

**North Canaan Congregational Church, UCC**

(860) 824-7232

Fax: (860) 824-5660

**Office Location:**

30 Granite Ave., North Canaan

**Church Location:**

172 Lower Rd., East Canaan

**Email:** nccongchurch@snet.net

**Website:**

northcanaancongregationalchurch.org

**Worship:** 10:15 AM

**Interim Pastor:**

Rev. Rosemary Dawson

(860) 824-1555 (P House office)

**Email:**

pastor.no.canaan@hotmail.com

**Secretary:**

Michele Bosworth

Tues. & Thurs: 9:00-4:30

**Youth for Christ Coordinator:**

Christina Rogers

**Organist:**

Marilyn Mullins

**Sexton:**

Sally Pollard

**Boards and Committees:**

Moderator – Ned Gow

Vice-Moderator – Ned Gow

Clerk – Carolyn O'Connor

Treasurer - Wendy Kennedy

Asst. Treasurer – Sally Pollard

**Deacons:**

Chair: Tammy MacDonald

Gert Anderson

Ned Gow

Ceil June

Leslie O'Connor

Sally Ford

Mabel Walker

Lynne Martin

**Trustees:**

Chair: Frank Ghi

Ruth Adotte

Sharon Milukas

Fred Ruggles

Glenn Rogers

Lois Carlson

**Christian Education:**

Chair: Stacey Curtis

Melissa Gandolfo

Barbara Ghi



# THE SPIRE

The North Canaan Congregational Church, UCC

March 2010

Sometimes good things just come your way. As I was preparing a newsletter for you this week, I received a letter from Mike Ciba. I am including it in this edition of *The Spire*. I think it is timely for the work of our church. In broad strokes, this is the task of the interim journey for our church.

May God bless us as together we pursue his way.  
Rosemary



## ***The Spire 2***

Valley Northwest Passage  
*February 11, 2010*

Dear Colleagues in Ministry,

Michael Himes, a theology professor who advises students at Boston College, suggests that, when we are facing vocational questions, we should ask ourselves three questions:

- What gives us joy?
- What are we good at?
- Do other people need us to do it?

While Himes conceived of these questions primarily in terms of individual discernment, they can just as easily be asked by a local church. Many churches struggle with questions of mission, ministry, and identity. Who are we? Who is God calling us to become? What is God calling us to do? What if a church began asking itself these same three questions?

*What gives us joy?* Every church engages in multiple activities. Some clearly bring joy, whether they require great effort or are relatively easy. Others do not bring joy, and some of these require great effort. Joy is much more than feeling good or happy or content with ourselves. It is the sense of peace, calm, and strength that ultimately comes from God's presence in our lives and our aligning our activity with God's purpose for us. Some activities call forth joy and others do not. Even activities that are painful to do can produce joy in the end. If something consistently does not call forth joy, we need to honestly and seriously reflect on whether it is something God is calling us to do. What if the members of a local church began asking this question about the various things they do as a church? Would they have the wisdom and courage to let go of some things that did not bring or call forth joy? Would they have the courage to try some new things that may or may not be joyful?

*What are we good at?* People have multiple and sometimes conflicting expectations of a church. It is impossible to meet everyone's expectations. Can a local church focus on its strengths and nurture them? Can a local church let go of unrealistic expectations that aren't really from God? A church does not have to limit itself to what it is already doing. It may very discover it is good at a lot of things that it hasn't tried yet. The only way to find out is to try them. But a church also needs to be willing to graciously let go of unrealistic expectations and of things that it may have done well in the past but is no longer able to do now.

*Do other people need us to do it?* What does God need the church to do, not only for its members but also for the world? The church today has become too focused on itself. As important as our community life is, it can't become our only or even our primary focus. From the day of Pentecost, the church has been called to open its doors and to live God's good news in the world. We need to claim this calling anew.

Himes stresses that vocational discernment for individuals does not take place in a vacuum. We need other people to discern with us, especially about the second and third questions. The same is true of our local churches. Churches need other churches to discern with them who they are and who God is calling them to become. This was the basis of our early associations and conferences. How can churches help each other to claim their joy, assess their strengths, and do God's work in the world?

It's hard to ask these questions and can be even harder answering them honestly. But not asking them at all can, in the end, be even worse. If we don't ask them, we may experience joy less and less often. We may lose the ability to distinguish our strengths from our weaknesses. We may become useless to others and even to ourselves.

Jesus didn't avoid the hard questions. Neither should we.

Michael Ciba  
Valley Northwest Regional Minister  
Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ

### ***The Spire 3***

## **MARCH 2010 CALENDAR**

**Fishes & Loaves Food Pantry** is open every Wednesday of the month 9:00am - 11:00am AND 4:30pm - 5:30pm at PH.

**The Children's Clothing Exchange** is open every Wednesday of the month 9am - 11:30am at PH.

**Faith Without Bounds:** Worship service, First Sunday of the month, 4pm, at PH. There will be NO service during the months of March or April. The next ecumenical service will be May 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**All Committee Night & Potluck Supper:** Monday, March 22, 6pm at PH. NO meeting in April, next meeting and potluck supper will be May 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**Palm Sunday:** March 28, 10:15 am Worship Service at our church including Special Music.

**Maundy Thursday:** April 1, 6:30 pm Worship Service at our church; Holy Communion, special music, Service of Tenebrae.

**Good Friday:** April 2 –

Noon Ecumenical worship service at Christ Church, Canaan.

Silent Meditation 6-8 pm, at our church in East Canaan, the sanctuary will be open for personal meditation and reflection.

**Easter Sunday:** April 4 -

\*Ecumenical Sunrise Service at 6 am taking place on Cooper Hill, Ashley Falls, MA. Breakfast to follow at The United Methodist Church in Ashley Falls, MA.

\*10:15 am Worship Service at our church, Special Music, Communion.

**DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME BEGINS: Sunday, March 14<sup>th</sup>! Remember to turn your clocks AHEAD on Saturday night!**

**Angel Food Ministry–Order deadline:** Sunday, March 14<sup>th</sup>.

**Deadline for Spire articles:** Monday, March 15<sup>th</sup>.

**Ecumenical Lenten Services:** Wednesdays, worship service and luncheon, noon. Please see schedule in this edition of *The Spire*.

**Angel Food Ministry–Pick up at Pilgrim House:** Saturday, March 27<sup>th</sup>, 9:30-10:30am.

## ***BOARD OF TRUSTEES***

The Board of Trustees met February 22, 2010 following a Fellowship Dinner at Pilgrim House. Lois Carlson, Sharon Milukas and Glenn Rogers are new members to the Board. Frank Ghi was chosen to be the Chairperson. There was a long discussion regarding replacing two furnaces at Pilgrim House and one at the church. Members approved to replace the furnaces. The work will be done in the spring. We also discussed the windows at the church that need replacing and painting the wood on the outside of the church. No action will be taken until we have quotes for the work. We approved a contract for the maintenance of the copy machine at the office. A meeting will be called in the near future after the deeds to both the church and Pilgrim House are researched. Members of the Board agreed that a decision should be made this year by members of the church regarding the sale of properties the church owns.

Ruth Adotte, member Board of Trustees

## ***BOARD OF DEACONS***

The Board of Deacons has kept very busy during January and February. Scheduled monthly meetings were held January 5 & February 2, 2010. Deacons held a special meeting in January to do a Pastoral Review and participated in the Annual Meeting January 31<sup>st</sup>. The Board will again meet February 22 for the first All-Committee meeting night.

Besides the normal business on January 5<sup>th</sup>, like Deacon of the Month assignments, worship prep, and a look ahead at Lenten services, an agenda item was addressing feedback from the congregation. A member shared her own feelings along with other members' thoughts, who had approached her. Emails sent to Deacons were read and all issues were addressed. Further discussion produced different plans of action regarding this feedback. Deacons responded to each person with a letter containing the results of this discussion. The Deacons appreciate all feedback and are committed to keeping open communication a priority.

Deacons said good bye to Sally Pollard and Sharon Milukas, whose terms were finished, and to Glenn Rogers whose call was to the Board of Trustees. Gert Anderson's term was also finished, but she graciously agreed to stay on another year. Deacons welcomed Sally Ford, Mabel Walker and Lynne Martin to the Board. The Pastoral Review meeting in January was attended by outgoing Deacon members, as well as those just signing on.

Although Deacons will participate in the All-Committee meeting night on February 22<sup>nd</sup>, we still met Feb 2<sup>nd</sup> at the church to officially welcome the new members. Ash Wednesday and Lenten services were discussed as well as Holy Week and Easter. Results of the Pastoral Review were shared with Rosemary and she shared her thoughts regarding the agreements of the congregation as listed on her current contract. Overall, the review was positive for all and a learning experience for the Deaconate. A report will be given to Council.

Deacons will firm up details for Lenten, Holy Week and Easter services at the next meeting Feb 22<sup>nd</sup>, and choose officers for the New Year.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Tammy MacDonald

**MARCH BIRTHDAYS**



1 Robert Wheeler  
Megan Baldesseri  
8 Corinne Hammond  
10 Melissa Gandolfo  
12 Annie Shealy  
18 George MacDonald

21 Lila Milukas  
24 Gert Anderson  
26 Slade Begley  
27 Elizabeth Verchot  
29 Cary Shealy

***YOUTH FOR CHRIST***

**Youth for Christ**

The Youth for Christ teen group have been meeting regularly for Sunday school classes. Every first Sunday of the month we join the service and have communion.

Thank you to the Youth for Christ teens for helping out with Souper Bowl Sunday. A special thank you to Josh and Garrett for helping with the collection baskets. Thanks to all of our church family we were able to collect \$62.80 for Fishes and Loaves food pantry.

Our events for February were:

February 7<sup>th</sup>- at Christina Rogers's house from 2:00pm – 5:00 pm; we had our annual homemade fudge and Guitar Hero competition. We had 8 in attendance.

February 28<sup>th</sup>- at Pilgrim House from 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm. We had Homemade Ice Cream Sundaes and movie night: "Night at the Museum; Battle of the Smithsonian's".

Our events for March will be:

March 14th at Pilgrim House TBA

March 28th- Movie night at Pilgrim House 6:00pm - 8:00pm

Hope to see you all there!  
Youth for Christ Coordinator  
Christina Rogers

## ***The Spire 6***

### ***DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME BEGINS***

**Daylight savings time begins on Sunday, March 14<sup>th</sup>! Remember to turn your clocks AHEAD on Saturday night!**

### ***JUNIOR YOUTH UPDATE***

The Junior Youth Group has been learning the about the life of David and how this youngest child of Jesse, a mere shepherd, is chosen by God to be king. They learned of his anointing, his triumph over Goliath, a nine foot giant, and of his love of music and poetry. We spent some time talking about the Psalms and their importance. Throughout the year, we have been spending some time speaking of the word "shepherd" and its significance. We reflect on Moses, David and Jesus and how the word shepherd is appropriate in many senses for all three.

For the month of February, we will be moving our focus to the New Testament and be focusing on the Sermon on the Mount. We will discuss the Beatitudes, what is means to be salt of the earth and the Lords Prayer just to name a few. Learning to worship and serve God with two hands and an open heart is a common theme.

Slowly we are becoming comfortable with finding passages in the Bible. We have made Bible brownies to help with this task as well as a treasure hunt. The children were to find "hidden arrows" with words written on them. Then working as a team, they found the passage that was necessary that week and put the "arrows" together to make the verse. Not only is this method of learning fun for the kids (they love to "hunt" for hidden objects); it allows them to be comfortable with the Bible as well as work together as a team.

As always, should you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to speak with me.

Respectfully submitted,

Stacey Curtis



## ***The Spire 7***

### ***SPECIAL SERVICES FOR HOLY WEEK***

#### **Wednesdays - ALL Noon Services followed by a light lunch/refreshments\*\***

Feb. 24 - United Methodist Church, Canaan

Mar. 3 - St. Joseph's Church, Canaan

Mar. 10 - Falls Village Congregational Church, Falls Village

**\*\*Mar. 17 – 7 pm**, United Methodist Church, Great Barrington, MA

Mar. 24 - North Canaan Congregational Church, East Canaan (shared with Christ Church)

#### **Palm Sunday - Mar. 28**

10:15 am Worship Service at our church in East Canaan  
Special Music

#### **Maundy Thursday - Apr. 1**

6:30 pm Worship Service at our church in East Canaan  
Holy Communion, special music, Service of Tenebrae

#### **Good Friday - Apr. 2**

Noon Ecumenical worship service at Christ Church, Canaan

Silent Meditation 6-8 pm, at our church in East Canaan  
The sanctuary will be open for personal meditation and reflection

#### **Easter Sunday - Apr. 4**

Ecumenical Sunrise Service at 6 AM taking place on Cooper Hill, Ashley Falls, MA\*.  
Breakfast to follow at The United Methodist Church in Ashley Falls, MA.

10:15 am Worship Service at our church in East Canaan  
Special Music  
Communion

**\*Directions to Cooper Hill** - Take a right on Ashley Falls Road, (next to State Line Pizza and the police barracks). Follow to the flashing light intersection in Ashley Falls (at the post office). Take a left onto Rannapo Road. Follow Rannapo Road (you will go past Rivers Farm) and take a left onto Cooper Hill Road. Take a right at the top of the hill (sign says Silver Street) and go a short way down the hill. You will see the cars.



## **FROM THE OFFICE**

### **Church Office Hours**

The Church Office Hours have changed to Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9am-4:30pm.

### **Church Cancellations**

Please tune in to WFSB, Channel 3, during inclement weather to see if Sunday worship services will be cancelled.

### **Our Church Website**

Please visit our church website at [www.northcanaancongregationalchurch.org](http://www.northcanaancongregationalchurch.org) and sign the guestbook. You may sign up to receive *The Spire* through email, check the monthly calendar or view pictures of church events. The website is updated regularly and your input is greatly appreciated.

### **Pilgrim House Usage for March**

Every Monday 6:30pm & 7pm-8pm; Wednesdays, 3:15-4:45 pm Cub Scouts; Friday, March 5<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup>, Yo-Kids Dances, 7-9:30pm; Sunday, March 7<sup>th</sup>, Girl Scouts Pancake Breakfast, 6am-noon; Sunday, March 7<sup>th</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup>, YFC, 6-8pm.

### **Angel Food Ministry**

The **deadline for ordering this month is Sunday, March 14<sup>th</sup>**. Please pay in cash when you place your order. To obtain a menu or place an order, please see Christina Rogers. Food boxes will be **distributed at Pilgrim House on Saturday, March 27<sup>th</sup>, between 9:30 & 10:30 a.m.** For more information, please call the church office at (860) 824-7232, or visit the Angel Food website at [www.angelfoodministries.org](http://www.angelfoodministries.org).

### **Deadline for Spire Articles**

**Reminder:** the deadline for articles for *The Spire* is the third Monday of the month. This is also the deadline for any items that you would like to submit to be included on our Church Website.

**\*\*Deadline for the next edition of *The Spire* is Monday, March 15<sup>th</sup>.**

Michele Bosworth  
Church Secretary



**SEARCH COMMITTEE REPORT  
Hearts and Hands...Our Faith, our Church**

On Saturday, February 20<sup>th</sup>, many of us gathered at the Pilgrim House with members of our Search Committee for the first of what we hope will be a series of conversations about our Church life: our spiritual hopes and dreams as a congregation, our journey of discovery toward our true purpose and mission as people of God. Our spiritual guide for the day was Rev. Cheryl Anderson, who had met two days prior with the Search Committee to introduce us to the concepts of "affirmative inquiry" and "provocative propositions" as interview and conversational principles to guide us during our "Conversational Cafes".

"Affirmative Inquiry" leads us to seek out our strengths and gifts. We were instructed to frame every question in a positive way, and to answer each question with a positive response. "Provocative Propositions" lead us then to find metaphors to connect who we were, and now are, into the future to who we want to be as a congregation.

After an opening prayer and introductory comments from Cheryl (and delicious breakfast goodies brought by Sharon Milukas), we each chose a partner to ask a series of prepared questions. We were all given the same questions to ask, and each person had 20 minutes to interview their partner. We asked each other to tell a story about our church at its best: to recall a time when we felt most alive, most involved, or most excited about our involvement, how we felt, how we experienced the Holy Spirit among us during that time, who was involved, who did what and when.

We asked each other what we each value about our congregation; what is the single most important thing that our participation in this church has contributed to each of our lives. We asked each other what the greatest strength of our congregation is...what we are best at.

We asked each other what we believe is the core value of our church. What values give life to our congregation: what is it that, if it did not exist, would make our church totally different than it currently is?

Finally, we asked each other this question: if God had three wishes (prayers) for our church, what would they be?

We then re-convened and shared each other's stories. We identified values and themes that came through the interviews, and then listed those things that came through as most creative, faith-affirming, life-giving and valued.

At this point Cheryl asked us to take some time for lunch and personal reflection. She suggested that we each find ways, through art and imagery, to create symbols or metaphorical images of what we were personally feeling after our interviews with each other. Tammy MacDonald shared the symbolism of the Mandala with us as an example of creative imagery. Lunch and art/craft supplies were provided by the Search Committee.

**SEARCH COMMITTEE REPORT-CONTINUED**

After lunch and reflection, we gathered again, this time to create our “provocative propositions”: our statements of what kind of congregation we will be from here on into the future. These propositions had to be grounded in reality and had to represent the values and themes we had identified during our time of inquiry. We shared our artistic creations with the group, and as we talked about our work, two particular themes stood out: the love and caring shown daily by the members of our church through our willingness to help others, and that we are a congregation that welcomes all of God’s children. This theme was vividly portrayed on paper by Lynn Martin, who had created a circle of hands reaching out, but also through many other pictures using hearts and lights as symbols.

In closing, Rev. Cheryl Anderson read, to those of us gathered, a free-form poem written by Melissa Adam during our time of reflection. It was evident to all of us present that the Holy Spirit was working through Melissa in an extraordinary way to speak to the rest of us. Melissa’s reflection is being written out in calligraphy by Barbara Austin, to be framed and shared with us all when ready.

The Search Committee will be calling for more congregational conversations in the months ahead. We thank each of you for so helpfully sharing this journey of discovery with us.

Gert Anderson,  
Corresponding Secretary  
Search Committee





***North Canaan Congregational Church,  
United Church of Christ  
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THE SPIRE

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Deadline for the next edition of  
*The Spire* is **Monday, March 15<sup>th</sup>**.