



ConnTact

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“YOU SHARE THE GIFTS”

BY JIM MORGAN

Ground breaking on the new Health and Welcome Center building at Silver Lake Conference Center is scheduled to begin this April, thanks to a generous gift from the Rev. Harold C. Smith, Pastor Emeritus of Unity Hill, UCC in Trumbull.

Smith's gift of 4,000 shares of Martek BioSciences stock, valued at nearly \$250,000, was prompted by a conversation he had at the Silver Lake display with new co-directors Anne and Tim Hughes at the Connecticut Conference's 2003 Annual Meeting last fall in New Canaan.

"I had the incredible opportunity to meet with Tim and Anne Hughes," said Smith. "Later, Tim and I had a one-on-one conversation. I told him about my experience with Y camps and as Chair of the International Council of the YMCA."

Tim recalls their talk this way. "I answered Harold's questions about the proposed Health and Welcome Center. He asked me, 'What would it take to do this thing right?' 'How much?' I said. 'Well, we're looking at another \$200,000 at least!' After reviewing the specifics, he came back with a twinkle in his eye. 'Well, I'll see how well I do in the stock market this year. Maybe I can help you out!'"

Though he has never visited Silver Lake, Smith has treasured memories of his own youthful experiences at the Fernbrook and Mensch Hill Evangelical and Reformed summer camps in Pennsylvania. "They were inter-generational. We had wonderful ministers," Smith remembers. "Great things happened to me, and I'd like that to happen to other people."

"We are profoundly grateful for Harold's generous gift! It is not only a gift that will keep on giving over the years ahead, but a gift that enables the Hughes to focus their energy on building Silver Lake's ministry for the future, and especially for next summer's program," said Conference Minister, the Rev. Davida Foy Crabtree. *Continued on page 5*



Truth, Trust & Accountability are Required



"Business ethics is not an oxymoron," said the sign as I walked into the breakfast where I was to speak in December. I smiled to myself, remembering the many variations on that phrase that I had preached as a local pastor. Then I mused to myself, and later to the audience, "I wonder whether government ethics in Connecticut has become an oxymoron."

I have been hesitant to enter the controversy about our governor's ethics, in part because I have not felt I had anything to add to the debate, and in

part because for a while the lines were drawn primarily by party politics. Yet, as leader of the largest Protestant denomination in Connecticut, it seems wrong to remain silent. We do have something to add to the debate, and that is Christian teaching:

Lying is wrong. Twisting the truth is wrong. Using the public trust to build up one's own wealth is wrong. It does not matter whether others have done the same, as some have argued. Nor does an apology immediately set things right. An apology, like confession, is measured by acts of repentance and setting things right.

Integrity must be the basis of all government, whether one is a governor, a corporate leader or a conference minister, for as Paul teaches us, a governing authority serves as a steward for God. If, in a democracy, the people cannot trust their highest leaders as men and women of integrity, then democracy will ultimately break down. With its demise will come abuses of authority and the loss of the people's participation in determining their own future and in sharing responsibility for the common good.

Some have said that it doesn't matter whether the governor lied, that he has been a good governor and that is all that counts. I am appalled by such reasoning. This governor is not accused of lying about some minor personal matter. More important, the accusation is not just about lying, but about his

use of his office for personal aggrandizement, and not just once. Whether or not he has otherwise been a good public official is irrelevant. The question is whether the accusations are true, and whether he can recover the public trust, lead with integrity, and restore Connecticut's reputation for good government. If he believes this will blow over and go away, he is wrong. The people in a true democracy do not forget such actions. Nor should they.

Now some have also said that as Christians we all know that God is the final judge. I agree. I also believe that as citizens we have a responsibility to weigh actions of our leaders on a moral scale and to expect them to measure up. To us is entrusted the well-being of democracy and responsibility for the common good of all people.

These are some of the standards to which I believe all governing authorities must be held. In the Church, we seek to be a community of grace and a community of mutual accountability. As a Church, we can extend our care and concern and prayers for Governor Rowland and our legislators. As Christian citizens, we must speak up about our ethical concerns. We must do so with an insistence on honesty, integrity, and transparency, and at the same time, pray for a civil public engagement with these issues that matter greatly to our state.

Your Church on the Web New Tools for Communication

by Rev. Eric S. Anderson

Nearly half of the Connecticut Conference's congregations—113, to be precise—have a web site listed on ctucc.org's links page. This means, of course, that more than half of the Conference's churches have not developed or publicized this increasingly popular communications tool. How can a local church develop a web presence?

Why a Web Site?

A web site can serve several functions for a church. Understanding these can help church leaders decide whether to take on the expense, and will also guide development of the site itself.

A church web site serves as an electronic signpost. It is a declaration that "we are here" in a medium that more and more people are using to discover information about their

community's institutions. It offers the ability to provide significantly more detail than traditional newspaper or telephone directory advertising, helping a site visitor understand the strengths and offerings of the congregation.

Church web sites also serve their current membership by posting contact information, event details, newsletters, sermons, and more – all in an easily accessible format. Sites often describe the congregation's special programs, and some are developing resources to support their members' prayer lives. Some churches offer "chat" services as an additional way to encourage conversation among members and friends.

How?

A web site requires a host computer on the Internet, which is generally provided by an Internet Services Provider (ISP). Prices range from free—supported by advertising the ISP places on the site—to \$40 a month or more.

Many plans cost about \$20 a month. Most Internet connection accounts include web hosting, which permits a church to experiment without paying for unneeded and expensive features. The address for these accounts frequently looks like this: www.myisp.com/members/mychurch/.

More expensive accounts allow a church to have its own domain name, which is a simple Internet address such as www.mychurch.org. The cost may be as low as \$10 a month. The simplified address makes it much easier for church members and other site visitors to find the information they seek.

Who?

Computers make web technology available, but only human beings can produce the content. Once a web site is up and running, it must be maintained, with the content regularly "refreshed" for timeliness and accuracy.

Churches frequently seek a volunteer from among their computer-literate members for help with *Continued on page 6*

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CT Conference's Annual Meeting a 'Green' Affair

by Micah Cogen

The 2003 Annual Meeting at New Canaan's Saxe Middle School was a bit "greener" thanks to the Conference Justice and Witness Ministry Team (JWMT) and EAD Environmental LLC, a New York-based marketer of renewable energy. Recognizing it had the power to support clean renewable electricity, the JWMT took action to help offset its environmental impact at the three-day meeting by supporting wind power with EAD Environmental.

Building upon this commitment to the environment, the Conference recently joined the Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut and a number of other religious institutions, in announcing its intention to offset 100% of the electricity consumed at the main Hartford office for two years by financially supporting the generation of 90,000 kilowatt-hours from small hydroelectric facilities in New England.

Last September, the JWMT discovered the power of Renewable Energy Certificates (RECertificates). These certificates are the only proof that the generation of electricity from a renewable source of power actually occurred. Each RECertificate represents the additional cost of producing a single kWh of green power. With RECertificates, the JWMT took the bold step of using the meeting to make an environmental commitment.

Powering Saxe Middle School during a weekend in mid-fall requires considerable consumption of fossil fuel and nuclear power. By taking a quick look at the school's monthly electricity bill, the JWMT discovered the building would consume approximately 11,000 kilowatt-hours (kWhs) during Annual Meeting - more than the average home in New

England consumes annually.

By simply consuming conventional power, the Conference could have contributed to the threat of global climate change as well as local and national air pollution. However, with the help of EAD, the Conference was able to offset the negative effects of its consumption by purchasing 11,000 kWhs of EAD Environmental's 100% New Wind RECertificates, making the generation of 11,000 kWhs of wind power financially possible.

Anyone can purchase RECertificates for their home, business, or even church. EAD provides a growing number of Connecticut residents with RECertificates from a variety of renewable resources. Currently, EAD Environmental offers residents two unique RECertificate products: National Wind Energy Certificates and Home-Grown Hydro Certificates. Generating electricity from wind and hydroelectric power is pollution-free, and residents can offset the electricity consumed without having to change their power provider.

Last summer, EAD Environmental launched its Offset Your Impact campaign for religious institutions in Connecticut. The campaign is designed to help 'green' the power they consume daily and heighten overall awareness among congregants about the environment with educational forums and other community-building events. Since the campaign was launched, several churches, synagogues, and other religious institutions across the state have already purchased RECertificates.

"What has interested me from the start," said

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Voices Across Diaspora from Lament to Hope

Shirin Ebadi

by Lois Harwick



how they have moved from lament to hope. A number of women from the Middle East told their stories and others, including one of our own ministers in Connecticut, Nayiri Karjian, Pastor of the Congregational Church of Easton, UCC, responded.

Now we are all thrilled that Shirin Ebadi, one of the women speaking in the Mosaic Series, has been honored with the Nobel Peace Prize. Ebadi, a lawyer, writer and university lecturer, has spent three decades working to advance human rights in Iran and foster a dialogue between Islamic fundamentalist hard-liners and reformists.

Ebadi is the first Muslim woman to win the Nobel prize and was the first female judge in Iran before the Iranian revolution in 1979. She had hoped the revolution would help to create an Iran that would rival the most open Western democracy. Unfortunately, the opposite happened. She was demoted, but never gave up. She was convicted of slandering the government three years ago and spent three weeks in jail. In spite of her harsh experiences, she has never lost hope.

Over the years, Ebadi has transformed herself into one of Iran's most outspoken human rights advocates, pressing for the rights of women and children. Her strategy is two-fold: pressing the case that Islam is compatible with democracy and human rights, while staying

within the confines of the religion and the Islamic Republic. She does not have to look to other countries for role models, for there were many courageous Iranian women before her, who, for more than a century, fought against despotism and sexism, opening political, cultural and social spaces for Iranian women.

In one instance, Ebadi pressed for justice in the case of Arian Golshani, a nine-year-old girl murdered by her father and stepbrother. Representing Arian's mother, she turned the trial into a fight for the rights of women and children in a country where law prevents a father from being convicted for murdering his own child. The stepbrother was convicted, and, although the law has not been changed, Ms. Ebadi drew attention to it.

"We asked people who objected to the law to take white flower petals and throw them into the street," she said in an interview. "In a few minutes, the whole street was white with petals."

In a pointed critique of the United States, which accuses Iran of secretly working to develop nuclear weapons, Ms. Ebadi said outsiders have no right to meddle. "The fight for human rights is conducted in Iran by the Iranian people, and we are against any foreign intervention in Iran," she said.

If the life and courageous work of Shirin Ebadi interests you, we encourage you to get a copy of the Mosaic Series from your church or association, or purchase one at the Conference office. Besides the stories, prayers, and responses, it includes a very meaningful retreat experience. Getting to know and understand our sisters in the Middle East better is a must for all of us in this country, now more than ever.

Lois Harwick is a member of the Study Committee of the Connecticut Women of UCC.

To read an interview with Shirin Ebadi, go to the PBS.org web site, and click on Frontline/World under the "Stories A-Z" tab.

Come Celebrate!

as the Rev. Susan Townsley is installed as Western Regional Minister of the Connecticut Conference

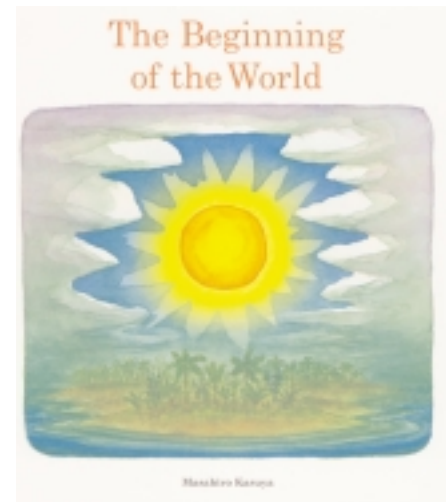
February 29 at 4 p.m.
Monroe Congregational Church
34 Church Street



New Books in the Ruth Dudley Resource Center

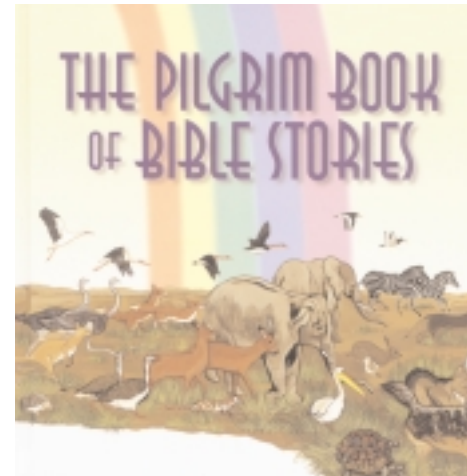
There are many children's Bibles available, but *The Pilgrim Book of Bible Stories*, new from Pilgrim Press, is particularly unique. This is the first children's Bible to be written entirely in inclusive language. It is also a colorful book, with full-color illustrations on nearly every page. While the stories are written simply for easy comprehension, each story gives the Biblical reference ("Read-the-story-for-yourself") for the child who has grown to that level of reading competence. This Bible may be borrowed, but it would make a very nice gift for any child and her family.

Also from Pilgrim Press is *The Beginning of the World* by Masahiro Kasuya. This book tells the creation story for very young children, but children of all ages will love the beautiful illustrations by this Japanese book illustrator and storyteller.



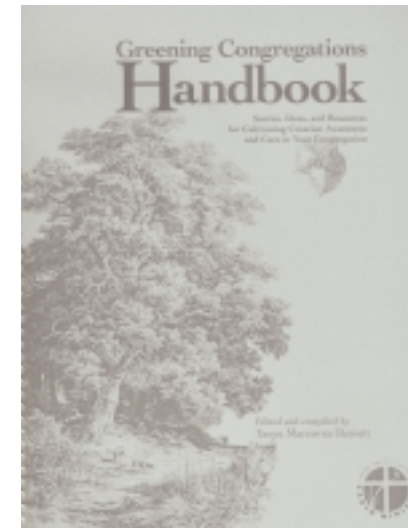
The book ends in a wonderful way with two children's faces: "New people are being born everyday, and God gives each person a special face—yours too."

Pilgrim Press has a series of books called, "Pilgrim Prayers for..." We have three volumes from this collection in the resource center, *Pilgrim Prayers for Church Choirs*, *Pilgrim Prayers for Single Mothers*, and *Pilgrim Prayers for Grandmothers Raising Grandchildren*. Each book is written by different authors and is therefore unique in style. The first, by Kenneth Johnson, presents prayers for every Sunday of the year plus



others for special observances. The author also provides journaling pages for "prayer reflections. Michele Howe writes individual chapters about the experiences of single mothers such as finances, friendship, fear, loneliness and anger, and offers first-person prayers. Similarly, Linda H. Hollies, writes about the difficult and joyful times of raising her own grandson, experiences she reflects in her prayers.

The Justice and Witness Ministry Team of the Conference has given the resource center a copy of *Greening Congregations Handbook: Stories, Ideas, and Resources for Cultivating Creation*



Awareness and Care in Your Congregation, edited by Tanya Marcovna Barnett. This thick volume is full of ideas, practical suggestions, and resources, as well as some wonderful readings such as Rodney R. Romney's "In Love with All Creation" and H. Paul Santmire's "The Christian Tradition and the Love of Nature."

All of these books may be borrowed from the Ruth Dudley Resource Center. Call toll-free 866-367-2822 or e-mail rrdrc@ctucc.org.

Healing Environments: Personal, Family, Church and the World of Work

A Workshop with Kent Ira Groff

Thursday, March 11 • 9:00 am – 4:00 pm • Registration \$45
• Bethesda Lutheran Church • New Haven, CT

How can those who give care nurture environments for being faithful and joyful in serving others? This workshop will center on spiritual practices that transform human struggles into growth. We will explore methods for creating environments that heal. Break-out groups will include interactive presentations, music, quiet time, small group reflection and art as reflective practice.

LEADER: Dr. Kent Ira Groff, teacher, author, spiritual director, and pastor, is founding mentor of Oasis Ministries for Spiritual Development, Camp Hill, PA, and adjunct professor at Lancaster Theological Seminary. A graduate of Shalem Institute in Bethesda, MD, his retreat ministry takes him across the US and abroad. His writings include *Active Spirituality: A Guide for Seekers and Ministers*; *Journeymen: A Spiritual Guide for Men (and Women who Want to Understand Them)*; *The Soul of Tomorrow's Church*, and *What Would I Believe if I Didn't Believe Anything? A Handbook for Spiritual Orphans* (January 2004).

Sponsored by the Spiritual Partnership Council representing Episcopal, UCC, Methodist, Lutheran and Roman Catholic clergy and spiritual directors in Connecticut.

Registration may be sent to: Pathfinder P O Box 356 Albertas, PA 18011

For questions, you may call Rev. Mary Lou Howson, at 203-426-8915

Elsie Gibson Remembered

BY REV. ALLEN F. TINKHAM

A memorial service of love and thanksgiving was held at Avery Chapel on November 21 for Elsie Gibson, widow of the Reverend Royal Gibson, who served the Connecticut Conference for many years as Minister of Connecticut Missions.

Elsie was also a minister, ordained in 1935. After graduating from Taylor University in Indiana, she attended Hartford Seminary, where she met Royal. They were married the evening of their graduation. She is remembered as a person of strong character and steadfast faith. She was proud to be a minister, and her achievements reflect her devotion.

As a member of the Avery Community for over 30 years, she contributed to its life and ministry, offering Bible study, being active in Chapel matters and often preaching from its pulpit. A Christmas letter written in her ninety-fourth year echoes her enthusiasm for Biblical studies. "Our small Bible study group has finished reading and discussing the Book of James and plans to take up Colossians next."

Elsie had a mission to the wider church. She wrote articles for both Protestant and Catholic periodicals,

and was known for her interfaith dialogue groups. She was honored to be a Protestant observer at Vatican II.

She also authored three books: *When the Minister is a Woman*, *Life Is Something Else*, and *Honest Prayer*. A quote from *Honest Prayer* reveals the wellspring of vision:

I was born legally blind and totally color-blind,

And I am fully convinced that the limitation

Was a factor in the development of my lifework...

God can take any evil offered to Him

And so transmute it by His love that it achieves good.

At the conclusion of a staff party she hosted at Avery, as we were saying our good nights, we said, "Keep the faith." She immediately answered, "That's funny, I always thought my faith kept me!" And so it was.

Rev. Allen Tinkham served as the Minister of Church Development for the Connecticut Conference UCC and has served as an Interim Pastor in many CT churches.

"You Share the Gifts"

continued from page 1

"Harold Smith has been a gift himself to the United Church of Christ for many years as an ordained minister and pastor, as a member of the Pension Boards of the UCC, and most recently as a member of the Investment Committee of our Conference," she said. "We give thanks to God not only for his monetary gift, but for his vision of and commitment to the wider mission of the church."

The money, combined with UCC insurance funds of approximately \$140,000 and another \$45,000 raised so far through special donations, means that the Health and Welcome Center can fulfill the vision of a facility to serve SLCC's size and accommodations needs, now and in the future.

The Health Center side of the building will feature nurse's quarters, several infirmary rooms, including one isolation room, and a reception area with historical displays. The Welcome Center will share the reception area that can double as an off-hours meeting space, and also will include a small kitchen for an off-season residence. There will be four offices, a conference room and work area space. A full basement will also be constructed, for possible use as a rec room for summer staff.

The building is designed to be environmentally friendly, featuring south-facing windows for winter warmth and heat-conserving windows on the north side, the highest rated insulation and energy-saving solar panels. In addition, there will be deciduous tree plantings that will allow for summer shade and winter sun exposure. And the designers will be asked to explore the idea of a geothermal pump bringing 55 degree air from deeper ground to supplement necessary heating and air conditioning.

Work on the building will stop during the summer with so many children around, then resume in September. It is expected to be ready for off-season occupancy next fall. In the meantime, development of the Silver Lake Master Plan continues, as does the need to fund this future work. The plan envisions a Building Improvement Fund, an endowment for maintenance of grounds buildings, a Nurses' Fund, and other elements of the constant attention that a well-run conference and camp facility requires.

For now, there is cause for celebration at the Lake. When asked about his generosity, Smith explained that he felt compelled to return his good fortune in some manner. He also frankly admitted, "God wasn't letting me sleep, having made all this money. I wasn't given much rest. I wasn't being left alone by 'the Boss'."

Talking to Harold on the phone after learning of his gift, Anne Hughes asked when he would be coming to camp. "Harold, if God was not letting you sleep before," she said, "we'll make sure you get a good night's sleep now, when you come to see the great things that are happening as a result of your gift!"

The last word belongs to Smith. "My heart is in Connecticut. I'm really glad I could do this. Camps are so important, and I get such a great feeling out of giving."

Christmas at Silver Lake

BY TIM AND ANNE HUGHES

Neither 15 inches of snow, nor sleet, nor unplowed Sharon Mountain could keep 31 fifth through eighth-graders from enjoying being snowed in for Christmas at Silver Lake the first weekend of December. We discovered new uses for old bunk mattresses, made snow sculptures, created our own creche scenes out of clay, sang songs and made ornaments, and drank lots of hot cocoa as we alternately dried gloves and boots by the fire, then went outside to play all over again. Surely there's no better place to be snowed in for two days, then at camp! Better yet, all nine counselors and registered youth braved the weather forecast and showed up for the fun.

On Sunday, another 86 people dug out cars, donned boots and hats, and arrived for Christmas at Silver Lake's hayride, craftmaking, and spectacular Christmas dinner and caroling. Guests enjoyed six 30-pound turkeys with all the trimmings, topped off with three different kinds of homemade pies! Along with the standard Christmas hymns, the entire group participated in a rousing Silver Lake version of "The Twelve Days of Christmas." We were even blessed with spirited, impromptu solos for "Gingerbread Rock", and "Frosty the Snowman" by the under-five crowd. The icicles, leftover turkey, and Christmas spirit remained with us long afterwards at Silver Lake. And for those who are willing to make the trek, there are 'old mattress' sled rides for the taking by any winter visitors!

Tim and Anne Hughes are the co-Directors of Silver Lake Conference Center in Sharon, Connecticut.



① A vision in white - Snow Angels descend at Silver Lake



② Down by the lake - "Let It Snow, Let It Snow, Let It Snow!"

③ Amber Bedford, Olivia Benson, Alicen Finley and Georgia Morgan singing "The Little Green Frog."

④ Putting the old mattresses to good use, Jenna Dufresne waits for her turn on the hill.



Congregational Studies: Roots Reaching to the Future

by Cecile Gilson

On September 12, 2003 Hartford Seminary hosted a special forum bringing together experts on the study of congregations for a day-long discussion about congregational analysis: past, present and future. The forum identified the voices, forces and feelings that have shaped the congregational studies movement in the past 30 years, and explored new shapes of congregational life and imagined new possibilities for congregational studies.

Jackson W. Carroll, Professor Emeritus of Religion and Society at Duke University Divinity School and director of "Pulpit & Pew: Research on Pastoral Leadership" was the keynote speaker. He spoke of the background of Congregational studies and the shaping influences on congregational studies. In the late 1970s, Robert W. Lynn, then with the Lily Foundation, invited a group of people to talk about congregational studies. This group went on to offer a conference in Atlanta to reflect on changes in congregational life. Ultimately, the Lily Foundation funded a congregational studies project that has developed significant learnings.

The morning panel, including Lynn, now the executive director of the Lake Family Institute on Faith and Giving, William McKinney president, Pacific School of Religion, Loren Mead of the

Alban Institute, and Barbara Wheeler, president of Auburn Theological Seminary, explored Congregational studies done over the last several decades. They noted that the shape of congregations has been profoundly influenced by societal changes, such as the continued evolution from a rural to an urban society, the growth of suburbia, the civil rights movement, the



Jackson W. Carroll

Viet Nam protest era and ongoing efforts to secure women's rights. All have had a major influence on congregational life, they said.

Additionally, a deep and growing mistrust of organizations in general has created a change in the perception of the church. In these circumstances, traditional congregational life has yielded to the forces of change. Missional work has also experienced a change in direction. For that very reason, the Alban Institute was founded to help congregations work with the changes that have occurred. And lay ministry has experienced increased importance in the life of the church.

The afternoon panel consisted of Edwin Hernandez, Director of the Institute for Latino Studies at Notre Dame University, James R. Nieman, Associate Professor of homiletics at Wartburg Theological Seminary, and Scott Thuma, Faculty Associate for Web and Distance Education at Hartford Seminary. They spoke to the issue of continuing congregational studies. In the 21st Century, the shape of religious gatherings in North America is experiencing radical transformation. New influences such as computers and the Internet have opened the way for many new forms of congregation, from prayer cells and mega-churches to house meetings and cyber-congregations. New studies must maintain a critical examination paying attention to the times and issues. The role of youth and how congregational life affects youth also is an increasingly important issue. Religion on the margins should be included in the reflections and current methods of congregational studies need to be re-examined.

The day ended with a fund-raising dinner to support the Scholarship Fund for New Horizons in Congregational Studies. This fund recognizes the need for a new generation of leaders to study and engage the changing horizon of religious commitments and organizational realities. To make a contribution to the Scholarship Fund, contact the Office of Public and Institutional Affairs of Hartford Seminary at 860-509-9519.

Cecile Gilson is Coordinator of Justice & Witness and Wider Church Ministry of the Connecticut Conference United Church of Christ.

Your Church on the Web

Continued from page 2

their first site. Some may eventually choose to hire a consultant, while others have either hired new staff or added web maintenance to an employee's responsibilities. It is vitally important to identify the web designer, and even more important to develop procedures by which changes and updates will get to that person. In the end, a web site, like any other communication tool, is only as good as its information.

Further Steps

Once the church has determined the purposes of the new site, the people who will maintain it, and the company that will (at least initially) host it, the work of developing the site can begin. The web designers will need to identify the tools they will use. The staff and leadership will need to write the content they wish to share. The group will need to agree on the site's navigational design and general appearance. And they will need to find ways to let people know the site exists.

The result can yield a dynamic, interactive communications tool: a web site that describes a unique household of faith to an inquiring visitor, and which informs its members and friends of its activities and opportunities.

The Rev. Eric S. Anderson is the Connecticut Conference's Electronic Media Specialist and an independent computer consultant.

UCC Web Hosting Offerings

The United Church of Christ has made arrangements with the Faith and Values network to offer the WebMedley service to UCC congregations. WebMedley does not require that the web designer learn HTML code or purchase a web creation program, but does allow the user to insert information into existing templates. There are three levels of service.

A free option provides a single web page to the church. More information is available at: www.ucc.org/webmedley/.

A new "WebMedleyLite" option offers a domain name, eight web pages and additional storage space to download a newsletter. More information is available at: www.webmedleylite.com.

Paid WebMedley service starts at \$40 a month and includes a domain name and at least 30 MB of storage space. For more information, visit www.webmedley.net.

Stewardship Leaders to Begin Work

by Amy Beveridge

The Connecticut Conference has been awarded a grant by the Stewardship and Church Finances Ministry of United Church of Christ to develop a team of Stewardship Associates who will work with the congregations of our conference. The national office initiated the grant program to help strengthen the financial health and vitality of local churches. Each conference was invited to design its own Stewardship Associates program and to present its proposal for a grant.

In Connecticut, the program consists of nine persons from around the state, plus two staff. All of the Stewardship Associates have been trained as workshop leaders/consultants. Beginning in late winter and early spring, the Stewardship Associates will each lead three workshops for clusters of three or four congregations.

Three workshops will be scheduled for each of the three regions this year. Most of the events will be held in the spring in the recognition that, while stewardship planning should be ongoing year-round, preparation for a fall campaign should begin early in the year. Another series of workshops will be offered for a different set of clusters of churches each year. Thus, most of the Conference's congregations will be invited to send a delegation to a workshop every other year. In this way, persons who serve in stewardship-related roles in the local church will have frequent opportunity to learn new approaches and new tools for their stewardship ministry.

Amy Beveridge, the Conference's Stewardship Specialist, is setting up the first round of workshops. Several churches have already offered to host workshops, and others will be approached.

The Stewardship Associates for the Connecticut Conference are: Jane Cerri, Clinton; Luis Cruz, East Hartford; Peggy Dufresne, Naugatuck; Kevin Ewing, Bloomfield; Susanna Griefen, Westport; Linda Kasevich, East Windsor; Kathy Pierson, Windsor; Dean Warburton, Wallingford; and Jack Zappulla, Columbia. Amy Beveridge and Jim Morgan are the staff persons working with the Stewardship Associates team. If your church is interested in being part of a workshop, you may contact them by e-mail at amyb@ctucc.org or jimm@ctucc.org.

Amy Beveridge is the CT Conference Stewardship Specialist and Coordinator of the Ruth Dudley Resource Center.

CLASSIFIEDS

Positions

EAST HARTLAND — First Church in Hartland is seeking a part-time Director of Music (10 hrs/wk). Piano skills are necessary, with organ skills preferred. Responsibilities include regular and seasonal services and direction of a choir. The church is located 30 minutes from Hartford, in a small town where people love both to sing and play music. • Contact: Pastor Jim Silver, First Church in Hartland, PO Box 155, East Hartland, CT 06027; 860-653-6495 [2/04]

GLASTONBURY — Vibrant Glastonbury UCC congregation seeks committed individual to provide consistent quality care to the children in the infant and toddler rooms during Sunday morning worship. Responsibilities include providing a safe and loving environment for the children, overseeing parent and teen volunteers who will provide child care support, and ensuring toys in the rooms remain age-appropriate and clean and that the room has adequate supplies. Part-time (4 hours per week). Experience working with children is necessary. First Aid certification, or willing-

ness to obtain, is required; CPR training is also preferred. • Contact: First Church of Christ, Congregational in Glastonbury, 2183 Main Street, Glastonbury, CT 06033, attn: Kate VanDerzee; 860-633-4641; or Firstchurch@glastonburyfirst.org [4/04]

HARTFORD — Immanuel Congregational Church, in Hartford, is seeking a Minister with Families and Children, 15 hrs/week, 43 weeks/year. Immanuel is a multiracial and multicultural UCC church of about 350 members. They are looking for a dynamic, outgoing Christian adult (ordination not required) who will interact with children and families within the congregation, and who will reach out to new families with children, with an emphasis on the neighborhood surrounding the church. • Contact: For further information, please contact Rev. Ruth Martz, Associate Minister, at 527-8121. Please send resume to: Rev. Ruth Martz, Immanuel Congregational Church, 10 Woodland St., Hartford, CT 06105. [4/04]

PILGRIMS & PARISHES

EDITED BY JEAN HAMILTON

West Avon Congregational Church offered a class on Pastoral Partners. The six-week training program helped those interested in learning how to minister to another Christian in the congregation. The church also invited children to an Advent PJ Night. Children came to church in PJ's or comfortable clothes for stories, songs, hot chocolate and other traditional advent activities.

New Britain First Church gathered "gently loved" teddy bears for "Operation Teddy Bear" a project that serves children in developing countries.

Woodstock First Congregational Church has a Secret Pen Pal Program each year. Adults and children are paired to correspond using nicknames. After several months, there is a breakfast where the identities of pen pals are revealed. It is an opportunity for adults to share their faith with the children of the church school.

Middletown First Church of Christ, Congregational invited adults and children to participate in a Secret Saint

Nick program. On three Sundays during Advent a simple gift - not more than \$3 - was left in a special location. On the last Sunday, everyone discovered the name of their Secret Saint Nick.

Essex First Congregational Church holds a special Pumpkin Sunday. Church School classes decorate and carve pumpkins to give to area nursing home residents and members of the congregation. Volunteers help deliver the pumpkins.

New Canaan Congregational Church offered an eight-week course entitled "Gifts for Children and Grandchildren." Participants were encouraged to reflect on their lives and the memories of parents and grandparents, as well as hopes and dreams for children and grandchildren. Gifts of scrapbooks, photo albums and journals were created for children and grandchildren. Congregational Church also has volunteers to assist parents of special needs children to ensure that their child will be mainstreamed into Church School classes.

Glastonbury First Church of Christ,

Congregational offered a Bible study using the words of Handel's Messiah. Studying the Christmas portion of the oratorio and listening to the beautiful music deepened the celebration of Advent and Christmas.

Branford First Congregational Church invited those who might be alone for Thanksgiving to join others who might be able to set an extra place at the table for them. Hosts and guests were coordinated in an effort to be sure those who wanted to had a place to be in community during the holiday.

Ivoryton Congregational Church offered a series of forums entitled "God is Still Speaking." The first forum was entitled "What in the world is God saying through Reality TV?" This unique topic provided a vehicle for discerning God's voice.

Wallingford First Congregational Church held a Wednesday morning study in December entitled "Spirituals and Canticles." Several biblical canticles of the season were explored, as well as the music they have inspired.

WEST HAVEN — The First Congregational Church of West Haven seeks a Director of Christian Education Ministries. The church is a family-oriented and welcoming congregation, in search of a person with strong leadership capabilities to provide vision for their educational ministries. Experience in Christian Education is preferred. The position is part-time, 20 hours per week, with flexible hours. The salary is competitive, based on experience and education. Membership of 400 with a Sunday School of 100 children from age 3 through 8th grade. • Contact: Christian Education Search Committee, First Congregational Church of West Haven, William Ewry, Search Committee Chairperson, 1 Church Street, West Haven, CT 06516; or fcfofwh@ctconnect.com [2/04]

Se11 or Give KENSINGTON — FREE: 196 used Pilgrim Hymnals in good condition. • Contact: Kensington Congregational Church 860-828-4511 [3/04]

EVENTS

Retracing Slavery as an Interfaith Pilgrimage •

February 3, 6-8 PM • Hartford Seminary, 77 Sherman Street, Hartford • Sponsored by The Metropolitan Training Advancement Institute, Christian Activities Council and Hartford Seminary • In 1998, Hartford native Aleta Alston-Toure participated in an interfaith group that retraced the historical slave journey through the Middle Passage. • Cost: Free. • Contact: Christian Activities Council (860) 527-9860

Come Together, Event for CT Youth •

March 7, 2004 Noon • West Avon Congregational Church, Avon, CT • Farmington Valley Association invites CT youth to attend an afternoon of worship and workshops. Beginning with a brown bag lunch at noon, youth will have an opportunity to hear a live band, participate in yoga classes, games such as the "Great Race" and "The Art of Pretzel Making" and comedy. There will be roundtable discussions for Youth Advisors. • Cost: \$5 per person • Contact: Bill Vibert, West Avon Congregational Church 860-673-3996

A Dialogue between the US and Cuba: Religion, Economics, Ecology and Human Rights •

March 9-18 • Plowshares Institute: Cuba • The Cuba seminar will consider US/Cuba relations. Participants will learn about Cuba's history and achievements through discussions with local leaders. Participants will visit Havana, Matanzas, Veradero and other sites of cultural and environmental significance. • Cost: \$2,500 includes visas, room, board, and airfare from Miami. • Contact: Plowshares Institute, 860-651-4304; or plowshares@plowsharesinstitute.org

Spring Pastoral Relations Workshop •

March 13, 9 to Noon • Spring Glen Church, Hamden, or April 17, 9 to Noon • Congregational Church of New Fairfield • Join Esther Shoup and find out what a pastoral relations committee is and how to start one in your church. • Cost: \$10 per person • Contact: Sarah Annis saraha@ctucc.org; 888-367-2822

Spirituality and Stewardship: Seeing and Being Jesus •

Friday, March 19 through Saturday, March 20 • Wesley Methodist Church, Worcester, MA • Keynote speaker Dr. Leonard Sweet, Worship leader Rev. Maren Tirabassi; numerous workshops offered by the Northeast Ecumenical Stewardship Council. • Cost: \$37.50 per day • Contact: Chris McGuire 603-329-4444 ext. 12; or www.umfne.org events

Seminary Support Committee Clergy Event •

Wednesday, March 24, 2004 9:15 to 1 PM • Church of Christ Congregational, 1075 Main Street Newington • Ron Baard from Bangor Theological Seminary. • Cost: TBA includes lunch • Contact: Carole Carlson carolec@ctucc.org 860-233-5564 or 866-367-2822, toll-free in CT

Spring Planting 2004 "Seeds of Change" •

March 27, 9 - 3 • Church of Christ, Congregational, Newington • Come and join your sisters and brothers in Christ for Spring Planting 2004. This is a time to celebrate the gifts of our conference and to experience new ideas for ministry. Workshops, worship, displays, Hartford Seminary bookstore, SERVV sale and a program for school-age children will be offered. • Contact: Sarah Annis saraha@ctucc.org; 888-367-2822

United Church of Christ Office Support Staff Network

2004 Annual Meeting • April 16-18 • Church House in Cleveland, Ohio • Keynote speaker: The Rev. José A. Malayang, Executive Minister, Local Church Ministries, Worship, Workshops, Sabbath Opportunities. Free pre-event workshop on the new, online Profiles system. • Cost: \$225 includes 3 nights, double-occupancy housing (Thu-Sat), 6 meals and materials • Contact: Kimberlee Bublik at 866-822-8224 ext. 3874; or nagyk@ucc.org

New England Conference on Economic Justice:

Transforming Globalization through Community • April 22-24 • Mont Marie Conference Center, Holyoke, MA • Keynote Speakers are David Korten, co-Founder and Board Chair "Positive Futures Network" and author of *When Corporations Rule the World* and Richard Horsley, Professor of Religion, University of Massachusetts and author of *Jesus and Empire*. • Contact: Cecile Gilson cecileg@ctucc.org ; 866-367-2822

The New England Association of United Church Educators 33rd Annual Conference on Christian Education •

May 4-6 • Craigville Conference Center on Cape Cod • "Keeping the Boat Afloat/Trusting in God's Navigation." Rev. Mary Luti will be the keynote speaker and worship leader. This conference is designed for Pastors, Associate Pastors, Youth Ministers, Christian Educators, Youth Leaders and Sunday School Teachers. • Contact: Sarah Annis sarah@ctucc.org; 888-367-2822

Transition and Crisis: Human Rights, Economics, and the Role of the Church in China •

May 24-June 7 • Plowshares Institute: Hong Kong and Mainland China • This seminar will explore economic transition, issues of human rights and the role of religion in China.

Unique to this seminar will be personal dialogue with senior government, civic and religious leaders, both in Hong Kong and mainland China. • Cost: \$3,800 includes visas, room, board, and travel from New York. • Contact: Plowshares Institute 860-651-4304; or plowshares@plowsharesinstitute.org

National Youth Event •

July 22-26, 2004 • University of Tennessee • It is not too early to start planning...Watch the UCC youth and young adult web page for updates. www.ucc.org/youth • Cost: Registration is \$300 from February 1 - April 30, 2004, \$325 May 1 - June 1, 2004 • Contact: June Boutwell at boutwelj@ucc.org

The Rehabilitation of Mission: The Interfaith Context With Dale Bishop

Thursday, February 12, 7 p.m.



The very word "mission" tends to evoke either an unjustified romanticism about the efforts of Christian missionaries throughout history, or the critique that the message promulgated by missionaries has been culture-bound and insensitive to local cultures and to people of other religious traditions. Our current context, which may be described as a globalized one, in which interfaith relationships are not only a feature of our interactions with other societies, but are also a part of our national life, requires a new understanding, a "rehabilitation," of mission as a central task of the church and indeed as something that continues to lie at the heart of the Christian faith. While the ecumenical movement has convinced many American Christians of the need to appreciate the experiences of others as they read the Gospel in light of their local circumstances, we are further challenged by our encounter with people of other faith traditions to incorporate the insights of those traditions into our understanding of our own. We are challenged, in other words, to engage in mission mutually with people of other faiths, witnessing to each other for our mutual conversion to faithfulness to God.

Dale L. Bishop is Director of Relationships and Resources for Interreligious Understanding at Hartford Seminary. He will help recruit international students, develop partnerships with other seminaries and teach. Bishop was Executive Minister for Wider Church Ministries in the national United Church of Christ office in Cleveland, stepping down in September. • Cost: \$10

Recent Pastoral Transitions in Connecticut

New Calls

Kimball, Janice from Supply Preaching, New London to Pastor, St. Peter's UCC in Wadesville, IN, January 2004

Nye, M. Ruth from In-Care, Hartford East Association to

Associate Pastor, First Congregational Church of Haddam, January 18, 2004

Svalberg, Nancy from In-Care, Fairfield West Association to Pastor, North Branford Congregational Church, January 4, 2004

Swilagi, Tony from Pastor, First United Church of Christ, Bridgeport, to a church in Pennsylvania, December 31, 2003

Zappulla, Jack from Pastor, Columbia Congregational Church to Senior Pastor, Enfield Congregational Church, March, 2004

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