

OCTOBER 2012



the Lifeline

NORWICH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST



THE
NCCUCC ANNUAL
CHURCH PICNIC
WAS A GREAT SUCCESS!



NORWICH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

Mary Brownlow Pastor
 Kathleen Sherlock-Green Choir Director
 Jane Chase Helms Organist Emerita
 Tacy Colaiacomo Organist

Danielle Taylor Sunday School Coord.
 Jenny Gelfan Office Manager
 Dan Goulet Sexton

An Adult Education Opportunity

Starting on September 30, on alternate Sunday evenings, we will co-sponsor with the Norwich Women's Club a presentation by Second Growth called *Rising Above the Risks*, led by Robert Bryant of Second Growth. This is a conversation for parents, teachers, coaches, community members and other caregivers on the prevention of adolescent risk behaviors. Free, open to all, no sign up, just show up in the Parish Hall, 7-8:30pm.

Sunday, October 28, 2012

WHAT DO YOU LOSE WHEN YOU CHOOSE TO USE? Talking with the Teens about Substance Abuse

Sunday, November 11, 2012

COMMUNICATION SAVES LIVES: Preventing Teen Suicide

We hope that many of you can take advantage of this opportunity for understanding our young people and the world they live in.

Yo! Stewardship! Brunch!

By the time you are reading this *Lifeline*, our church will be in the midst of "stewardship month". You will have already received your stewardship packet through the mail. No doubt you have opened it and read it. We hope you have found the letters thoughtful and informative.

On Sunday, October 28th, be prepared to bring your pledge card to church and enjoy the Stewardship Brunch after the service. All are welcome in a spirit of thanksgiving and gratitude.

Priscilla Vincent and Jane Helms



IF YOU WANT TO DONATE FLOWERS FOR WORSHIP...

please contact Tilda White at (802) 649-1654 for help, information, or to sign up. You may also sign up on the "Flowers" sheet posted at the back of the church.

2012 LEADERSHIP

CHURCH OFFICERS

Church Council Chair Susan White
 Church Council Vice-chair Bob Miller
 Moderator John Severinghaus
 Vice Moderator Carolyn Mertz
 Clerk Joanne Egner
 Ass't Clerk Katy Gerke
 Treasurer Christopher Ashley
 Ass't Treasurer James Hourdequin
 Collector Judy Pond
 Ass't Collector
 Auditor

BOARD OF DEACONS

Senior Deacons Paul Gerke
 Sharon Corrigan
 Christopher Ashley, Rita Severinghaus
 Dick Broussard, Hillary White

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Chair Doug James
 Carolyn Mertz, Stan Williams,
 Daniel Van Dorn, Avery Post, John Grant

BOARD OF MISSION

Chair Doug Britton
 Deborah Berryman, Jeff Nielsen
 Kathy Grant, Vicky Fish, Heidi Webster

Board of Christian Education

Chair Laura Beliveau
 Harry Higgs, Mary Sachsse,
 Ann Beams, Beth Bidstrup

COMMITTEES

Flowers

Tilda White, Ryan Adams
 Deborah Van Arman

Hospitality

Evelyn Gick, Anne Egner
 Joan Wanner, Susan McGrew
 Stephanie Smith

Investment

Mark Beliveau, Peter Mertz

Music

Don Helms

Nominating

Barbara Duncan
 Ann Waterfall, Katy Gerke

Stewardship

Priscilla Vincent, Jane Helms

Woodworth Fund

Doug James, Judy Hobbs
 Mimi Simpson, Kenneth Cracknell
 Marianne Spalding

Other

At-Large Church Council Chuck Egner
 Head Usher: Willemien Miller
 Historian: Susan White
 Delegates: Avery Post
 Kenneth Cracknell
 Alt. Delegates Katherine Broussard



From the Minister

“That same year – 1843 – women gathered at the Norwich Congregational Church to establish an anti-slavery society. African-American abolitionist and minister Henry Highland Garnet of Troy, New York, welcomed their aid and distributed the warm blankets, mittens and clothes they gathered to runaway slaves.”

Recently the church received a mailing from the Vermont Department of Tourism and Marketing. They wanted to let us know that our church was included in a new glossy guide: the *Vermont and the Civil War Visitors Guide*. The quote above is from the guide, and our church is marked on a map so that visitors can find us. Of course, in 1843 our church was not on this spot exactly. It would have stood across the street near the present location of the bandstand. The women of the Norwich Congregational Church were very busy in those days. In 1853, they lobbied for moving the church to its current plot and raised the money for the move.

Last Sunday, a young woman walked into the sanctuary just as I was greeting folks at the end of our worship service. She gazed upward and around at the lovely interior of our church. When I said hello, she said that she was from New Zealand, just passing through, and had an interest in New England architecture. That morning, our church looked beautiful, with September sunshine steaming through the windows, and I was glad to see it all anew through her eyes.

These two events made me aware of the many ways we function in this community. At times we are

compelled to speak out on pressing issues of injustice. The same impulse leads us to gather “warm blankets” or other material donations. When needed, we focus on the practical: issues like improving our building and stewardship of place. Then, our church has open doors, so passersby might drop in for a variety of reasons: to look at the sanctuary, to sit and pray, to hear music or to mourn the passing of a friend.

We are not a single-issue gathering of people. Somehow I feel that this fits in with our congregational polity. Each member has a voice, and a role, and spiritual gifts. At times, our pattern of decision-making can seem burdensome, or inefficient, or scattered. The phrase “herding cats” comes to mind! But our congregation also has moments of great power, moments when prophetic stances are taken, or generous gifts are made, or deep feelings shared. Perhaps because I have a unique vantage point of presence in this building and on those occasions, I see this happening quite often.

I would like to encourage two things. First, let’s learn about our history, whether it is events of 1843 or those of 2005. We can honor those who made difficult decisions and took brave actions. If we investigate more deeply, we may

find more hidden acts of kindness and faithfulness that don’t make headlines or get entries in the Vermont Department of Tourism and Marketing guides. Then, let’s learn to value each other as potential history-makers. Some of you (this includes of course the youngest generation) will take stands on public policy. Some of you will welcome a stranger. Some of you will beautify our place of worship. And some of you will hold us in prayer as we follow the Spirit’s leading. All of you are valued; through all of you we are blessed.

Mary

Our Annual Women’s Retreat will be held on November 2 and 3

There will be an evening session on Friday, 11/2 from 7-9:30, and the rest of the retreat will take place on Saturday, 11/3 from 8 am to 8 pm.

PLACE: Mary Brownlow’s house at 288 Beaver Meadow Road, Norwich.

TOPIC: “For All the Saints, Friends and Neighbors”

Food will be pot-luck.

Sign up at the church office, letting us know times of arrival and departure.

Ask Mary for more info.



Member Profile

Julia Anderson

Julia is 14 years old and in the 9th grade at Hartford High School. Her favorite subject is advanced geometry where she has learned that a point doesn't really exist (Hmmm!). She's also taking advanced biology, French, band, chorus, and gym. She competes in cross-country meets and gets anxious because she wants to do well.

She also loves winter sports: snowboarding, skiing, ice hockey, and figure skating. "I've done a lot of figure skating and really enjoy dressing up in skating costumes and competing. We moved to the Upper

Valley 5 years ago and I found that ice hockey was quite popular but figure skating less so. I had a wonderful figure skating coach when we lived in State College, Pennsylvania."

Julia began playing piano at age six and started the flute in 4th grade. She also enjoys singing and drama and is in a Hartford High original production of *Homework Eats Dog*.

Julia feels she is lucky that in her earlier years she lived so close to New York City. "My family and I went to museums, symphony concerts, and Broadway musicals. In the fifth grade I went to my first Broadway show, *Wicked*, based on

The Wizard of Oz. I love the show and know it all by heart."

Julia has a favorite book, *The Prince of the Pond*, by Donna Jo Napoli. This is a rather unusual retelling of the old fairy tale and Julia rereads this illustrated children's book frequently.

Julia participates in the Young Writers' Project and also travels to Burlington and Winooski for slam poetry events.

"I've always gone to church with my mom. When we first moved up here it took us a while to get organized and to find a church where we were comfortable. We found it."

Update from the Board of Deacons

At recent deacons' meetings we have discussed the value of strengthening our communication with the congregation. As a first step we will begin including regular Lifeline updates that highlight our role in the church.

Did you know that the Board of Deacons shares responsibility with the pastor for the spiritual ministry of the church? In fact, our NCC-UCC bylaws regard this charge as its overall responsibility. Another responsibility includes assisting Mary in carrying out pastoral duties.

Our 2012 board consists of 6 members, 2 new members elected annually: Sr Deacons Sharon Corrigan and Paul Gerke, along with Chipper Ashley and Rita Severinghaus, Hillary White and Dick Broussard.

We began the year with a wonderful retreat during which we selected UCC topics to be discussed at our monthly meeting that could further broaden understanding of our role.

During September we are discussing "Celebrating Minis-

tries". In essence, the ministry of the church is the ministry of all people, we the congregation carry out the church's ministry. Some of us may act out of commitment, others out of a sense of obligation, and others simply to take part in the work of a faith community.

Participation at any level regardless of scope or location, large or small is important ministry to the church. This may include helping out in the garden, leading worship, pruning our beautiful plants, shoveling a walkway in winter, driving members to church, or supporting your community through social efforts, an unending list of possibilities.

The act of ministry does not require special skills, yet each person's ability strengthens our covenant with each other.

We are endeavoring to recognize and celebrate all kinds of ministry. We invite you to share your gifts.

For the Board of Deacons,
Rita Severinghaus

Sunday School News!

Autumn Arrives

Sunday School has kicked off with a great start as we welcome back former and new students. We began our year with a lesson on the church calendar and now we move on to our exploration of several stories from the Old Testament.

Many thanks to our volunteers who donated time last year and over the summer to ensure a successful Sunday School program for our children! This important work most definitely cannot be done without the generous support of many individuals.

With a budding pre-school program now in the mix, classroom helpers are always welcome and needed. Please consider donating your time one Sunday to our Sunday School program. Materials and projects are provided – all we need is a friendly body to spend some time with the kids. Contact Danielle Taylor at danielletaylor10@gmail.com if you are interested.

How Can You get Involved with Sunday School?

There are many ways in which individuals can spend time with our Sunday Schoolers:

Be Our Guest: Want to be a kid again? After the children's message, join us in Sunday School as a guest adult.

Bring a Guest: Visitors are always welcome to our classroom. Bring your grandchildren, nieces, nephews, neighbors and friends.

Volunteer: I work hard to prepare lessons for our children each Sunday, but with the growing number of kids attending church, I am always desperate for more adult bodies to help facilitate the activities part of the day. Just show up and jump in – no planning necessary.

From Mission:

Every fourth Monday of the month our church makes supper for the health care providers at the Good Neighbor Health Clinic. This is a simple meal for about 6-8 people. We are looking for volunteers for the coming months. Please call or e-mail Heidi Webster if you are willing to help out or would like more information 603-727-9505, hpwebster1@gmail.com. Thanks!

Norwich Churches Annual Bazaar – 2012

The Norwich Churches Annual Bazaar will be held at our church on November 10, 2012, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The Norwich Congregational Church Women's Fellowship has been making items to sell at the bazaar. The proceeds of the bazaar are used for various worthy causes, most of which are actively filling needs in the Upper Valley.

Our Fellowship has made a quilt which will be raffled at the bazaar. The proceeds from that raffle will be given to The Upper Valley Haven. The quilt is on display in the church now, and tickets are for sale! The price is \$5.00 per ticket or 3 for \$10. You may purchase tickets following our worship services, at Coffee Hour.

We will be meeting on Monday afternoons in October at Anne Broussard's home (11 Cottage Court, White River Junction, 295-2706) to work on projects.

In addition, we would be very happy to receive your donations of handmade items to sell at the bazaar. In the past we have sold bed quilts, baby quilts, quilted pot holders, embroidered items, knitted items, handbags, dolls, doll clothing, jams, jellies, pies, breads, pickles, salad dressings, birdhouses, jewelry, pillows, aprons, terrariums, baby clothing, wooden toys, and the list goes on! You still have time to make something for the bazaar!

You may bring your contribution to us ahead of time, or the day before the sale. Please label your item with a suggested price. You may also call Joan Wanner (802-295-7298) or Anne Broussard (802-295-2706) if you have any questions, would like to lend a hand at the bazaar, or if you would like to buy quilt tickets).

Church Council Minutes for August 29, 2012

Present: Susan White (Chair), Bob Miller (Vice Chair), Chuck Egner (At large), Doug James (Trustees), Stan Williams (Trustees), Jeff Nielson (Mission), Priscilla Vincent (Stewardship), Jane Helms (Stewardship), Joanne Egner (Clerk), Rev. Mary Brownlow (Pastor)

Opening prayer led by Bob Miller.

The minutes of the July 11, 2012 Church Council Meeting were unanimously approved. (B. Miller moved; C. Egner 2nd)

Trustees:

Doug reported that VTel will be making a presentation to the Board of Trustees at their next meeting about putting an antenna in the steeple. The proposal would include putting up plastic shutters and the Trustees will check to make sure it doesn't violate any Historical Society regulations. There is a possibility that VTel will help fund steeple repairs. One estimate for repairing the steeple came in at \$56,000 and another at \$65,000. The Trustees plan to coordinate with the Norwich Historical Society on a grant application to the state that could fund up to \$20,000 for the repairs. The application deadline is October 1st and there is only a 25% chance it will be approved.

At the next Trustees meeting, Mark Beliveau will also be reporting on the review of our financial procedures.

Deacons:

Mary reported that at their last meeting the Deacons discussed visitations and providing rides for people at Valley Terrace to Church.

Christian Ed:

Mary reported that Vacation Bible School was cancelled because only 5 people signed up. A new nursery caregiver has been hired and the Sunday School year is set to start on September 9th. There may not be a confirmation class this year since there is only one 8th grade student registered on the Sunday School list.

There will be a 2nd hour on reading poetry and scripture aloud on September 16th and 23rd. Christian Ed is also collaborating with the Norwich Women's Club on a Sunday evening series beginning September 30th on adolescent risk behavior. Plans are being discussed for a book discussion group in October on faith and politics.

Mary also reported that the Woodworth Committee has approved the grant for a musical event at the end of January with John Bell of the Iona community.

Mission:

Jeff reported that the Board of Mission has been getting involved with the After Irene Ministry (AIM), a new group taking over coordination of the activities supporting Irene victims that had previously been based at St. Paul's. There are 60 families and 13 businesses on Route 114 between Hartford and Sharon that were devastated by Irene. Our Church will be helping by providing a monthly meeting space, funding a Tracfone, and giving \$200 for supplies such as water that are delivered during visitations. Funds for these efforts are coming from the Mission budget and the Pastor's Discretionary Fund.

Stewardship:

Priscilla reported that plans are being made for the Stewardship campaign in October. The Stewardship Committee has asked the Board of Trustees to present at a second hour on September 30th. Ideas for communicating financial gifts and participation in stewardship were discussed.

Pastor's Report:

Nothing additional to report.

Unitarian/Universalist Congregation of the Upper Valley building rental proposal: Mary reported that she and Susan had met with the Interim Pastor and President of the Unitarian/Universalist Church. The Unitarian/Universalist Church would like to rent a different space

than the Marion Cross School while they get organized on creating their own space. Their needs would include use of the Sanctuary, Parish Hall and 3 class rooms on Sundays from 3:00 to 6:30 PM. They would also require storage space and use of the piano. Both Mary and Susan have been discussing the rental proposal with staff and various members of the Congregation. They reported there is a wide range of opinion on the topic with both logistical and emotional concerns. Mary sent a letter to the Unitarian/Universalist Church to let them know that we couldn't make a decision by their September/October time frame and that they should make other plans for the fall. The Council discussed the benefits of additional rental income versus limitations to expanding our own Church programs (including musical events) on Sunday afternoons/evenings.

Nalamdana Project:

Doug reported that the Woodworth Committee has decided not to fund the Nalamdana Project. They gave a grant to the project a few years ago and decided that the current proposal did not quite fit with the Woodworth Fund's intent to focus on Church initiatives.

Upcoming Reports/Agendas:

Susan reported that Avery Post would like to talk to the Council in October about the wider UCC context.

Susan asked for the Council's input on reports from other groups or individuals. Mary suggested that we consider a discussion about parish nursing. It was agreed to add it to the agenda for the next meeting.

Next Meeting:

Wednesday, September 26th, 2012 at 7:00 PM

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 PM. Unanimous.

*Respectfully submitted,
Joanne Egner, Clerk*

Mission Offering for October, 2012

Neighbors in Need

Neighbors in Need supports the UCC's ministries of justice and compassion throughout the United States. This important ministry funds a wide array of local and national justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, and direct service projects.

Through UCCTakeAction.org, the national Justice and Witness Ministries office offers resources, news updates, and action alerts on a broad spectrum of justice issues and policy advocacy work on issues such as the federal budget, voting rights, immigration, health care, hate crimes, civil liberties, and environmental justice. Neighbors in Need also supports our American Indian neighbors in the UCC. One-third of the offering supports the UCC's Council for American Indian Ministries (CAIM). Today there are 20 UCC congregations on reservations and one urban, multi-tribal UCC congregation in Minneapolis.

Neighbors in Need helps make another world possible. It needs our support. Please give generously in the orange envelopes during September and October.

BOARD OF MISSION

Update on Assistance to Tropical Storm Irene Victims

In our Mission Board meetings early in 2012, we decided to focus much of our attention this year on assisting local families who are still recovering from the effects of the floods from Tropical in August of 2011. Here is an update on our activities in that area.

- In July, we made a monetary donation through COVER to a family in West Hartford. This enabled them to purchase wire and other supplies to complete the rough wiring on the house they were building.
- In August we served dinner one evening to the DreamBuilder volunteers, a group from Maryland who were assisting the same family. Funds for the food came from the Pastor's Discretionary Fund.
- The Mission Offering for July & August was targeted for Irene assistance. The Mission Board is distributing the money received from your donations, to assist families in the West Hartford area who are still suffering financial hardships in the aftermath of the storm. Through your generosity, we raised \$1,861. The Pastor's Discretionary Fund added \$139, so we have an even \$2,000 to donate for fuel assistance. The plan is to donate \$200 to ten families in need. We are working with volunteers to identify the families and will pay the money directly to their heating oil or propane providers.
- After Irene Ministry: AIM is a faith based successor to the Irene Ministry group of volunteers based at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in White River. In the immediate aftermath of the storm and for the next several months, a core group at St Paul's coordinated the efforts to supply food, water, shelter, resource information, grant writing assistance and numerous other services. This summer, as St. Paul's wound down their official participation, a small core group has reached out to area churches to form an organization which will continue to identify and provide needed services. The start up process is ongoing, and we are involved in the organization. To date, we have pledged funds for a telephone for AIM to use to improve contact with the families being assisted. We will also supply funds to support food and water deliveries, as unfortunately some families are still in need of these essential items. As these efforts continue, we will update you on what is happening, and what volunteer opportunities are available.

Thank you for your support.

*The Board of Mission:
Deb Berryman, Doug Britton, Vicky Fish, Kathy Grant, Jeff Nielsen & Heidi Webster*

**NORWICH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

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Pastor: Rev. Mary Brownlow

**AN OPEN AND AFFIRMING
CONGREGATION WORSHIPING ON
SUNDAYS AT 10 AM**

LIFELINE

Coordinator / Editor / Photographer:

. Linda Himadi

Designer: Douglas Lufkin

Send articles to: . . . nccucc2@myfairpoint.net

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E-MAIL ADDRESSES

If the church does not have your e-mail address, and you would like to be kept abreast of announcements and events at church – by this no cost/no waste option – please send an email to the church office at nccucc2@myfairpoint.net.

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Wmffre the Sweep

Wmffre the Sweep was mad as a mink,
Covered with cinders, blacker than ink.
Didn't mind darkness, didn't mind stink;
Light was his loathing, light made him blink
Coming through crevices, cranny or chink.
Drank through his whiskers, dust in his drink.

Wretched the ways of Wmffre the Sweep:
Little to gain, and nothing to keep;
Labor was plenty, labor was cheap,
Filthy the flues, and chimneys were steep;
Grimy, red-eyed, unable to weep,
Home to his pallet, ugly in sleep.

Wmffre the Sweep beheld a strange sight
In his day's dark or in the real night:
Ninety-nine angels, harnessed in light,
Michael among them, bearded and bright,
Majesty moving, melody, might~
Wmffre the Sweep was inspired to write.

Wmffre the Sweep, a lout and a clod,
Fed all his life on cabbage and cod.
Housed in a hovel, never well-shod,
Shouldering buckets, besoms, and hod,
Shovelled, like all men, under the sod,
Left a great poem, praise of his God.

*Rolfe Humphries (1894-1969)
The Earth is the Lord's: Poems of the Spirit (New York:
Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1965)*

A Plug for B.S. (aka Bible Study)

Bible Study is one of the Norwich Congregational Church's best kept secrets. It probably isn't what you might expect. Here's what it's not: doctrinaire, pious, solemn, rigid, stuffy. Here's what it is: open minded, open hearted, passionate, often full of laughter, engrossing, educational, serious, joyous. And here is what we do. We meet on Wednesday mornings from 9 to 10 in an upstairs classroom. We start on time, and we end on time. We read aloud to each other, using whatever translation we prefer. Sometimes we compare translations. If you come, you don't have to bring a Bible; there are plenty around in the building.

We read, we stop, we discuss. Mary is well versed in scripture and in scholarship; not only in the Jewish and Christian traditions, but also somewhat in Islam. I have been coming to Bible Study for about 20 years and have found that every one of our ministers has been deeply knowledgeable and open to full examination of everything we are reading. There is no "correct" approach to anything. No one is trying to convert or persuade anyone else to a different way of thinking. This is a place of safety, where anyone can question and inquire and learn.

We are constantly surprised and frequently entertained by what we find in scripture. We may think we know our Bible pretty well, but when we start to dig into it we keep discovering new things. At the moment we are reading the book of Acts. Imagine our surprise as we were reading along in chapter 14, and found that when Paul and Barnabas got to Lystra, the locals took them for Greek gods! Zeus and Hermes, in fact. The local priest brought oxen and garlands to conduct a sacrifice to them! Naturally that made Paul and Barnabas uncomfortable.

Paul and Barnabas had a habit of making themselves *persona non grata* as they traveled around. They had fled to Lystra to escape a mob in a nearby city which wanted to kill them. As they came into Lystra, they healed a lame man - of course! This man had been born lame (or, as the King James version so delightfully put it, "impotent in his feet"). This dramatic miracle convinced the locals that Paul and Barnabas were gods, and there we go. You can find out what happened by going yourself to chapter 14 in Acts.

We welcome anyone who would like to come join us. Give it a try, you might like it. Wednesdays from 9-10 am in an upstairs room.

Priscilla Vincent