

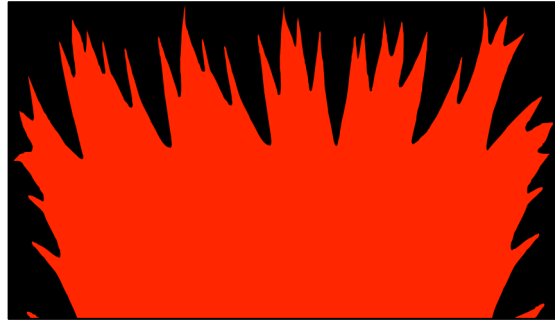
The Inkling

The News of First Presbyterian Church

May 2016

PENTECOST

Pentecost is fast approaching. We celebrate the gift of the Holy Spirit on May 15th. Please consider something red, orange or yellow – the predominate colors of fire.



Fire is a symbol of the Spirit because Acts tells us that there were tongues as of fire that rested over the heads of those who had been gathered together.

Fire is both an entrancing and dangerous image. I doubt I am alone in enjoying the flames of a fire – as long as it is safely contained. But when fire runs rampant, it is downright frightening. I think the same is true of the Spirit of God. We might want to contain her to working in very predictable ways. But the truth of the Spirit of God is that she goes where she wills and works in ways we truly never expected. Sometimes we welcome that – as when a church needs a new start. Other times we fight it – when it means letting go of some of our treasured ways of doing things, or our well set expectations.

As Pentecost arrives this year, it might be worth asking how the Spirit is at work in your life. Are you fighting the new thing the Spirit is revealing or are you finding a way to enjoy the something new that is happening in your life. The Spirit is at work – we would do well to look for that work in our own lives, and in the life of this congregation.

--Pastor Susan



Scripture Readings for Sundays in May

May 1 – I Peter 3:13-17, Psalm 66 and John 15:1-8

May 8 – John 15:9-17, Psalm 71 and I Corinthians 13

May 15 – John 14: 15-27, Psalm 104:24-24, Acts 2:1-8, 12-13

May 22 – Romans 5:1-5, Psalm 8, John 16:12-15

May 29 - open

Memorial Cairn – Monday, May 2nd

Reclaiming the Prophetic Voice will once again mark the number of deaths of civilian and military personnel from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Join friends at the monument on the corners of Broadway and Elm Streets in New Haven at 6 p.m. for a 15 minute prayer service. All are welcome.

CT Folk Concert-Friday, May 6th

The CT Folk concert at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, May 6th, features a group called [No Fuss and Feathers](#), performing a tribute to Linda Ronstadt. The church gets 10 free tickets. If you are interested, please let the church office know. This is the final First Friday concert till the fall schedule.



April Session Report

Our April Session meeting opened with poetry and prayer. Pastor Susan shared that we will have a new director of campus ministry (Emily Theus). We then discussed honoring and recognizing those in our congregation who are graduating this year.

The Congregational Study Committee reported that 131 people completed the survey (or at least part of it!). They will plan to write report from the survey over the summer. During the Financial Committee report we discussed the Presbyterian loan program for building: currently there will be no refinancing but there is a possibility to restructure our mortgage.

As many in the congregation already know we had a fantastic clean-up day for the church grounds. Elder Robert Williams put it best in his own words: “EMERGE sent a group of approximately 20 guys who worked hard for three hours alongside FPCNH congregation members to cut down trees, clear weeds and brush beside the parking lot and in between the church and manse, pull out the azaleas that were blocking the sign in front of the church building, trim the yews between the parking lot and church building, spread mulch throughout the playground area, reorganize the kitchen, etc. etc. It was fun, productive, and a terrific fellowship opportunity.” The Worship Committee reported on re-forming a task force to explore ways to display art in the sanctuary.

We closed with prayer and look forward to the next Session meeting.

-John Dinkler

PENTECOST OFFERING to be collected on May 15th

A gift to the Pentecost Offering helps the Presbyterian Church encourage, develop, and support its young people, and also address the needs of at-risk children. 40% of the Pentecost offering can be retained by individual congregations wanting to make an impact in the lives of young people within their own community. The remaining 60% is used to support ministries of the Young Adult Volunteers and Ministries for Youth and Children at Risk of the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

Emily Theus, our new Campus Chaplin

Welcome to Emily Theus, who will start in September as our new Campus Chaplin at Yale!

Emily is finishing her first year at Yale Divinity School, where she is pursuing a Master of Arts in Religion, concentrated in Theology. A native of Columbia, South Carolina, Emily graduated from the University of South Carolina in 2015 with a B.S. in mathematics and religious studies. In the past, she has worked on the summer staff at Montreat Conference Center, and as a youth advisor for Eastminster Presbyterian Church. Outside of her work, Emily also enjoys taking walks with friends, drawing, and exploring new places.

If we are going to say hello to Emily, we should say goodbye to Jackie!
THANKS, WELL DONE, AND FARE WELL



Jackie Spycher, last year's intern, and this year's campus ministry person will be graduating from Yale Divinity School this May - if she gets all her papers done! She has been among us for two years and has become an integral part of the congregation. We will miss her, but celebrate her achievement and look forward to what comes next for her. She will be moving back to Michigan in late May and starting a position for a church in a non-ordained capacity, as she also finishes taking Greek. We wish her well, and thank her for the blessings she has shared with us while she was here.

Update: Connecticut Food Bank Walk Against Hunger—New Haven

Have you been wondering about this year's walk? The Connecticut Food Bank has decided not to hold a walk in New Haven this May, although they do have a 5K run in Norwalk on June 5 for any eager runners among us.

Instead, folks are asked to contribute to the 2016 Annual Fund Drive Against Hunger, run by the Connecticut Food Bank. Donations are fully tax-deductible. Send your check to The Connecticut Food Bank, 2 Research Parkway, Wallingford, CT 06492, or donate online at ctfoodbank.org.

Our church continues to contribute to the food bank with a generous annual donation through the Mission Committee.

Even though Connecticut is a relatively well off state, one person in every seven in Connecticut is food insecure.

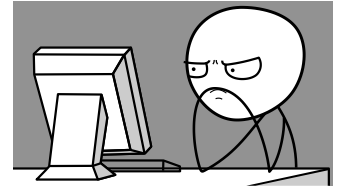


A reminder: the food church members bring to the wheelbarrow is contributed to Christian Community Action, a New Haven organization that helps people in need. CCA also obtains food from the Connecticut Food Bank. This summer our church will donate fresh vegetables from Massaro Farm to CCA every week.

--Mission Committee

FPCNH Financial Team

Recently, several people have inquired about who handles the specifics of our church's financial operations. Whether you need to contact someone with a question, or are just curious about what happens after your offering is collected, here are the duties of the three church volunteers who handle the financial operations at our church. Feel free to contact them, and also thank them for their dedicated work.



Mike Spicer is our Treasurer.

The Treasurer is responsible for the financial system including:

- The monthly bank reconciliation
- Monthly Financial Statements
- The relationship with Logos (our financial computer system)

David Miller is our Treasurer for Disbursements.

The Treasurer for Disbursements is responsible for creating and signing checks. The Treasurer should not have checking signing responsibility to enforce separation of responsibilities.

Mary Porterfield is our Treasurer for Receipts.

The Treasurer for Receipts is responsible for depositing the money the church receives. For special donations, she also needs specific instructions for what account to charge special donations to.

Three perspectives on our Church financial position are prepared and distributed each month to Session:

1. A Trial Balance that includes all transactions. Each month, include all year to date transactions.
2. A Balance Sheet with the ending balances in all accounts and funds
3. An Income Statement comparing current operating spending to budget

A Funds Statement summarizing the in's and out's from Special Funds (money designated for a specific purpose.)

In addition, we provide the Mission Committee with statements that include just their accounts

--Martha Smith and Mike Spicer

Our Churches Need True Colors Education

A note from First Presbyterian Church of New Haven's Director of Christian Education for Children and Youth, Kimberley Fais

Is the Bible a Voice of Hope or a Word of Death for LGBTQ+ Folk? This was the title of the first workshop I attended at the True Colors Conference this spring. It was one of several listings from the Spirituality Institute, a category I hadn't even expected to find there.

The facilitator, a lesbian pastor, asked, "Have any of you been abused with Scripture?"

Several people raised their hands and told their stories.

"Okay," she said, pursing her lip and gathering some holy resolve. "You're the reason I'm here. There's always an inner circle and an outer circle to these events, right? This workshop is open to everyone, but you – you are why I'm here."

Together we studied some of the history and linguistics of the clobber texts from the Hebrew Bible and the Pauline letters. The growing relief in the room was palpable, but by the end, there were still some questions that the pastor could not answer. Her presentation focused entirely on the lens of gay and lesbian people, and it became clear that she was only prepared to discuss the implications of same-sex relationships and none of the various other issues the LGBTQ+ community encounters in religious contexts. Those attending the workshop engaged specific questions from a transgender person and a parent of a transgender child, and the conversation broadened accordingly.

This collaborative session highlighted for me not only how vital it is to empower people who have endured spiritual abuse and marginalization, but also how easy it is even for well-meaning and highly trained leaders, allies, and LGBTQ+ people to erase and neglect certain people and the particularity of their experiences. It was a reminder to me that no matter how welcoming and inclusive my church and I may consider ourselves, surely there is always something more to learn, someone whose reality we do not yet understand well enough to affirm them as fully as we intend.

In that morning's opening program, activist and former NFL player Wade Davis addressed the crowd of hundreds of youth, family members, and professionals. He said: "Do the work that doesn't just look like you in the mirror. Don't think just because you're LGBTQ that you don't have your own stuff to work through." He urged everyone to learn more about other gender identities and orientations, but also about the intersectionality of issues like race, class, and disability, and the nuances these layers contribute to individual and communal experience. With a selection of related courses, the conference offered opportunities for participants to find spaces which better honored our whole selves, and also opportunities to step outside our contexts.

My final workshop of that first day was about *Solidarity*, primarily from the perspective of Black transgender people. After inviting our definitions, the two facilitators explained their own take. "Solidarity means, 'What are you willing to give up?' Allies ask what they can do, and I say allies could do a lot *less*. That is, use the time and space and platforms you have, and give them to queer voices."

And so in that spirit, I ask:

What are we willing to ask of our communities?

Whose voices are still missing in leadership, liturgy, and decision-making around the church? If, for any reason, these bodies are not yet present or in positions of power, how might we lift up their voices nonetheless?

Are we willing to center listening and learning in our activism, rejecting the notion that these tasks are inherently passive?

Are we willing to give up our sense of satisfaction as progressive Christians, as pastors, as educators, as activists, and humbly admit that even the most knowledgeable and dedicated of us still have more to learn?

Are we willing to give up whichever concepts of queerness or alliance make it too easy not to challenge ourselves?

Are we willing to give up our time, energy, and space – physical spaces, verbal spaces, sacred spaces – for purposes of hospitality, education, and safety?

I welcome questions about the True Colors Conference and will be happy to correspond or meet with those who would like to know more. I encourage youth, families, healthcare professionals, educators, ministers, and parishioners to attend future conferences. I urge our churches to invite guest speakers, panelists, and workshop leaders to train our congregations – ideally the *entire* congregations of our affirming churches, and not just the folks who might make special effort to attend such training.

And in tandem with that learning, I suggest we take inventory of our programs and our spaces through the lens of LGBTQIAPD+ people* – not as a monolith, but envisioning each and every identity we aim to know and affirm. Let us consider the earliest tangible gestures of welcome we extend. We might designate restrooms as gender neutral and take care to mark them in such a way as to include nonbinary gender identities, i.e., not just men or women. We might use gender-diverse language for both humans and God in our liturgy and printed materials and perhaps display some of the lesser-known pride flags alongside the ubiquitous rainbow flag.

But let us back up these gestures with the diligence of learning precisely why such visible affirmation is necessary and appreciated, why some of our most progressive churches are not yet fulfilling their potential to be wellsprings of life and liberation to the queer community, and why a full classroom of youth and young adults in 2016 attended a workshop called, *Is the Bible a Voice of Hope or a Word of Death for LGBTQ+ Folk?*



Pictured: The flags of Transgender Pride, Asexual Pride, LGBT Pride, and Pansexual Pride.

*Lesbian, gay, bisexual, bigender, transgender, two-spirit, queer, questioning, intersex, asexual, aromantic, agender, pansexual, polysexual, demisexual, and any not listed here.

I chose this term for this piece to highlight these various identities, but as the acronym grows, some people prefer other options such as SGM for Sexual & Gender Minorities.

Lecture by Bernie Adeney-Risakotta at OMSC

On April 13, a number of people from our church heard one of our mission co-workers, Bernie Adeney-Risakotta, speak on “Cross-Cultural Christian Ethics in a Muslim Society.” Bernie spoke about the need for a new model for Christian mission in Muslim societies. He pointed out that the two most common historical Christian approaches to Muslims have been either that Muslims are so far away from any understanding of the Gospel that they are inapproachable, or, worse, that Muslims are just evil, and so should not be approached. He said he found these two models “problematic,” and he argued for a third model, based on cooperation between religions. He peppered his lecture with fascinating anecdotes about life in Indonesia, and also with interesting information about the country. Did you know, for example, that:

- Indonesia has the largest Muslim population of any country in the world (239 million)?
- Indonesia’s constitution has as its first principle “belief in the one and only God”?
- All religions are protected in Indonesia, and six (Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism) receive state support?
- Only ten percent of the world’s Muslims live in the Middle East?

Bernie and his wife, Farsijana, will visit us the weekend of June 12 to preach and give at least one talk. There will be more details about their visit in next month’s *Inkling*. Check out the library cart if you’re interested in reading more about the country, and the Welcome Table for their latest newsletter.

---Mission Committee



Ecumenical Advocacy Days (EAD)—April 15-18, 2016

EAD is a spiritual social justice conference attended by about 1,000 people of faith in Washington, D.C. At EAD attendees are immersed in inspirational, humbling preaching, motivating speakers and informative sessions. EAD energizes attendees to fulfil their faith and provide assistance to the poor, give voice to the voiceless and lift up the marginalized. A common thread through all of the sermons and speakers is sharing equally the abundance of God’s creation. We break our covenant with God when we - through greed - accumulate more for ourselves at the expense of others and the environment. We are all complicit, we all need to participate, we all need to be prophets.

Speakers included Rev. Aundreia Alexander, Joshua Russell, Rev. Dr. William Barber, Ashindi Maxton, Sandy Sorenson, Marian Wright Edelman and Rev. Any Gopp.

The Lobby Day ask was:

- Supporting the Voting Rights Advancement Act of 2015 (S. 1659/H.R. 2867) as a substantial legislative step to restoring and strengthening the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and
- Defeating the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade agreement that deepens inequality and prioritizes corporate interests over both God's creation and people, especially vulnerable communities in the U.S. and abroad.

We attended sessions on Voting Rights, Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP), Syria, Palestine, Spirituality of Advocacy, and Global Corporate Exploitation: Debt and Taxes. There was so much more that we could not fit in.

The LGBTQ breakfast reminded us of the diversity of the people in the movement and that physical safety and acceptance are more important than marriage equality for many.

The Palestinian Justice breakfast emphasized the importance of boycotts, divestment, and sanctions as non-violent, consciously objecting to Israeli injustice.

While there, we were able to connect with friends in the Palestine Justice Movement. Sahar Vardi, an Israeli who refused to serve in the Israeli Defense Forces because of the atrocities committed in the West Bank, is now an activist working with American Friends Service Committee in Jerusalem. Sahar leads protests trying to prevent home confiscation and destruction. Sahar contributed to our Program on Palestine. Bshara Nassar, the nephew of Daoud Nassar, the patriarch of the Tent of Nations farm in Palestine, is creating a Museum of the Palestine People in Washington, D.C.

On Monday – Lobby Day - we met with staff in Congresswoman DeLauro's, Senator Blumenthal's and Senator Murphy's offices. Fortunately, all of our representatives strongly support voting rights – they are co-sponsors of the bill – and each has spoken against TPP, Congresswoman DeLauro most forcefully.

While there, we also brought up:

- refugee resettlement in the United States,
- a non-violent resolution for the Syrian civil war,
- greedy hedge funds who purchase Puerto Rican debt at deeply discounted prices and then bring lawsuits to be paid at the full face value,
- the plight of indigenous people in Peru facing an environmental catastrophe due to mining by international companies, and
- land thefts in the Philippines.

Also on Monday, there were demonstrations around the capital by groups supporting voting rights and immigrant rights. It was a great time to be in DC.

Ask us about EAD. We would be happy to provide additional details.

--Art and Mary Hunt

Mark your Calendars!

Sunday, June 19th – 9:30 a.m. summer worship schedule starts.

Sunday, July 17th - Killam's Point Picnic.

Details to follow in the June Inking.



In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. (Philippians 4:6)

When you pray, offer prayers for ...

Church members and friends who seek God's healing grace, including Ken Haynam, at Benchmark Senior Living in Hamden.

Libby Hollingsworth, who is hospitalized with multiple health concerns.

Jeff Miller, brother of David Miller, who is recovering from surgery.

Allyson McKinney, who needs prayers for health and healing.

Family and friends of Dorothy Malone, Anita Shaffer's sister-in-law, who passed away last week.

Shaleen Camery-Hoggatt, Michal Beth Dinkler's mother, who is undergoing chemotherapy.

The people of Kenya, Turkey, Syria, South Sudan, Egypt, Israel and Palestine, Iraq, and for those all around the world experiencing unrest, violence, and discord.

David Meeske, serving with the Peace Corps in Mongolia.

Andrew McCloskey, serving with the Peace Corps in Mozambique.

Christopher Woodington, serving with the Grinnell Corps in Namibia.

James Smit and Patrick Copeland, who are serving in the armed forces.

Those who are unable to worship with us on a regular basis.

Prayers for other people and situations in need of our supplications.

May 2016

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 9:30 a.m. Sunday School College Goody Bags 10:45am Worship & Communion 12:00 p.m. Friendship Hour	2 4:00pm Musical Folk 6:00 p.m. Memorial Cairn	3 10:00am Musical Folk	4 11:30 am Staff Mtg 5:30 pm Musical Folk 7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal	5 9:00am Yoga 1:00 pm Bible Study 6:30 pm NH Comm Chorus	6 9:30 am Musical Folk 7:30 p.m. CT Folk	7 9:00 am Yoga 9:30 am Women's AA 5:30 pm Columbus House Dinner
8 9:30 a.m. Sunday School 10:45am Worship	9 4:00pm Musical Folk	10 10:00am Musical Folk	11 11:30 am Staff Mtg 5:30 pm Musical Folk 7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal	12 9:00am Yoga 1:00 pm Bible Study 6:30 pm NH Comm Chorus	13 9:30 am Musical Folk	14 9:00 am Yoga 9:30 am Women's AA
15 Pentecost 9:30 a.m. Sunday School 10:45am Worship 12:00 p.m. Potluck Lunch	16 4:00pm Musical Folk 7:15 pm Session	17 9:00 am- Presbytery Comm Meeting 10:00am Musical Folk	18 11:30 am Staff Mtg 5:30 pm Musical Folk	19 9:00am Yoga 1:00 pm Bible Study 6:30 pm NH Comm Chorus	20 9:30 am Musical Folk	21 9:00 am Yoga 9:30 am Women's AA
22 9:30 a.m. Sunday School 10:45am Worship 12:00 p.m. Friendship Hour	23 4:00pm Musical Folk	24 10:00 am Musical Folk	25 11:30 am Staff Mtg 5:30 pm Musical Folk	26 9:00am Yoga 1:00 pm Bible Study 6:30 pm NH Comm Chorus	27 9:30 am Musical Folk	28 9:00 am Yoga 9:30 am Women's AA
29 9:30 a.m. Sunday School 10:45am Worship 12:00 p.m. Friendship Hour	30 Memorial Day	31 10:00 am Musical Folk				

June 2016

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			1 11:30 am Staff Mtg 5:30 pm Musical Folk	2 9:00am Yoga 1:00 pm Bible Study 6:30 pm NH Comm Chorus	3 9:30 am Musical Folk	4 9:00 am Yoga 9:30 am Women's AA 5:30 pm Columbus House Dinner
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12 9:30 a.m. Sunday School/Mission Co-Worker Visit 10:45am Worship 12:00 p.m. Potluck Picnic	13 4:00pm Musical Folk	14 9:00 am- Presbytery Comm Meeting 10:00 am Musical Folk	15 11:30 am Staff Mtg 5:30 pm Musical Folk	16 9:00am Yoga 1:00 pm Bible Study	17 9:30 am Musical Folk	18 9:00 am Yoga 9:30 am Women's AA
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26 9:30 a.m. Worship 10:30 p.m. Friendship Hour	27	28	29	30 9:00am Yoga		

INTERIM PASTOR: SUSAN DEE REISINGER

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC: PATRICK McCRELESS

CHURCH ADMINISTRATOR: MARTHA SMITH

DIRECTOR OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION FOR
CHILDREN AND YOUTH: KIMBERLEY FAIS

CAMPUS CHAPLAIN AT YALE: JACKIE SPYCHER

NURSERY CARE PROVIDER: NAOMI BRINTON

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Christian Education for all ages

9:30 a.m.

Worship

10:45 a.m.

**First Presbyterian Church
704 Whitney Avenue
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06511**

Please find your e-copy on the church website at fpcnh.org!