



The Messenger

Volume 56 No. 7

First Congregational Church

Fairhaven, Massachusetts

September 2007

The First Congregational Church

34 Center Street
Fairhaven, MA
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Pastor

Rev. Bette McClure
508-990-7513
bettemc2@juno.com

Administrator

Sharon M. Dorian

Office Hours

Mon thru Fri
9:00am - 12:30pm

**UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**



**God is Still
Speaking,**



**Rally Day
September 9th
10:00 a.m.**

**Come Join Us!!
Invite a Friend!!**

Blessing of the Animals to be held Oct 7th

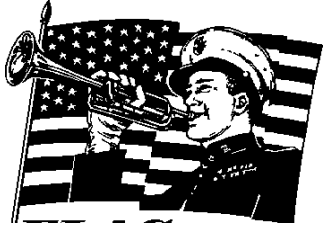
"Blessed are you, Lord God, maker of all living creatures. You called forth fish in the sea, birds in the air and animals on the land. You inspired St. Francis to call all of them his brothers and sisters. We ask you to bless this pet. By the power of your love, enable it to live according to your plan. May we always praise you for all your beauty in creation. Blessed are you, Lord our God, in all your creatures! Amen." (Franciscan prayer)



Over the years I have received numerous requests from children asking to bring their favorite pet to church. The children innately seem to understand that all living creatures are part of God's creation and they want them to be included in the prayers and blessings we offer for each other.

Many churches throughout the country offer such blessings in October near the time of the feast day of Saint Francis. In the Roman Catholic tradition St. Francis, who lived in the 13th century, had a special affinity for all animals and thus became known as the patron saint of animals. Blessings of pets and other animals are often associated with his name.

While bringing our pets into the sanctuary might not be a popular idea with the Property Committee, and honoring the reality that many folks have allergies to various animals, this year we will have a special Blessing of the Animals on our lawn on **Sunday, October 7th at 2:00 p.m.** You are invited to bring your pet on a leash or in a cage/carrier. There will be a brief time of general prayer honoring God's creation and then each animal will be given a special individual blessing. Pets of all kinds – dogs, cats, birds, lizards, guinea pigs, rabbits, snakes – all are welcome. All pet owners are welcome also – children, youth, adults, seniors – whether from our church or not. Spread the word!



Our Men & Women in Service

Do you have a relative or friend who has been activated? Let us know. We are creating this list of service men and women so that we can stop each month to remember them and pray for their safe return.

L.Cpl. Tyler Tripp, USMC

Djibouti, Somalia

Grandson of Joe & Juliet Tripp

**Sgt. Jonathan M. Rice, ARMY,
Fort Drum**

**P.O. Christopher H. Rice, NAVY,
Brunswick NAS**

Betty Monk's Grandsons

Capt. Barbara Webster, AN Iraq
friend of Pam Kuechler

Lt. Marc Lavoie, RCC 94th Iraq
son of friends of Ann & Jim Cochran



-Rev. Bette McClure-

Dear Friends,

As some of you already are aware, part of the agreement made between the church and me when I was called to be your pastor is that I would have the opportunity to take a sabbatical leave sometime between 5 and 7 years into my pastorate. (The 5-7 year guideline is one suggested by the UCC and most mainline denominations.) On July 1 of this year I began my 7th year in Fairhaven and the Church Council, Board of Deacons and I have begun making plans for the upcoming sabbatical.

You may have some questions about sabbaticals and how they work. I have tried to answer some of those questions below:

What is a sabbatical?

A sabbatical is a time to focus in-depth on things that are important to a person's work and life with the church. Sabbaticals for pastors are highly recommended in order to renew the calling and creativity of our spiritual leaders. Such sabbaticals should include intentional times for reflection, rekindling the spirit, and deepening spiritual life and family relationships. *(From Reformed Church of America website)*

A sabbatical also gives the congregation a chance to renew itself and look at how its lay leadership can stretch and learn new ways of being. When pastors return from sabbatical there is often new energy and excitement through out the church.

When will the sabbatical take place?

Traditionally, sabbaticals are for a three month period during which the minister is freed from all pastoral responsibilities. While there are good reasons for taking the time all at once, I am proposing a different plan that I think will work well for both the church and for me. I plan to take my sabbatical in one month periods as follows: 11/5/07-12/4/07; 3/24/08-4/23/08; and a month sometime in June/July 2008 (possibly combined with some vacation time.)

What will the pastor be doing?

Some of the specifics of my sabbatical are still in the planning stages. During the first month I plan to begin with a short retreat and then take some time to just "be" and to allow my body, mind and spirit a period of rejuvenation. In April, I plan to go on a "post-Easter" retreat and then to do some traveling. The third month will be one of concentrated study and

(continued on page 6)

***"Our mission* is to provide opportunities to experience God's presence and in humble and caring ways to use all of our resources to welcome, love, challenge, and equip each other for Christ's ministry in our community and the world."**

Planning for Church Fair Underway



The First Congregational Church Fair will be held in coordination with the Town's Old Time Holiday on **December 8th**.

To date we have the following tables in place. All of these folks will be looking for helpers before and during the fair.

Home Cooking

Cheese

Jewelry

Children's Beads

Cookie Walk

Bake Table

Note Paper & Photographs

Luncheon

Christmas Ornaments

Dot Bungert

Bill & Ginny Vining

Donna Perry

Donna Perry

Mabel Filipek & Betty Monk

Ellen Rogers & Alice Cooney

David & Lee Ann Wood

Steven Dorian

Rev. Bette McClure

- We still need someone to chair the chance auction. Expert advice is available from 30 year veteran, Dot Bungert.
- Donna Perry is looking for costume jewelry to sell and beads for children to make beaded bracelets with.
- A men's table is looking for donations of hand crafted wooden items to sell.
- Two raffles will be held with tickets going on sale in October. The first is for a framed print of an Arthur Moniz watercolor of the Pergrin Falcon on our church tower from an original photograph taken by Carolyn Longworth. The second is a get-a-way weekend donated by Briar Rose Bed & Breakfast in their luxury historic 1891 Queen Anne Victorian home overlooking the New Bedford Harbor.
- Crafters will be allowed to rent space for the day for \$45.

If you are able to help in any way or have any other ideas, please contact: Beverly & Ron Johansen 508-992-7303 Peg & John Rogers 508-994-3607 or Ann & Jim Cochran 508-990-2642.



Family Communion to Continue

In the past several years we have begun a practice of having the Sunday School children join the rest of the congregation for Communion on the first Sunday of the month. We have also offered a Communion Education program for children in 2nd grade and their parents each fall. It has been our intent to assure that ALL of God's people are welcome at the Lord's table each time we celebrate Holy Communion.

This year, the children will still join us each month for Communion. However, on World Communion Sunday (**October 7**) the service will focus on the sacrament of Communion – educating all of us about this practice and helping us to truly celebrate the joy and mystery of the sacrament. Children will be integrally involved in the Communion portion of the service and I believe all of us will come to more truly appreciate the richness and blessing of this sacrament.

Construction Notebook



During the month of August, the actual work of installing the elevator has been taking place. This has involved the coordination of the elevator builders, electricians, carpenters and roofers. Work continues on planning the painting, flooring, and other decor needed upon completion of this project to once again make our facility a welcoming space for all. Thank you to Norm & Sue Burr, Peg & John Rogers and Ann Cochran for all their efforts on getting the finishing touches underway.

Pulpit Flowers



On August 26th -
- In loving
memory of **James
Henry Fitts III**
by his family.



Women's Fellowship

The Women's Fellowship will hold its opening dinner meeting on **Wednesday, September 12th at 6:30 p.m.** Baked chicken with all the trimmings will be offered for \$6.00/person. For reservations call Carol Gage by Sept. 10. (508-994-7901)

A general meeting will be held with fun and games to follow. Don't forget annual dues of \$5.00 are due. All are welcome!



The Matthew Richard Summer Study Scholarship Fund

In recognition of Matt's service to the music ministry of the First Congregational Church the Board of Deacon's has created a summer study music scholarship to be awarded to youth of our church next summer. It can be used in the instrumental, vocal or drama/ vocal area for lessons, workshops, or camperships. If you would like to contribute to this fund forward your donation the Matthew Richard Scholarship Fund, c/o First Congregational Church. To date \$230 has been donated.

Mattapoissett Church Offers Adult Bible Study Saving Jesus: A New Way to Understand Jesus Christ

Ever feel like Jesus has been kidnapped by the Christian Right? *Saving Jesus* is a revolutionary DVD-based, small group exploration of Jesus Christ for the third millennium. Featuring leading religious voices of our day, the 12-week program includes a CD with facilitator and participant guides with readings, quotes and discussion questions. The format for each 1 – 1 ½ hour session includes conversation around the readings, a 20-minute video segment and guided discussion. Join Marcus Borg, John Dominic Crossan, Matthew Fox, Amy-Jill Levine, James Forbes and a host of others for an exploration of the relevance of Jesus Christ for the third millennium.

Saving Jesus starts on **Monday, September 10 at 7:00 p.m.** at the Mattapoissett Congregational Church UCC. For more information or to register, phone 508-758-2671 or email mattcong@galaxy.net

To every member of the First Congregational Church of Fairhaven,

I have enjoyed spending time at the church and creating music over the last fifteen years and I wish to thank you all for allowing me to be a part of the church. I have also appreciated everyone's kindness as I finished up this summer. I know that the music program will continue to be an important part of this church as it has been for over two hundred years.

My new surroundings on Sunday mornings are not entirely new. On August 18 and 19th, I began playing keyboard and organ for all four masses at St. John The Baptist Church in Westport where I have played on Saturdays for over ten years. I will be working with their choir director and lead cantor, Scott Simpkin who many of you know.

I send my best wishes to all of you. I'm sure I will see you around town or one of the many concerts or events scheduled at the Church.

Sincerely,

Matt Richard

Fairhaven Community Concert Series

Support the Fairhaven Community Concert Series by becoming a series sponsor. Your sponsorship will appear in the program booklet.

Categories are:

Diamond \$500, Platinum \$250, Gold \$150, Silver \$100, Bronze \$75, Benefactor \$50, Patron \$25, Friend \$1-\$10

Sponsorship forms are available at the church.



Fairhaven Community Concert Series

<http://fhvnccs.googlepages.com/>

Scheduled Concerts for Our 5th Season! 2007-2008

October 28, 2007 **7:00 p.m.**
Atwater-Donnelly Trio
Meatpie Dinner 5:30 p.m.

December 2, 2007 **2:00 p.m.**
Aaoife Clancy
Folk & Irish vocalist

January 27, 2008 **7:00 p.m.**
Mack Williamson
Jazz percussionist
Mardi Gras Dinner 5:30 p.m.

April 13, 2008 **7:00 p.m.**
The Brentwood Brass
Dinner 5:30

Kids Supper Klub



Are your children too young for our Middle School and High School youth groups? Would they enjoy a chance to gather with other kids at church to share a meal, have some fun and grow in faith? If so, we have a special activity designed just for them!

Kid's Supper Klub is a once a month youth activity designed for 4th and 5th grad-

ers. We prepare a simple meal together, take part in a "burn off energy," full of fun activity, and have a time of simple worship to recognize that we are blessed as children of God. Each meeting will have a theme and will be packed with fun.

Rev. Bette will be leading this group but will need help each month from one parent.

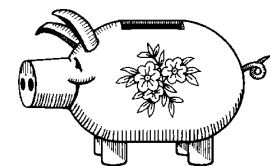
When: Sundays, 4-6 p.m.
Sept. 30, Oct. 21, Nov. 4, Dec. 9
(watch for dates in 2008 to be announced soon)

Who: Kids in grades 4-5 (friends are welcome even if they don't belong to this church!)

Questions: See Rev. Bette

Neighbors in Need Special Offering

Sunday, October 7th we celebrate communion with the world on this special day of unity. We also collect on that morning the special Neighbors in Need offering which helps us to reach out in partnership with people on the margin of society, providing a hand up, not a hand-out. Neighbors in Need supports the UCC's ministries of justice and compassion throughout the United States and Puerto Rico.



Fundraiser Updates

Goodsearch	\$40
Shaws Receipts	\$330.44
Coffee Can	\$1,700.00
Handyman	\$1,180.00
OTHER	??



HELP NEEDED! Sunday School Teachers

The success of our Sunday School program depends on the willingness of many folks to help teach. We urge everyone to step forward and take part in a rewarding ministry – helping our youngest members grow in faith.

We have purchased a new curriculum this year for grades K-5 entitled *Kid Connection*. Developed by *Faith Alive Christian Resources* in cooperation with the Children's Ministry Office of the Reformed Church of America, the curriculum is designed to provide a variety of teaching options for leaders and diverse learning activities for students. It is especially geared to smaller Sunday Schools.

The commitment is only 3-4 Sundays one time a year. During that time you will work with the same group of youth. Lesson plans are ready for you to review and are written in a user-friendly fashion. All supplies are provided. All you need to do is share your love and faith with our children.

If you are willing to teach, please return this slip to the church as soon as possible:

___ YES, I am willing to teach a Sunday School Unit this fall.

Below are the unit(s) I would be interested in/ available for teaching, in order of preference (*We are only looking to have you teach one unit, but would like to know your preferences and availability.*)

Name: _____

(Please indicate 1st, 2nd, and 3rd choice if possible.)

_____ Unit 1 – Lookin' Good
(Creation 9/16, 9/23, 9/30, 10/7)

_____ Unit 2 – God to World: I Still Love You
10/14, 10/21, 10/28, 11/4

_____ Unit 3 – A Schemer and a Dreamer
(Story of Joseph) 11/11, 11/18, 12/2

_____ Unit 4 – Whole group planning for Christmas
Sunday – 12/9, 12/16

(from page 2)

research on a specific area of pastoral work. I may look at ways of integrating folks from different (or no) faith traditions into the life of the church, or ways of reaching out to people with disabilities and fully embracing them in our congregation. I hope to attend workshops and/or conferences and do lots of reading.

What will this all cost?

During a sabbatical the pastor continues to receive a salary and all benefits. Each year we earmark \$1000 in our budget towards a sabbatical. That fund is designed to pay for interim pastoral coverage during the sabbatical. Because I plan to split my sabbatical into one month periods, there will not be a need for a regular part-time interim. I have colleagues who are willing to be available for emergencies. Our former student minister Greta MacRae has agreed to lead worship for the first month of the sabbatical (for which she will, of course, be paid) and is open to being available for some additional hours as the need arises. Therefore the additional cost should be well under \$3000. for the entire sabbatical. Currently we have \$9000 earmarked in the sabbatical fund.

I am very appreciative that this church is committed to the concept of sabbatical and I know that having the experience will help me to be a better, more centered and energized pastor. I am happy to talk with anyone who has additional questions.

Blessings,
Bette

Pot Luck Fellowship September 21, 2007

6:30 p.m.

Church Family Fun Night - A time for children, youth and adults to eat, talk and play together. Cost of admission is a dish to share.

The Cupboard Corner

The Pantry was used only **twice** in August, but we are still in need of your donations to restock it. At the moment the pantry is in need of canned meats, tuna, hearty soups/stews, paper products and beverages.



Drivers Needed



On occasion there are folks in our church family who need assistance with transportation. Sometimes it involves providing a ride each Sunday to church. At other times someone might need a ride to an appointment, or to the grocery store or pharmacy. We are looking for volunteers who are willing to be on a list of folks to call in such situations. Arrangements will be coordinated by the Board of Deacons and we hope to get enough people signed up so that no one person is always being called to help out. This is a simple way to be of service within our family of faith. If you are willing to help out, please leave your name at the church office.

Walk for a Cure

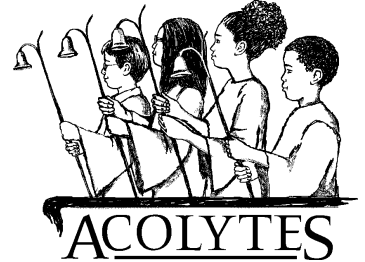
The Mass. Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association is conducting 2 walks in our area. Sept 16th at BCC in Fall River and Sept 23rd in Plimouth Plantation. Both walks begin at 9:00 a.m. Register at www.memorywalkma.org.

Write to Figri, our foster child at the following address:

Figri Abdyansayah
132/340204/00154
Proyek Panti Nugeraha 3795
P.O. Box 1364
Jakarta 10013 - Indonesia

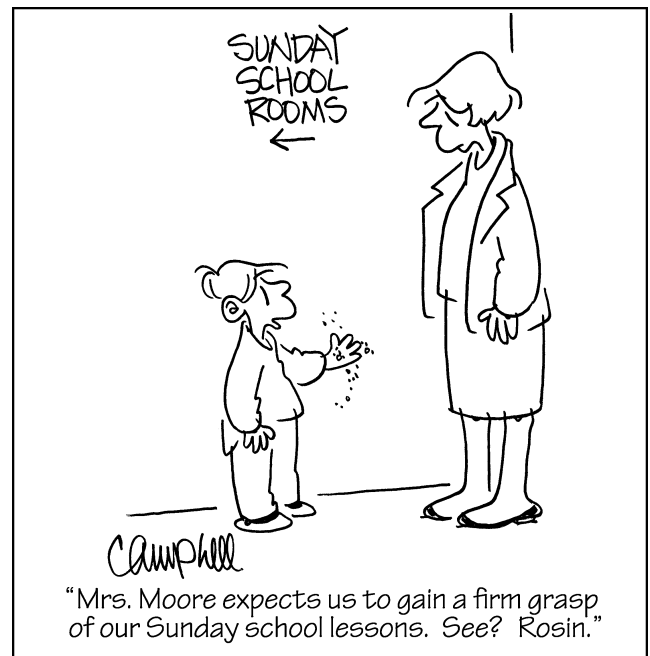
Acolyte Program

There are many important jobs that need doing to allow our worship service to flow smoothly. Some of these are done by the Deacons who get the sanctuary ready each Sunday morning. Additionally, greeters welcome worshippers, ushers take the offering, the choir and music director provide uplifting music, Deacons serve communion, and a member of the congregation serves as Lay Leader.



We would like to continue to include our children as active participants in the service each Sunday. Therefore, we are again recruiting children in 3rd grade and above to serve as acolytes. This involves lighting the candles in the sanctuary about 10 minutes before the beginning of the service, and then extinguishing them at the end of the service during the postlude.

If you are interested in having your child help lead worship as an acolyte, please call the church office and leave his/her name. On **Sunday, September 16th** we will offer a **brief training session** for the children **right after worship**. Once we know how many children are interested we will set up a rotating schedule for the upcoming months. If you have any questions, please speak with Rev. Bette.





Thanks & a Tip of the Hat to...

To Marc Champagne and Handy Andy's for his continued maintenance and free supplies for our fleet of vacuum cleaners. This summer he contributed over \$700 in repairs/maintenance.

To Ron Johansen & Al Jones for their handyman contributions and all their work at the parsonage.

To the Board of Deacons as they coordinate the search for a Music Director.

To Norm Burr for dealing with a yellow jacket infestation at the parsonage.

To John & Carol Gage, Al & Marge Jones, Bev & Ron Johansen, Jim & Ann Cochran for greeting and hosting coffee hour in August.

To Carol Gage, Al Jones, Bev Johansen & Milton George for providing worship leadership in August.

**Help us make
communications
faster/easier by
sending your your
e-mail address to
fccof@juno.com.**



Handyman Special

-Al Jones

Ron Johanson and I are still available as handymen for small jobs. Our terms are: "we work for donations to Church" 508-525-5842 or 508-992-7303. Jobs we have done so far include painting, light landscaping and general home maintenance. To date our efforts have added \$1,180 to the general fund.

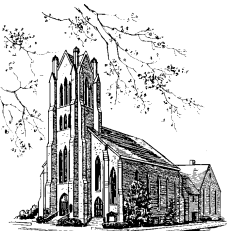
We would love to add people to our work crew at any time, please let me know if you are interested and available.



Next Messenger Deadline: September 21st

The Messenger

First Congregational Church
34 Center Street
Fairhaven MA 02719-2931



EST 1794

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