

A VIEW FROM THE STEEPLE

AUGUST 2008

The ***View from the Steeple*** is published monthly by The Congregational Church of Plainville, UCC.

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Ministerial Musings ~ August 2008

As a faith community, we use the Seasons of the Spirit materials. Not only does this provide us with a dynamic and wonderfully diverse church school curriculum, the curriculum itself is based on the lectionary readings for that Sunday/week as are the worship materials used to structure our Sunday morning experiences. Arguably, then, families and friends “should” be able to discuss the same scripture passages or themes whether they spent the morning worshipping in the sanctuary or in the church school.

The worship materials provide suggestions galore about what of interest in the four scripture chosen per Sunday might lend itself to various interpretations and dramatic readings. There is always an expository piece to begin the offerings ~ some piece of writing that suggests an approach/focus to the week’s focus passage ~ and provides definitions, or translations for Greek and Hebrew words of significance.

Last week (the morning of the day on which I left for vacation) the expository piece began like this, “Jesus often taught in parables.” Such a simple sentence; didn’t Jesus often say, “Those who have ears, let them hear?”

I think God comes to us in “parables,” too. (The meaning of the word “parable,” according to *The Harper Collins Bible Dictionary* (HarperCollins, 1996) “should be more accurately translated by the wider term ‘metaphor.’” Searching for meaning in a parable then, invites us to “wonder about the meaning of the words for their own lives in God’s realm.” {Seasons of the Spirit, July 13th, 2008} Let’s interpret this a little more widely, and think about all the mundane “coincidences” in which, if we but have ears to hear (and dedicate the time to listening) God invites us to new understandings of all kinds ~ “for our own lives in God’s realm.”

For instance, I thought my eyes were playing tricks on me when, as I reached northern Maine and was trying to decipher when (according to my GPS) I might arrive in Edlington on Prince Edward Island. My car clock said one thing and the GPS start time was two minutes later than that. No concern there; I found it reassuring to think that I was more often on time than I thought! But, then, as I did the math, (adjusting for the fact that it would be an hour later in the day when I crossed a certain line in Canada), it looked like I would actually also “gain” another four minutes!! Huh?! And then I laughed, right out loud. Gaining time was exactly what I would be doing...

And I thanked God for the reminder that dedicating time to renewal ~ time set apart from everyday concerns and activities ~ helps us to “gain time.” Research shows we will live happier, longer and more healthy lives if we pause once in a while ~ even a few moments every day ~ for renewal.

Through what daily events, “coincidences,” or parables might God be speaking to you? And, blessed with the ears to hear, dedicating the time to noticing, what are *you* hearing God to invite you to better understand about your “life in God’s realm?”

Blessings ~

Claire



TAKE ME OUT TO THE BALLGAME!

Faith and Family Day

Sunday, August 24, 2008

1:35pm (gates open at 12:05pm)

Rock Cats (Minnesota Twins)

Vs.

Akron Aeros (Cleveland Indians)

**Featuring a post-game Christian rock concert and all kids get to run the bases
after the game!**

**Signup sheet is in Kelsey Hall or contact Marianne Wright at 506-2206;
email:**

Tickets are \$5/person

Payment due by Sunday, August 10, 2008

**Bring a lunch on the 24th and then after lunch, we will leave from the church to caravan
to New Britain Stadium**

Eagle Scout Service Project at Congregational Church of Plainville

Hi everyone!

My name is Matt Potter and I am from Troop 67 Plainville CT. I'd like to say thank you to all those people who donated money towards my eagle project. I have enough donations now to build the walkway. The walkway will be done the 16th or 17th of August. If anyone is willing to help, please talk to me at church, or you can call me at 793-1017.

Thank you for all your support.

YIS, Matthew Potter, Troop 67, Plainville, CT

Mowing



A big thank you to everyone who cut the grass.

Please remember that it keeps growing through October, so sign up early!

UnitedScrip

Please pick up **UnitedScrip** order forms in the narthex or in Kelsey Hall. Simply check which stores, restaurants, and gas stations that you frequent, then make a check out to our church and give the order form with a check to Carol after church in Kelsey Hall. Remember, we now have Wal-Mart and Shop Rite gift cards to select. Be sure to purchase your gift cards for all your normal shopping needs. You will receive the full face value of the gift card, and our church will keep a percentage of the face value. It's win-win for all!

For June 22nd through July 13th, we thank the following church families who participated: Bamberg, Blanchard, Boiczuk, Drachenberg, Fuller, Edge, Heap, Hodge, Hoerle, Michaud, Parker, Pegg, Pershken, Peterson, Potter, Rose, Schatz, and Seeds.

<i>Our Scrip Profits for 2008:</i>	
Month of Jan & Feb:	\$179.35
Month of March & April:	\$244.95
Month of May:	\$123.80
Month of June:	\$212.90
<i>Total Scrip Profit for 2008:</i>	<i>\$761.00</i>

For any questions regarding our scrip fundraiser, please call Carol Peterson during the day at 547-5136. Thanks.

UCC's *Strengthen the Church Offering* – Sept. 15th

Our Church's Wider Mission, often referred to simply as OCWM, has two parts: OCWM *Basic Support* and OCWM *Special Support*. The Basic Support is our giving through our pledged donations according to our Annual Budget for OCWM. The *four* special offerings within the United Church of Christ are:

1. One Great Hour of Sharing (4th Sunday in Lent) ----- *Giving Help, Hope, Life*
2. Neighbors in Need (1st Sunday in October) ----- *Justice and Compassion*
3. Christmas Fund (Sunday before Christmas) ----- *Remembering Those Who Serve Our Church*
4. Strengthen the Church Offering (Rally Sunday, Sept. 21st) - *Faithfully Building the Body of Christ*

The fourth special offering, Strengthen the Church, is not new, but Sept. 21st will be the first time that our church participates. **We will collect the Strengthen the Church Offering on Rally Sunday, Sept. 21st.**

The Strengthen the Church Offering grows the UCC's future by:

- **Funding new church starts and invigorating existing congregations;**
- **Nurturing lay and pastoral leadership;**
- **Building youth and young adult ministries;**
- **Supporting the God is Stillspeaking Ministry and its extravagant welcome for all within the United Church of Christ.**

All gifts are directed to activities and programs of our church's local conference as well as the UCC's national ministries. Want to see *Strengthen the Church* in action? Check out the video of First Church of North Miami and witness the kind of renewal your support makes possible by logging onto the United Church of Christ website: uuc.org.

Your Mission-Social Action Committee --- Audrey, Carol, Mary, Pauline, Rinette, Robin, Ruthe

Covenant to Care for Children Back-to-School Backpack Drive

Summer is here, and many of you have already started purchasing back-to-school items for our Covenant to Care for Children social worker's young school-age clients. A huge basket in the narthex is ready to accept: backpacks, notebook and construction paper, pencils, pens, notebooks, folders, dividers, rulers, crayons, markers, calculators, glue, glue sticks, erasers, pencil boxes, pocket dictionaries -- any school supply, except no scissors. Watch for sales, and if you are shopping at Staples, CVS, Walgreens, Wal-Mart, or many other stores – *please support our scrip fundraiser and our church's general operating budget by making your purchase with UnitedScrip gift cards.*

There are 8 girls aged: 3, two 7, 8, 9, 12, 16, and 17. And there are 13 boys aged: 2, four 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 14, and 17. This year, we will be putting together the backpacks on Sunday, August 17th following worship, which will give our Adopt-A-Social Worker Lynn Ludwin time to deliver them all before school begins. Thanks for your generous support.

Your Mission-Social Action Committee --- Audrey, Carol, Mary, Pauline, Rinette, Robin, Ruthe

Thank You for Your Christmas Fund Generosity - in July!

For those who attended worship the first two weeks of July, they heard a special plea during the Message of Christian Concern from the United Church of Christ for its Christmas Fund Offering. Based on past experience, the Pension Boards budgeted \$75,000 from last year's 2007 Christmas Fund Offering for Emergency Grants. Without our current economic situation, this budget should have been adequate. Record breaking gasoline prices have dramatically impacted the cost of every commodity we use. And low-income annuitants receiving pensions have been hit especially hard. The ripple effect of soaring energy costs affects what consumers pay for food, utilities and other necessities as well. The Pension Boards of the United Church of Christ have seen a 300% increase in requests for Emergency Assistance not only from our church retirees, but also from those active in ministry. During the month of July the United Church Board for Ministerial Assistance, part of the Pension Boards, will provide \$200, one-time Energy Assistance Grants to 1,000 low-income church retirees.

Rev. Dr. Douglas Borko, the Director of Ministerial Assistance, requested that our churches consider making an extra, special contribution to the Christmas Fund during the month of July. He writes, "Your contribution of any amount will help to ensure we do not have to refuse requests for help from those who serve, and have served, the United Church of Christ churches so faithfully."

Thanks to those in attendance during the first two weeks of July, you generously donated \$285 for the special appeal for donations to the Christmas Fund. Your gifts are *very* appreciated!

Your Mission-Social Action Committee --- Audrey, Carol, Mary, Pauline, Rinette, Robin, Ruthe

Thrift Shop Notes



*** The Thrift Shop will be closed the weeks of August 4th and 11th. ***

In the spirit of helping our environment, please think of us as you sort through your gently used "stuff". The shop offers an excellent opportunity to recycle - both to dispose of items, as well as find something you really want at a bargain price.



Musicians Wanted



Do you enjoy singing or playing an instrument? We would love to have you join the Music Program this Fall!

CHOIRS:

Chancel Choir—sings every Sunday and during special services; practices are Wednesday evenings
Youth Choir—children practice during Church School and sing throughout the year—all ages
Bell Choir—plays once a month and during special services; practices are Wednesday evenings

AUGMENTED CHOIRS:

There are augmented chancel and bell choirs for those who enjoy singing or playing bells but can't commit to a regular schedule. These augmented choirs will perform several times throughout the year.

INSTRUMENTS/BANDS/QUARTETS, ETC:

If you play piano, brass or wind instrument or percussion and would like to participate in a service by offering a prelude, offertory music, benediction, etc please let us know. As we put together special music or use instruments as part of the service, we'd like to have a list of people who would be interested in participating.

IN THE SPIRIT COFFEEHOUSE:

Don't forget about the annual In the Spirit Coffeehouse! This coffee house is in early December and all performers are welcome. Watch the Steeple and bulletin for more information in upcoming months. If you have questions or would like to participate, please contact a member of the Music Committee, Anne Lee or Rev. Claire Bamberg.

Music Committee Members:

Marianne Wright-Chair 860-506-2206;

Kathie Marsan, Jocelyn Michaud, Dolly Pelletier, Joanna Vastola, Bev Letendre and Nancy Mailhot

The Kitchen

We have a happy kitchen once again, thanks to Steve Swets and a hard working community service "young man". After their scrubbing and sanding, they applied a cover/sealer followed by two coats of paint to the needy walls and cabinets, at the left.

The trustee decorators chose the cool semi-gloss color of Sea Breath. Again our thanks Steve and "young man" for such a huge undertaking - it looks AWESOME.

~ The Other Trustees

American Red Cross

Our church is being asked to support the American Red Cross in their efforts to maintain an adequate blood supply in the state of Connecticut. For more information, please call Matt White at (860) 284-7049, or email at whitemaa@usa.redcross.org to find information on blood drives in our area.

Information per letter sent to us from: American Red Cross, Connecticut Blood Services Region

MUMS, USED BOOKS, BAKED GOODS AND THRIFT SHOP EXTRAVAGANZA!

Mark your calendars! A huge fund-raiser sponsored by our Church Family will take place on Saturday, September 6, 2008 from 9:00am until 1:00pm. Mums, used books and baked goods will be on the Church Lawn, while the Thrift Shop Extravaganza will be located in Kelsey Hall. In case of rain, the full event will be moved indoors. All proceeds from this sale will benefit the Church. Used book donations may be placed on the stage in Kelsey Hall after August 20, 2008. Delivery of baked goods are requested Friday evening between 6:00pm and 7:00pm OR Saturday morning between 8:00am and 9:00am. Our Thrift Shop is continually in need of used clothing in good condition and household items. The store accepts donations during operating hours. Please use the Mum Sale order form to obtain advance orders from family and friends. Order forms can be found on the table in the Narthex. These hardy mums are planted in 8-inch pots and will be sold for \$5.50 each or 4 for \$20.00. We request any pre-orders be dropped off in the Church Office along with the monies (checks payable to the Congregational Church of Plainville) no later than Wednesday, September 3, 2008. Pre-order pick-up will take place on Friday, September 5, 2008 from 6:00pm to 7:00pm in the front of the church. Everyone is invited to participate! Should you have any questions regarding our sale please contact Donna Zapatka at 747-1990 or any member of the Diaconate, Christian Education, Evangelism and Church Growth, or the Thrift Shop. Please encourage your co-workers, family and friends to attend our sale!

ORDER FORM CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF PLAINVILLE MUM SALE

8-Inch Pots \$5.50 each OR 4 for \$20.00

COLORS AVAILABLE:

NAME _____
 ADDRESS _____
 PHONE NUMBER _____

Red/Burgundy Pink/Purple
 Bronze/Orange Yellow White

Quantity	Color Choice		Price per Item	Total Cost	Payment Method (Cash or Check) <i>(Please note check number)</i>
	1 st Choice	2 nd Choice			
TOTAL					

SOLD BY: _____

Make Checks Payable to Congregational Church of Plainville

Pre-orders to be picked up on Friday, September 5, 2008 from 6:00PM-7:00PM at the Congregational Church of Plainville, 130 West Main Street, Plainville, Connecticut. An open sale will also take place on Saturday September 6, 2008 from 9:00AM to 1:00PM.



We received a **“Thank you”** note from the Visiting Nurse Association of Central CT, Inc., Hospice & Palliative Care Program . . .

Dear Rev. Dr. Bamberg, Ken Hodge & Staff at Congregational Church of Plainville,

We would like to thank you for allowing us the opportunity to hold our Memorial Service at your Church May 21st. We were so pleased to be able to collaborate with your church. Everyone that we encountered from your church was so helpful and a pleasure to work with, especially throughout the planning and clean-up process.

We received such positive comments about the service, which provided comfort to many of our families and allowed them to continue through their grieving process in such a peaceful environment. You and your staff made it possible for them to continue with their process. Thanks again!

Sincerely, Alison Vandergrift & the Hospice Staff

Our heartfelt sympathies to those who have lost family members this past month:

To the friends and family of:

Gladys V. Geer, Christine Cody, and Gwendoline Sunderland.



Our thoughts and prayers are with: Pam Collins, Jeff Adams, Jeff Schaefer, Linda Hill, Ann Campbell, Peg Hoerle, Jessie Flanders, Joe Robar, John Borry, Sebby, Jane Sommer, Bill Griffin, Cliff Carlson, Jean Cotton, Tony Yanez, Pat and Phillip, Peg Young, Mary Devine, Gordon McCann, Helen McKernan, Jeane Pierson, Eleanor Anderson, Walter Smykla, the families of Gladys V Geer, Christine Cody, Gwendoline Sunderland, Orien Sledge, Christine Haddock, as well as members and friends serving in the military: James Palmer, Gabriel Smykla, Mark Terrill and Renny (Sr) Astolfi.

“Thank you”

Joe Robar thanks everyone for the prayers, cards and food after his surgery!

We received a **“Thank you”** note from Bruce and Barb Edge...

To our Church Family... Thank you for the many gifts, cards, wishes and donations to the Book of Remembrance in recognition of our 40th Anniversary.

Fondly, Bruce & Barb

We wish a very **“Happy Birthday”** to the following members of our congregation who have birthdays this month: Gina Guglietta (August 1), Brian Beausoliel (August 15), Joanna Vastola (August 19), Rinette Yanez (August 19), Carey Beausoleil (August 30), and friend of the church, Margaret-Ann Bamberg (August 17).



We also wish a very **“Happy Anniversary”** to our members who will be celebrating anniversaries this month: Rinette and Tony Yanez (8/3), Diana and Russ Drachenberg who will be celebrating their 30th anniversary (8/5), Marianne and James Wright (8/10), and Linda and Elton Hill (8/23).

*“First be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift”
(Matthew 5:24)*



Will You Grant a Wish?

***There are many items
the Church needs,
Sized big and sized small.
Choose from our Wishlist;
There’s something for all!***

The Church’s Wishlist

Kelsey Hall Floor Strip & Polish	\$	750.00	
Carpet Cleaning	\$	400.00	
Guest Minister (Vacation Coverage)	\$	125.00	
Office Supplies	\$	50.00	<i>A Scrip card goes even further...</i>
Guest Minister (Mileage)	\$	25.00	
Adopt a Girl Mission Monthly Gift	\$	24.00	<i>\$240+ short to date in 2008. Would</i>
Adopt a Boy Mission Monthly Gift	\$	24.00	<i>you help these fine children?</i>
New Century Hymnal	\$	17.00	
Plastic Container for the Thrift Shop	\$	5.00	<i>\$60 received with gratitude!</i>

If you’d like to contribute an item or even to part of an item from our Wishlist for the Church, please write the name of the item in the memo portion of your donation check. Your check can be made payable to the Congregational Church of Plainville and placed in the offering plate or in an envelope in the Church Office mail slot. Your donations are tax-deductible. God bless you!

How Are We Doing?

	Income	Withdrawn Money Market	Expenses
January	\$ 21,032.35	\$ 5,169.90	\$ 26,202.25
February	\$ 12,616.23	\$ 2,825.02	\$ 15,441.25
March	\$ 14,616.63	\$ 11,516.58	\$ 26,133.21
April	\$ 18,310.31		\$ 15,374.00
May	\$ 11,894.22	\$ 4,785.72	\$ 19,616.25
June	\$ 15,631.18		\$ 15,631.18
	\$ 118,398.14	\$ 24,297.22	\$ 118,398.14

THE FINANCE COMMITTEE