

## Lent—the Holiest Season—Awaits You

**OUR MIDWEEK SERVICE** is the heart of Lent at First Church. **Beginning with Ash Wednesday, February 22**, this special service of prayer and Communion is offered in the Meetinghouse Wednesday evenings from 6:30 to 7:10, **through March 28**.

This is a time for prayer, for singing songs of praise, for the

celebration of the Lord's supper. Starting with the second week (February 29) a different member of our family of faith speaks briefly at each service.

Our "heart-to-heart" speaker on **Wednesday, February 29**, will be **John Wieder**. Please see page 3 for a brief profile.

### Upcoming Sunday Sermons

#### NEW SERVICE TIMES!

TRADITIONAL SERVICES: 8:45 & 10:30 AM  
WIND CONTEMPORARY SERVICE: 10:30 AM

#### FAMILY 2.0 — Ephesians Sermon Series

God is restoring His family through the glorious work of His Son. As His children, we are to be good stewards and use His gifts to bring about unity in the family. We are to walk like Jesus and show off our Father in everything we do.

**FEBRUARY 5**

*More*

Message by Todd Willard • Text: Ephesians 3:20-21

**FEBRUARY 12**

*Walk Worthy*

Message by Deryk Richenburg • Text: Ephesians 4:1

**FEBRUARY 19**

*Walking in Unity*

Message by Deryk Richenburg • Text: Ephesians 4:1-6

\* \* \*

#### ABIDING IN CHRIST — Lenten Sermon Series



**FEBRUARY 26 — First Sunday in Lent**

*Abide in Me*

Message by Deryk Richenburg • Text: John 15:1-11

#### LATELY, I HAVE

been thinking about a story in John's Gospel about Jesus and some disciples (John 1:35-39).

We are told that John the Baptist is with a number of his followers. They were spending some time together, when Jesus walked by.

John the Baptist pointed Him out to his followers and basically said, "This is the Man I told you about. He is the One I baptized. He is the Lamb of God who is going to take away all of our sins and the sins of others as well."

When the followers heard this, they went after Jesus and somehow got His attention. Jesus turned to them and asked a simple question: "What do you want?" I don't think Jesus was acting as if He was being bothered; rather, I think He was excited about hearing their response.

The followers replied with a simple question of their own, which provided insight into what they wanted: "Where are You staying?"

As you think about the story and Jesus' question, how would you answer Jesus? What do you really want from Him? As Jesus invites you to walk with Him, what is it that you want that He can give?

The followers of Jesus wanted to stay with Him and become His disciples. They didn't want an answer to a theological question—they wanted a relationship. They wanted to spend time with Him and get to know Him better. *They wanted Jesus.*

Is that what you want? Do you want more of Jesus? Do you want to "stay with Him"? Do you want to ask Jesus to reveal to you more of His love?

He can do far more than you or I can imagine. Walk the road with Him and abide with Him. He wants you to join Him.

—Pastor Deryk



# Women's Retreat with Linda Strickland

APRIL 27-29 — 'UNVEILED'

We are thrilled to announce that our 2012 Women's Retreat will feature an exciting theme presented by dynamic conference speaker **Linda Strickland**, the Director of Ministry for Christian Healing Ministries (CHM) in Jacksonville, Florida.

Linda's theme, *Unveiled*, will help each of us to personally recognize the obstacles that keep us from living our best life—the life Jesus wants for all of us. Her four talks are entitled *Veil of Lies*, *Veil of Fear*, *Veil of Shame*, and *Lifting the Veil*.

"And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into His likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit" (1 Corinthians 3:18).



Linda teaches at CHM's Schools of Healing Prayer and travels widely as a conference speaker. She is also a published writer and a regular contributor to CHM's *Healing Line Magazine*. She and her husband, Gene, recently started a new Anglican Church plant, The Connecting Point Jax, on the north side of Jacksonville. They have one son, Shon.

For those of you who have attended previous Women's Retreats, you know that a weekend of meaningful Christian fellowship, love, friendship, prayer, and learning awaits you. We hope to welcome many familiar and new faces.

Watch for additional details on this extraordinary retreat opportunity. Meanwhile, save the weekend of **Friday, April 27, through Sunday, April 29**, and prepare to be richly blessed!



## BOARD OF DEACONS, 2011-2012

Pictured at left are (back row) **Daryl Ostergren**, **Barbara Plante**, **David McNamara**, **Steve Soderberg**, **Brian Mace**, **Tom Izard**, (upper middle) **Nev Soderberg**, **Holly Clark**, **Kathy Cooper**, **John Oman** (lower middle) **Janise Foley**, **Tina Balmer**, chairperson **Nan Green**, assistant chair **Joseph Clark**, **Christopher Dukes**, (front) **Paul Breglio**, **Helen Davis**, **Janet Green**, and **Stephanie Pawlowicz**. Not shown is assistant chair **Debbie Chilberg**.

## CHURCH BOARD, 2011-2012

In the bottom photo are (standing) **Steve Peery**, Education; **Chris Jagel**, Finance and Property; **John Preysner**, Junior Member-at-Large; **Walter Kelly**, Member-at-Large; **Sam Rodriguez**, Research and Long-Range Planning; **Joyce Senn**, Communications; **Jon Vining**, Personnel; **Dave Delisle**, Clerk; (seated) Senior Minister **Deryk Richenburg**; **Suzanne Edgardo**, Inreach; **Nan Green**, Board of Deacons; **Judy Franzen**, President; **Catherine Preysner**, Junior Member-at-Large; and **Heather Dunn**, Member-at-Large. Not shown is **Dana Crompton**, Outreach.



## John Wieder to Speak at Lenten Service



Our **Midweek Lenten Service** on **Wednesday, February 29**, will include a brief “heart-to-heart” talk by valued First Church member **John Wieder**. The service begins at 6:30 and ends at 7:10 p.m.

John began attending First Church in 1959 and has been active in many ways, in recent years as a member of our Stewardship Committee and, currently, as leader of the Caring Ministries 80-plus Birthday Team. He is a much-loved visitor to many who are facing challenges and are unable to attend church. *Please see the front page for more about our Midweek Service.*

## Got Talent? Or Something to Auction?

Our annual **Missions Talent Show & Silent Auction** will be held on **Saturday, March 24** (auction starts at 5:00, show at 7:00, pizza available in between). All proceeds will support this summer’s Dominican Republic mission trip.

**You have time** to get your “act” together and/or plan items to donate for the auction! We need new and like-new items, gift cards from local businesses, golf clubs, crafts, furniture, “homemade dinner” or babysitting coupons, yard services, baskets, jewelry, art, weekends at the vacation cottage, golf outings, etc. Be creative! Would you like to perform in the Talent Show? Sign up on the Wells Area poster or contact **Penny Crompton** at 860-635-1530 or [dcrompton@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dcrompton@sbcglobal.net). Mark your calendar, and watch for more details on the event itself!

## Preview of Missions Weekend

The **Outreach Committee** will host this year’s **Missions Weekend** on **Saturday and Sunday, March 10 and 11**. *Please watch for full details in the next Spire and elsewhere.* Activities will include:

- Free **Saturday evening dinner**, 6:00 p.m., Keith Jones Hall, with presentations by **Dennis Ryan** (Campus Crusade for Christ in Florida, and its *Jesus Film* project), **the Wegeners** (see below), **Anneli Johnson** (YWAM New Zealand trip), and more, along with reports on planned trips, including the Dominican Republic and Peru.
- The **message** at all services that **Sunday**, entitled “The Real Race,” given by **David Wegener** (Mission to the World, Zambia).
- **Luncheon at noon** on Sunday, in the Fireside Room, with **Dennis Ryan** and **David and Terri Wegener**.
- Displays all weekend, highlighting various ministries, organizations and opportunities.

## Souper Bowl Sunday Is Here!

Before each worship service on **Sunday, February 5**, our Confirmation Class students will collect nonperishable food items for the Wethersfield Food Bank. Every year we participate in this important nationwide event.

**Please help us** as we seek to care for our community in this way. Monetary contributions will also be accepted and will be donated to the Town of Wethersfield Social Services.



## Nursery School Registration Takes Off!

First Church Nursery School registration for the 2012-2013 school year is proceeding **at a record pace—act quickly** for most choice of classes. Next year all classes will be **a full three hours long** for each session. For a school tour, call **Pat Gilbert** at 860.529.1575. Registration forms and more are available at [firstchurch.org/nurseryschool](http://firstchurch.org/nurseryschool).

## ‘Sanctuary’ Retreat to be Led by McDowells

While not a First Church event, a special retreat for adults will be led by **Pastor Mike and Cindy McDowell**, at Singing Hills in New Hampshire, from **Friday, March 30**, through **Palm Sunday, April 1**. All are welcome. Visit [www.singinghills.net/sanctuaryretreat.html](http://www.singinghills.net/sanctuaryretreat.html).

## IRON SHARPENS IRON

The annual **Iron Sharpens Iron** men’s conference for our region will take place on **Saturday, March 17**, at First Cathedral in Bloomfield.

Join 3,000 men for a wonderful day of praise and worship, two national speakers, 16 workshops, and many exhibits. The First Church rate until the end of February is \$44 per man and \$29 per youth.

Keynote speakers are **Bryan Carter**, senior pastor of the 6,000-member Concord Church in Dallas, and **Dennis Rainey**, president and cofounder of FamilyLife. Seminars will include **Living Life Out of the Rut** by **Rex Tignor**, founder of Man UP Ministries, and **Thinking Today About the Rest of Your Life** by **Tom Joyce**, retired fighter pilot and survivor of the 9/11 Pentagon attack. Visit <http://bit.ly/zAzsX4>.

More details will follow. If you have any questions, call **Bob Papertsian** at 860.257.7566.

## Class Updates

### New Topic for the Voths’ Class

Join **Greg and Ellen Gilson Voth** as they host a class discussing Christian stewardship of creation and our response to the environmental crisis. The text being used is **Our Father’s World** by Ed Brown, Executive Director of Care of Creation, an environmental missions organization. Go to [firstchurch.org/allclasses](http://firstchurch.org/allclasses) for relevant links.

This class meets in the Morgan House Chestnut Room on **Sundays** at 8:45 a.m. For more information, call Greg or Ellen at 860.563.7340.

### Class for Seniors: *The Prodigal God: Recovering the Heart of the Christian Faith*

Come and discover, during Lent, the amazing depths of God’s extravagant love! This new Bible study **for our senior members/attenders** and all other interested adults, led by **Pastor Mike**, will meet in the Morgan House Drawing Room on **Tuesdays**, 10:00 to 11:30 a.m., from **February 14 through March 27**.

Written by Tim Keller of Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New York City, the class will include time for group discussion, developing new friendships, and prayer. Cost is \$20 for the hardcover book and a discussion guide. To register, call **Arlene** at 860.529.1575, x211.

### Beta Is Offered, Led by Terry Shook

Studying the Bible can seem overwhelming, especially if you don’t have any experience.

On **Thursday, Feb. 2**, facilitator **Terry Shook** (shown at right) will kick off a six-week study of the Bible, based on a book written by Nicky Gumbel, the beloved pioneer of the Alpha course. Subtitled **Learning to Apply God’s Word to Your Life**, this class will meet in the Morgan House Birch Room **every Thursday through March 8**, from 6:30 to 7:45 p.m.

This is an opportunity for those who have very little or no experience with the Bible to gain some tools in studying God’s living Word with confidence and to discover its relevance and power for today. For details, or to sign up, call **Marilyn** at 860.529.1575, x213.



## BOOK OF LIFE

### ENTERED ETERNAL LIFE

Marion L. Harward, January 7, 2012  
Ronald R. Roth, January 13, 2012  
Ann (Flynn) Bailey, January 20, 2012

*Our Church unites in an expression of heartfelt sympathy to their families.*

### DEDICATED

Sadie Brooke Lathrop, daughter of David and Kristen (Stevens) Lathrop, January 8, 2012

### UNITED IN MARRIAGE

Christian Seth Horn and Lisa Mariah Papertian, January 7, 2012  
Jeremy Michael McLaughlin and Meghan Louise Spicer, January 7, 2012

## First Church

FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST IN WETHERSFIELD

CONGREGATIONAL

860.529.1575 • Fax: 860.721.7861  
250 Main Street, Wethersfield, CT 06109  
Website: [www.firstchurch.org](http://www.firstchurch.org)  
Email: [info@firstchurch.org](mailto:info@firstchurch.org)

### Sunday Worship

Traditional Services in the Meetinghouse:  
8:45 and 10:30 a.m.

Wind Contemporary Service  
in Keith Jones Hall: 10:30 a.m.

### First Church on Facebook

[www.facebook.com/FirstChurchPage](http://www.facebook.com/FirstChurchPage)

### Dial-A-Message: 860.529.1785

Uplifting Messages  
Provided by Caring Ministries

### What will you leave behind?

Please remember First Church in your will.

**e-GIVING** reduces paperwork and helps keep track of your yearly pledge. For info about contributing electronically via a monthly automatic withdrawal from your bank account, call the Finance Office, 860.529.1575, x218.

Ateesa M. Afshar ..... Associate Minister  
Wayne E. Luman ..... Director of Caring Ministries  
Marcia J. McCann ..... Dir. of Children's Ministries  
T. Michael McDowell ..... Associate Minister  
Donald W. Morgan ..... Minister Emeritus  
Deryk P. Richenburg ..... Senior Minister  
David C. Spicer ..... Minister of Music & the Arts  
Todd E. Willard ..... Associate Minister

### OUR MISSION

*We are a community of Jesus followers who love God, love one another, and make disciples.*

### SPIRE DEADLINE

Material for the March issue of *The Spire*, which will be mailed/emailed on Feb. 22, must be submitted to Dave Gilbert by noon on Friday, Feb. 10, at [daveg@firstchurch.org](mailto:daveg@firstchurch.org) or 860.529.1575, x225.

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# Concert of Spirituals

## Sunday, February 26 • 4:00 PM

**COME AND EXPERIENCE** the excitement and electricity of our Concert of Spirituals! The dynamic **Legacy of Spirituals Choir** of Hartford and the choirs of First Church of Christ, along with African drummers, will present a variety of familiar and new spirituals at 4:00 p.m. on **Sunday, February 26**.

The Legacy of Spirituals Choir, one of Connecticut's leading choral ensembles, is affiliated with Hartford's Metropolitan A.M.E. Zion Church and is directed by **G. Ingrid Faniel**.

The combined choirs will be conducted by Mrs. Faniel and our Minister of Music and the Arts, **David Spicer**. A majority of selections will be sung by the Legacy of Spirituals Choir. One of the selections sung by the

choirs together will be ***O Sifuni Mungu*** (*All Creatures of Our God and King*), one of Pastor Deryk's favorites. This concert is sure to fill the Meetinghouse with high energy and lifted spirits. Bring a friend or neighbor, and share the joy!

A free-will offering will be received. Following the concert, attendees will be treated to a delightful reception. Childcare is available for those age 8 and under. You are encouraged to bring one or more nonperishable food items for the Wethersfield Food Bank, as we continue to serve those in great need.

For more information, contact the Ministry of Music at 860.529.1575, x209, or [music@firstchurch.org](mailto:music@firstchurch.org).



G. Ingrid Faniel directs the Legacy of Spirituals Choir in last year's Concert of Spirituals.