

The Spirit

March 2009

THOMPSON CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

“LOVE IS . . .”

Recently, I went to a Valentine's party. I've been to a variety over the years. I know that it goes back to a pre-Christian, Roman festival called the "Lupercalia" that was a somewhat riotous occasion. When Christianity came to dominate it honored two different saints of the same name. Mala Powers has written: "Over the years, the legends of these two Valentines have been blended together creating a story of romance and true love."

True love! I'm sure that most of you have heard that there are several Greek words which are translated "love." And yet, whatever the relationship, "true love" does exhibit the same wonderful qualities. That is why 1 Corinthians 13 is often read during marriage ceremonies. "Love is patient, kind, bears all things, hopes, endures all things. Love never ends."

The traditional covenantal marriage vows promise - "for better or for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, until death shall part us." I remember one young woman who apparently realized what she was saying and whispered: "Wow - that's heavy stuff!" Unfortunately, and often for necessary reasons, too heavy for many couples.

Anyhow - unlike Charlie Brown's experiences - the party I attended was one where all those positive qualities were in evidence. It was held in the Center where my wife is a resident. I almost didn't go because I knew we couldn't participate in all of the outlined activities. When we got there I saw that it didn't matter because no one could.

Nevertheless, the main thing I observed and celebrated was that here was a group of people who - got it! I know there are several religious faiths represented there, but it's a marvelous example of what could happen if we all accepted those characteristics as goals in our human relationships. That's why I believe Paul included "hope." No matter how far we fall short of the ideal - we can never afford to lose hope!

February 25th is Ash Wednesday and the beginning of the Lenten Season which leads us, ultimately, to the remembrance of Jesus' crucifixion and beyond to the Day of Resurrection. This year April 12th is Easter - the crown of the Christian year. It's a special time for us to remember and re-commit ourselves to the One - who for us as his disciples - got it, incarnates what love - true love is!

With you in Christ's service,


Stan Possell

Prayers for Hope and Healing

- Natalie Habercross
- Jane Johnson and family
- Geneva and Sally White
- Barbara Loy
- Barbara Spahl -- *she now resides at the Westview Health Care Center*
- Barbara Kress—*cards may be sent to her c/o David Kress at 447 Quaddick road, Thompson*
- Pastor Stan and his wife Elaine
- Marion Howard
- Dick Lucier and Pam Ballard –Ross

Prayers of Condolence for

Bill and Barbara Brzezinski who recently lost their son Robert. Their daughter Karen passed away not long ago. Our hearts go out to their family

Congratulations

To Harry and Ruth Elliott who just celebrated their 64th Wedding anniversary

Prayers for Peace

For our United States and the world in this time of stress

Steeple Lighting

The steeple will be lit in March in memory of Bruce E. Bixby by his sister Lois B. Thompson.

Coffee hour schedule for March



March 1, Kristin Sevigny
March 15, Lunch
March 29, Judy Rondeau

March 8. Tinti Messler
March 22. Mary Anne Fontaine

Please call 928-0882 if you are unable to serve

Executive Council Meeting

The Executive Council meeting was held on 2/12/09 with the new chair Judy Cole Rondeau. The minutes as always are posted in the Church library. It was decided to hold our Concert of Sacred Music on Sunday, March 29th. at 3:00 PM. With two talented musicians in charge – Pastor Stan and Tom French. This will be a special occasion. Our morning service will be held in the Sanctuary also, a welcome sign of Spring.

Pastoral Search Committee

The Pastoral Search Committee launched its new season at a supper meeting during which our eight members discussed the search to date and lessons learned through the experience. The group is enthused about a new beginning in 2009 and optimistic that we will find our pastor this year.

The committee is updating our church's profile to reflect the improvement in leadership and ministry since the profile was first written in mid 2007. As soon as the FY2008 financial picture is available, those figures also will go into the revised report. It's important this document represent our congregation's current state so that prospective candidates know the nature of the position.

The Committee also decided to rewrite our church's position posting in UCC's *Employment Opportunities Bulletin*, which is circulated countrywide on a monthly basis. We hope a fresh look to our advertisement, and the fact that when it's posted in a new format, the posting will be in bold type, which may help attract new candidates. Additionally, Tom French is creating a list of theological seminaries to which we will consider sending our materials in the hope we can interest 2009 graduates. All of us are reviewing and revising our interview questions.

In the interest of the search, Blair Cole has updated the Church's Web site, thanks to the cooperation of committee chairs. Rev. Possell has provided Blair with an article and photo which is posted there together with the March 2009 Spirit and the last copies. If you have a computer, we urge you to take a look at our revised site at either of the following addresses:

www.thompsonchurch.org or www.thompsonchurch.com

Candidates will often check out a Web site, so we hope it inspires more interest in our position. If you have something you think would interest a reader of the site, please contact Blair.

The Committee has news of some progress regarding potential candidates. In January UCC sent us the profiles of four candidates and we have responded to three of them with packets of information . After these candidates review our materials, they will indicate whether or not they wish to pursue their interest. Hopefully we will receive some positive responses within a month and be able to begin interviews again.

These are exciting times. Let's hope we'll be ready when the opportunity arrives for us welcome a new pastor. In the meantime, the Search Committee appreciates the congregation's patience and support... and prayers.

Pastoral Search Committee: Ruth Barks, chair; Georgia Ballard, Blair Cole, Judy Eichner, Tom French, Judy Rondeau, Pam Ballard-Ross, Larry Sasso

**“ Be of good courage and he shall strengthen your heart,
all ye that hope in the Lord”
--Psalm 31:34**

Connecticut Women of the UCC

CALL TO EASTERN DISTRICT'S STUDY MEETING

Monday, March 2, 2009 ~ 9:30 am to 1:00 pm

First Congregational Church, UCC, Woodstock

with the theme:

“Jubilee! Luke's Gospel for the Poor. Debts are forgiven.”

Registration at 9:30 am (\$1.00) for Coffee and Fellowship.

Please join us



We Bring the Library Home to You!

A free service for Thompson residents
who are unable to come to the library

Get library materials at home

Program coordinated by Library staff
and delivered by volunteers

For yourself or someone you know
call Kate for details
923-9779

Thompson Public Library
www.thompsonpubliclibrary.org

**“I can do all things Christ which strengtheneth me”
-- Philipians 4:13**

EASTER LILY ORDER FORM

We will be decorating our sanctuary on Easter Sunday with Easter lilies. If you would like to give a lily in memory or honor of someone, we will need the following information (please list names of donors and those being honored or memorialized as you wish to have them printed in the worship bulletin):

Number of Easter lilies: _____

Given by: _____

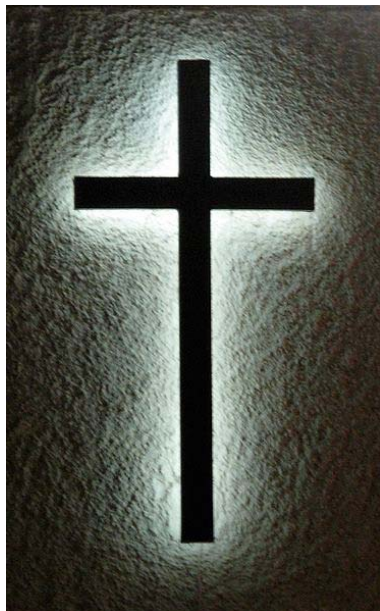
In memory/honor of: _____
(circle one)

Contact phone # (in case we have questions): _____

I want to keep my plant(s) _____ I want to donate my plant(s) _____

(Donated plants will be distributed to homebound parishioners or others at the church's discretion. If you plan to take your plant(s), please arrange to take it/them on Easter Sunday or no later than April 19.)

Easter lilies cost \$11.50 each. **We need to have your orders by March 27.** Please leave this completed form in the Flower Coordinator mailbox in the fellowship hall or mail it to the church (P.O. Box 308, Thompson CT 06277). Checks should be made payable to *Thompson Congregational Church*. You may also call Marjorie Woodward (935-5413) with the information or if you have any questions.



The Look of Lent

Lent begins this year on February 25, Ash Wednesday. With this change of seasons of the church year come some changes in decor in our worship area. Those of you who have enjoyed using the meditation corner in the fellowship hall might wish to take a look at the new set of posters and their descriptions. Also available on the table near the corner is the new list of lectionary readings for Lent and Easter. Some of the table runners and mats now take on the more somber hues that are traditional for the Lenten season. For more about Lenten symbols, see the handouts on the table near the meditation corner.

The banner that is hanging in our worship area was made last year by several members of our congregation. It features a number of different crosses. Some of them are copies or variations of traditional designs, and some were created for this banner. The cross is perhaps the most recognized symbol of the Christian faith. Throughout the history of the Christian church many different cross designs have been used, often having particular symbolism associated with them. In some ways looking at the different crosses is like a walk through church history. Despite their differences, though, all of them are mainly intended to remind us of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, with all that means for us. If you are interested in learning more about some of the traditional cross designs you might take a look at the poster that is near the banner, which shows some of the types of crosses that have been used throughout church history.