed Pledges Are Due



Please return the Heifer Project Ark Banks and Read-to-Feed pledges to your child's teacher or to Alida Woods if you have not done so already. Thank you to all who participated in this year’s Heifer Mission Project. You are helping Heifer fulfill its mission to end global hunger and poverty while caring for the earth. To date, we have raised \$967.00 through the Cake Auction, \$33.80 through the Fill-the-Ark Program and special recognition goes to second grader, Isabella Burdick, for raising \$70 through the Read-to-Feed program!

Please consider giving as much as you can since each dollar raised for Heifer International will be matched dollar for dollar by Wally and Linda Parker. We are truly grateful to Wally and Linda Parker for this generous contribution.

Bulletin Board Update – The Miracles of Jesus

Periodically throughout the year our Church School classes decorate the bulletin board outside of the Crib Room. Come and see what the Middle High class has created. Thank you to Middle High teacher Susanna Larmore for leading this effort!

Alexander Award

The applications for the Alexander Award Scholarship are due on Monday, May 1. All interested Seniors should submit their applications to the Church Office, uccfcc@verizon.net.



The Alexander Award Scholarship, named in memory of long-time members Edna and John Alexander, is given annually to one or more high school seniors who have made a significant contribution to the life of the church.



Church School children during Palm Sunday Processional

A Summer Mission Trip Fundraiser took place Monday – Wednesday, April 3-5, at the Westfield Diner. Through your participation and the generosity of the Westfield Diner, we raised \$575.00. Thanks again to all who dined



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Worship & Church School
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Next Deadline: May 16



Annual Progressive Evening - Saturday, May 20

Sign Up Now — Deadline is Sunday, May 14

Mark your calendar! On Saturday, May 20, from 6:30 until 10pm, join adult members and friends of FCC for our annual progressive event. Sign up at Coffee Hour during the month of April, or fill out the form below and mail it to the Church Office. The evening is a great way to make new friends and get together with old ones. Everyone is asked to either prepare food or open their home for part of the evening. Please call or email Merry Wisler (908) 403-7609 or merry.wisler@gmail.com (txts or email preferred) OR Judy Augustino at (908) 232-0661 or judyandalan1@verizon.net for more information or transportation.

Appetizers: 6:30–8:15 pm

You and your co-hosts (6-8) will plan and share expenses for soft drinks, wine, and hearty hors d'oeuvres for approximately 25–30 people.

Dessert: 8:30–10 pm

We need one generous person to host the evening's finale (~60 people). You will have several co-hosts to help plan and share expenses for coffee/tea and desserts.

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

Email _____

Check one:

- Appetizer Hosts (2-3 to volunteer home)
- Appetizer Co-Host (provide food/ beverages)
- One Dessert Host (volunteer home)
- Dessert Co-Host (provide food/ beverages)

Please list food allergies.