



The newsletter of The First Congregational Church
Canton Center, Connecticut

The CHURCHMOUSE

February 2007

REPORT OF THE PASTOR

It was wonderful for Laurie and me to be here with our Canton Center church family to mark the 30th anniversary of my ordination to the Christian ministry and my tenth year as your pastor. Again, I thank all our church members and friends for the special recognition that took place on Sunday, April 30. It was a tremendous surprise and very much appreciated. I continue to admire the framed certificate of appreciation and recognition that now hangs in my church office ... Laurie and I will long and fondly remember our chauffeured trip to New York City on Saturday, September 23 ... and we are very much enjoying our new Dell computer and HP copier. But, most importantly, we shall always treasure the thoughtfulness and generosity of so many of you who made all these things possible. It was great!

In large part, much of my duties as pastor evolve around my preparations for leading the regular and seasonal services of worship and providing pastoral care, which includes visitation and/or counseling in various settings, as well as conducting baptisms, wedding ceremonies, and memorial services. I also meet with church committees to help implement the church's schedule of programs, activities, and mission outreach.

On January 25, our church hosted the Town of Canton's Annual Meeting that marked the beginning of the town's Bicentennial Celebration. In the early years of Canton, going back to the time when Canton Center was known as West Simsbury, the annual meetings of the town were always held in the church – the meetinghouse. In June, our church, under the brilliant direction of Jim and Gina Magennis, entered a float in the Bicentennial Parade and took top honors for best float. Of course it didn't hurt that two of the three judges were church members – though I am confident the outcome would have been the same regardless.

On March 26, many of us enjoyed a potluck luncheon and Lenten Workshop program that was held after the morning church service. Sarah LeGeyt, with help from Christian Education Committee members, offered special activities for the children. I arranged for The Reverend Timothy Haut to meet with the parents and other adults present. Rev. Haut's slide presentation on *The Life of Christ in the Drawings and Etchings of Rembrandt* was well received.

In the Adult Study Group we continued reading and discussing *The Good Book* by Peter Gomes through February. During several of the weeks of Lent we used a video-based program from the *Questions of Faith* series. In the fall we began another book study, reading *The Heart of Christianity* by Marcus Borg.

On Confirmation Sunday – the first Sunday in June – we welcomed thirteen of our ninth graders into church membership. In the fall, I began meeting with a new class of 20 high school freshmen and 1 sophomore – a very male-dominated group of 16 boys and 5 girls. Besides regular class sessions, our fall activities included participation in the CROP Walk, a trip to Plymouth, a hike up Mt. Monadnock, and a weekend retreat at Silver Lake.

Near the end of November, Pat and Doreen Grace decided to step down as leaders of the Senior Youth Fellowship after many years of involvement and dedicated work with the youth of our church. It is with much appreciation that we recognize them for all the love, friendship, and commitment they have given. Sarah LeGeyt and I met with SFY members a couple of times in December and since then, Sarah has been doing an excellent job working to build the program and coordinate activities for the remainder of the current year.



ANNUAL REPORT

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In February, our congregation along with those of four other Canton churches welcomed the Parra family to town. Roberto and Yoannys and their young daughter Alejandra came to us from Cuba through the services of Interfaith Refugee Ministry. They are a delightful family and it has been a pleasure for many

of us to help them get established in their new surroundings. For 15 years Roberto had been on a list of those requesting to leave Cuba. I was chosen to be the Vice Chair of the Core Committee that meets to coordinate efforts to help the Parra family. The Committee also includes five other members from our church: Gina Magennis, Linda McAllister, Steve Byko, Katha Kerr, and Jane Watson.

I continue to meet with other Canton clergy once a month, participate in the annual *Feast of Thanksgiving* Ecumenical Thanksgiving service, and remain a member of Focus on Canton. Each year, Focus on Canton sponsors the Thanksgiving Dinner that is held at the Collinsville Congregational Church for folk who might otherwise be alone on Thanksgiving. This year, our church was responsible for providing the leadership. Rachel Baugher earned many thanks for doing an outstanding job as chief leader.

In October, I along with delegates – Steve Shadford, Joan Colglazier, and Dorothy Clark – attended the Annual Meeting of the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ. I also attended the Regional Meeting of the Farmington Valley Association and remain a member on the Association's Committee on the Ministry.

And finally, my thanks go to Alastair Clark, Barbara Patterson, and Bill Champion for their help calling on members of our church family in the hospitals. Alastair also fills in, now and then, doing a service at Cherry Brook Health Care Center. They, of course, are only a few of the many individuals in our church family who give of themselves and their time and talents in so many and varied ways and contribute to the health and vitality of our fellowship and our ministry and service to others. Thank you all!

Respectfully submitted, *Larry W. Smith*

CALENDAR OF CHURCH EVENTS

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| Feb. | 1 | Thursday, 7:00 P.M. Bell Choir. |
| Feb. | 4 | Sunday, 9:00 A.M. JYF Grinder making in the kitchen.
Sunday, 10:00 A.M. Worship and Church School (begin in class). |
| Feb. | 5 | Monday, Junior (6:30) and Senior (7:30) Choirs.
Monday, 7:00 P.M. Christian Education Committee.
Monday, Honor Court will be hosted by our church in Hartford. Donations of sandwiches, fruits and cookies may be left at the church. |
| Feb. | 6 | Tuesday, 10:30 A.M. Adult Study.
Tuesday, 7:30 P.M. Diaconate. |
| Feb. | 7 | Wednesday, 9:30 A.M. Staff Meeting. |
| Feb. | 8 | Thursday, 7:00 P.M. Bell Choir. |
| Feb. | 11 | Sunday, 9:00 A.M. Missionary & Stewardship.
Sunday, 10:00 A.M. Worship and Church School
<i>(begin in church).</i>
Sunday, 5:30 – 7:00 P.M. SYF Meeting at the Island. |
| Feb. | 12 | Monday, 10:00 A.M. Prayer Shawl Ministry.
Monday, 6:30 P.M. Board of Trustees.
Monday, Junior (6:30) and Senior (7:30) Choirs.
Monday, 7:00 – 8:15 P.M. Confirmation Class.
Monday, 7:10 P.M. Music Committee. |
| Feb. | 13 | Tuesday, 12:30 P.M. Adult Study (new time for this meeting only). |
| Feb. | 14 | Wednesday, Noon, Prime Timers meet in the Parish Hall.
Wednesday, 7:30 P.M. Church Council. |
| Feb. | 15 | Thursday, 7:00 P.M. Bell Choir. |
| Feb. | 18 | Sunday, 10:00 A.M. Worship and Church School (begin in class).
Sunday, 11:15 A.M. Cherub Choir begins rehearsals for Easter. |
| Feb. | 19 | Monday, the Church Office will be closed for Presidents Day.
Monday, Junior Choir will NOT rehearse.
Monday, 7:30 P.M. Senior Choir. |
| Feb. | 20 | Tuesday, 10:30 A.M. Adult Study. |
| Feb. | 21 | Ash Wednesday, 7:00 P.M. ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CONGREGATION. |

February 2007						
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Calendar of Church Events, continued

- Feb. 22 Thursday, 7:00 P.M. **Bell Choir.**
Feb. 25 Sunday, 10:00 A.M. Worship and Church School (*begin in church*).
Sunday, 11:15 A.M. **Cherub Choir.**
Sunday, 5:30 – 7:00 P.M. **SYF Meeting** at the Island.
Feb. 26 Monday, **Junior (6:30) and Senior (7:30) Choirs.**
Feb. 28 Wednesday, 7:00 – 8:15 P.M. **Confirmation Class.**

GLOBAL PRAYERS FOR PEACE services which have been held on the last day of each month at North Canton Methodist Church or Trinity Episcopal have been disbanded.

