

# THE CORNERSTONE

*First Church is an Open and Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Christ*

## MARCH 2016 WORSHIP SCHEDULE

*Join Us!*

Worship Services: 8:30 am in the Chapel, 10 am in the Sanctuary

March 6th Fourth Sunday in Lent

*with Holy Communion*

Luke 15:103, 11b-32

*Sorry Seems To Be The Hardest Word*

Rev. George Harris

March 13th Fifth Sunday in Lent

John 12:1-11

*Why Bother?*

Rev. Kevin Weikel

*Baptisms of Samantha Noelle Bub (8:30), and Samuel Cullen Somerville/Cooper James Somerville (10)*

### — HOLY WEEK AND EASTER SERVICES —

March 20th Palm Sunday

Luke 19:28-40

*I Love a Parade!*

Rev. George Harris

*This service marks Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem and the start of Holy Week. Palm fronds will be distributed at our services for all those who wish to receive them.*

March 24th Maundy Thursday 7 pm

Service of Holy Communion (The Last Supper) and the Office of the Tenebrae

*This service recalls the commandment (mandate) of Jesus to love one another, as well as the words repeated by the disciples, read by members of our Board of Worship, near the end of Jesus' life. Includes the extinguishing of candles. All are welcome; bring a friend, young or old.*

March 27th Easter Sunday

6:15 am Sunrise Service in Simsbury Cemetery ~ Revs. George Harris and Woody Eddins

*with Holy Communion*

*An early service, jointly offered by First Church and Simsbury United Methodist Church, to celebrate Jesus' resurrection. We begin the service in the sanctuary of the SUMC then walk up the hill to the Cemetery. The service is timed so that the bright sun rises over Talcott Mountain, and the rays shed soft light on all participants amidst surrounding gravestones. All are welcome. Please park in the SUMC parking lot, or on Hopmeadow St. Afterwards, everyone is invited to return to First Church for a pancake breakfast.*

8:30 am Early Worship Easter Service

*This service combines traditional and contemporary elements.*

Rev. George Harris

10:30 am Easter Service

John 20:1-28

*Supposing Him To Be the Gardener*

Rev. George Harris

*Our Traditional festival service, celebrating Jesus' resurrection. It will include beautiful music and the sanctuary will be decorated with a variety of colorful Easter flowers, given in honor of loved ones.*



Rev. George Harris  
Senior Minister

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Out of Office  
Tuesdays

## Pastor Pondering

For those who dare to follow, I invite you into the stream of consciousness that became this Cornerstone reflection:

*Oh no, it's Thursday afternoon and my Cornerstone article is due. What in the world am I going to write about? Think, George, think! What am I hearing from people in the church that suggests a topic? Members are still asking, "What are we going to do?" I wrote about that in the January Cornerstone but there is more to say. I know! I'll write about a vision and mission for First Church. That's it! ... write-write-write-write-write-write... (three hours and 600 words later) OK, let's see what I've got ...blah-blah-blah-blah-blah... Help me Jesus! This is complete garbage! <select all> <delete> Start over. Time's up, what am I going to do? I need a theme. (while driving home) think, think, think. It's still Lent. (while eating dinner) think, think, think. Easter is coming. (while watching Bruins game) think, think, think. I know, I'll Google "Lent and Easter." Ugh! Just more blah-blah-blah. Really?! My eyes are getting heavy, must sleep. I'll have to revisit this in the morning. Lourdes is waking me up, "Come on, we need to pack, we need to be on the road by 8:00." Panic sets in; we're driving to Baltimore for my Uncle Sunny's funeral. The Cornerstone article is late! If only I had a poignant Lent and Easter story to share. Uncle Sunny, why did you have to die; this isn't a good time. I'll have to write my article in the car. At least I get to see my mom. When I saw her at Christmas she was really beat down by her radiation and chemo treatment, weak and wobbly. Can't believe the MRI doesn't show any cancer now. We all thought this was the end, but mom sounds strong and happy. Lent and Easter. Lent and Easter. Come on George, think!*

*Oh... Duh!*

In response to my frantic plea, the chaotic jumble of my mind cleared to reveal the presence of death and new life.

Less than twenty-four hours after hearing about her brother Sunny's death, my mother received the news that the cancer that had filled the cavity behind her eye, wrapped itself around her optic nerve, and was intruding into her skull, was now undetectable. Both grief and hope are woven into the fabric of creation. This is the message of Lent and Easter. God acts in the world through death and new life, but we often have a hard time recognizing this because death can be so darn scary and sad, and hope can seem irrational. So we compartmentalize (newsletter article), distract ourselves (Bruins game), and refuse to think about death or recognize new life even when it is right in front of us (Sunny and Mom).

**These themes don't just manifest themselves in our family. The Black Lives Matter movement, birthed in response to the violent deaths of young black men, calls forth new life, testifies to hope in the very presence of fear and despair.**

Some might say, "Pastor George why did you have to go there? I was touched by the story of your uncle and your mom; did you have to mention Black Lives Matter?" But you see, that's my point. Lent requires us to confront the places death intrudes unwanted, sometimes violently, into our lives. And Easter demands that we proclaim hope in the very face of death, even and especially when this makes us uncomfortable.

And herein, after all, is the makings of a vision and mission for our good church.

In Christ,

*Pastor George*

## A Message from Rev. Kevin Weikel

*On January 14th, 2016, 110-year-old Bernice Martin passed away peacefully at McLean Home. Pastor George and I were honored to preside at her service on February 6th. While Pastor George offered the Pastoral Words, living up the goodness of Bernice's life and reminding us of the hope of our faith, I offered a reflection, sharing the wonderful experiences of taking groups of youth to visit with her over the years. Bernice made a huge impression on our youth, and she leaves a profound legacy at First Church. Therefore, I have decided to share with you in this space the words I offered at her service.*

As Associate for Youth and Young Adults, I have had the pleasure of taking many youth groups from our church to visit with, and Christmas Carol to, Bernice over the years. It is true that our young people were in awe of her age, as I think all of us were, but there was **also much more to Bernice than being in her 100's.**

Bernice had a love for young people, and it came out of her very being. She always greeted **our groups with a smile, a laugh, and something witty.** "Wow, look at all of you, I don't think anyone is left in Simsbury, I think you're all right here," she'd say, making us feel good about ourselves. When we mentioned we were from First Church, her smile grew even wider. Her love for this church was deep-rooted.

For many years, our high school youth group had an annual tradition of spending an evening with Bernice. During those visits, she shared with us how proud she was to have ridden a horse and buggy, and also to have flown in an airplane. She explained what this town was like before there was a stop light, or even a paved road, to which our teens would respond with a collective, "No way!"

Her most inspiring story, however, a story that is important for every member of this church no matter our age, is the story she would tell about her and her late husband, Garland Martin.

According to Bernice, in 1947, when Garland was serving as summer organist, he heard a beautiful male singing voice from within the congregation. The voice stood out to Garland so much so that he invited this person to sing in the choir. Now, during those years, young black men from Morehouse College in Georgia traveled to, of all places, Simsbury, CT, to work in the tobacco fields, and the person Garland had invited to sing in the choir was one of those young black men. While many in the congregation took no issue with Garland's invitation, Bernice told us that not everyone was of the same mind. There were a few folks who shared their disapproval with Garland, some even through written letters.

**It was at this point in Bernice's telling of the story when her face would become strong and stern, and she would say, "Garland simply told those people, 'I am not interested in the color of his skin, only in the sound of his voice.'" And she would continue on, telling us how nobody was going to get in the way of what was right. She also shared with us how, on occasion, they would have this young man to their home for a meal after church.**

As we well know, the young man to whom Bernice was referring was Martin Luther King, Jr.

Now, I am aware that Bernice would not want us to assume too much about her or her husband's influence on King's life. It seems she might think that to be a bit presumptuous. And it is true; Garland and Bernice are not singled out or mentioned by name in any of King's writings. But King did write how free he felt in Connecticut during those summers, and how hard it was to return to the segregated south each fall. If his time in Connecticut didn't give him his dream, it might have given him hope that his dream was possible.

As I would watch Bernice welcome and accept our youth groups with love and joy, it was never a stretch for me to envision her welcoming and accepting King in the same way. And while it would be impossible for us to calculate the precise degree of influence that Garland and Bernice had on King's life, we do know this: Through this story of hospitality and acceptance, Garland and Bernice influenced our church greatly. Garland and Bernice set for us an example of what it means to see all people as children of God, and to stand up for that understanding even when challenged.

**Just before Christmas this past year, a group of youth from our church stopped by Bernice's room to sing her a Christmas Carol, as our groups had done so many times before. This time, as this group of young people squeezed tightly into her room, she was sleeping. Regardless, they decided to go ahead and softly sing, "Silent Night." I could see on the faces of our young people the following questions: "Does she hear us?" "Does she know we are here?" As it turns out, she must have felt our presence. At the conclusion of the song, she opened her eyes; she lifted her head, and she smiled. And in that moment, she showed our youth what it means to be nearing life's end with grace.**

Bernice never stopped being an inspiration, even to her final days. She lived each day as a gift, and we are extremely blessed that her courage, strength, conviction, and joy will remain a part of this church forever. Amen. 3



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## Musical Notes



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### Holy Week.....Lion >>>> Lamb....?

This year Holy Week falls in the Month of March – how appropriate that “they” say that **this month comes in like a lion and goes out like a lamb.** It seems that there could be a certain amount of religious significance there, when you think about it.

Along with the preparation for Holy Week which is on the minds of **every member of all our choirs, Women’s Praise is preparing for and singing a** concert at First Church in Plainville on the 13<sup>th</sup>. We feel blessed that we have been invited there, and are doing our best to make ready an entertaining program. Whether any choir or musician is contributing music for Sunday worship or as an outreach somewhere else, we want to give it nothing less than our best effort.

We had an outstanding concert at the beginning of February with the DeChamplains in Palmer Hall – the music was, with no exaggeration, top notch, and those who attended will not forget the experience soon. We now have an upcoming concert on the first Friday in May to prepare for. Expert guitarist Sam Petitti – brother of Uncommon Band member Annie Petitti and son of Rev. Erica Nierendorf, will be playing with the inimitable Bridgit Davis and her band *The Viking Kings* for another Palmer Hall coffee-house concert. This Brooklyn, NY-based band plays contemporary, and very approachable, folk/jazz lyric rock. They were here for a very successful concert two years ago, and there have been requests to have them back. Tickets will be available by Easter.

Enough of this lion talk—**now let’s get to the lamb part. This is what it’s** all about ...

This season is the perfect opportunity to be a part of the music here. Holy Week – the jubilation of Palm Sunday, the grief and sorrow of Maundy Thursday and Good Friday, culminating with the elation that Easter Sunday brings – is incredibly rich in music, and to join us at this time would be an amazingly fulfilling way to experience this definitive time in our church. Even if you just come for the season, we will guarantee that you will come away all the richer for it. See our rehearsal schedules in the calendar.

Wishing you a meaningful Lent and a joyous Easter –

*Mark*

## K.I.D.S. @ First

### Kids Investigating Divine Stories at First Church

Visit [www.firstchurchsimsbury.com](http://www.firstchurchsimsbury.com) to see the church school schedule, videos, and information about what the kids are doing at First Church. Weekly church school emails are sent to parents on Fridays. If you are not receiving the emails contact [ccole@fccsimsbury.org](mailto:ccole@fccsimsbury.org).



### It Takes a Village to Raise a Child Potluck Dinner

**March 4, 2016 - 5:30-8:30 pm in Palmer Hall**

**Register at [www.firstchurchsimsbury.com](http://www.firstchurchsimsbury.com) or on the 3rd floor bulletin board**

Dinner Discussion: Who was Jesus's village? Who is your village? What can the church community (village) do to help you raise your children?

Activities: Families will use their creativity to construct components of a village out of cardboard boxes. We will provide some cardboard, duct & masking tape, markers, and scissors.

Please bring additional cardboard for your creations.



### Upcoming Events for your Calendar

#### March 4: It takes a Village Potluck Dinner

March 20: Palm Sunday, Event in Palmer Hall during church school

March 27: Easter: students attend the worship service

### Summer Camps:

#### Silver Lake Conference Center:

Silver Lake is a UCC overnight camp for kids in the fourth through twelve grade.

•Registration is open now: go to [www.silverlake.org](http://www.silverlake.org). Click on "Silver Lake Registration."

•Additional information is on the 3rd floor bulletin board.

#### Vacation Bible School

First Church of Christ, in partnership with the Simsbury United Methodist Church, holds a vacation Bible school program each summer.

**Dates: June 20-24, Mon-Fri, 9-12**  
Registration will begin on March 13, 2016



## TAG SALE

To Benefit First Church Children's Ministry Programs

**Saturday, April 30, 9am-4pm**  
**early bird entrance fee 8:30-9am is \$10**

**Drop off of all tag sale goods will be from Noon—8pm Thursday (April 28) and 9am-3pm Friday (April 25)**

**Volunteer shopping and party: April 25, 5-7pm**

The annual church tag sale will once again be coming your way April 30, 2016. As spring arrives and we think about cleaning out our closets, garages, attics, and basements, we can also plan to select our "best" stuff for the tag sale. The tag sale proceeds help the church school run the babysitting events, workshops, mission projects, and purchase of supplies and equipment.

#### We do very well with:

Costume jewelry and accessories; furniture pieces; holiday decorations; china, cutlery, pottery and glassware; children's games, books and toys; small appliances that are clean and working; radios and cd players that work; garden and workshop tools, adult books published within the last five years and nice baskets.

#### There are, however, a few categories of items we do not need:

Computers/keyboards/monitors and computer tables, vhs players, air conditioners, televisions, clothes, broken items (all appliances must be in working condition for us to accept them), exercise equipment, old skis, drapery rods, old suitcases, bikes over 5 years old, light fixtures/fluorescent ceiling fixtures.

Please clean up furniture (especially children's) and make sure everything you bring in is ready for sale. Imagine us trying to clean and make presentable for sale thousands of items brought in by many people.

**If you are willing to work on the tag sale to benefit the children at First Church, call or email :**

Kim Tawney , 860-716-5237, [kimtawney@gmail.com](mailto:kimtawney@gmail.com)



### March/April Church School Mission Project:

The students are collecting school supplies for **Smith Elementary School in New Britain**. Towards the end of the year, the teachers run out of supplies for their classroom. The church school will be helping to provide needed supplies. Donations needed:

- stickers
- markers and crayons
- glue sticks and clear tape
- pencils
- White board markers
- Copy paper
- Incentive prizes
- Kleenex
- Hand sanitizer
- Math flash cards



## Youth and Young Adults

*Junior Fellowship* (JF) is our youth group for 7th and 8th graders. JF gathers approximately once every three weeks, from 2:10-4:30 pm during the school year. At JF, we eat together, play games together, and participate in engaging activities and faith-based discussions together.

Sunday, March 13th — 11:30 am-1 pm in the Youth Room

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The *Confirmation* year is a concentrated time for 8th graders to explore what it means to be Christian. Through large and small group gatherings, mission/service work, experiencing and reflecting on worship, going on retreat, participating in the events and activities of JF, and much more, our Confirmands build positive and grace-filled relationships with one another, and develop a deeper **understanding of God's love for all people, while exploring what it means to follow Jesus.**

Sunday, March 6th                      Session 11 in the Youth Room (5-7pm)  
**Bible Reading: "Miracles" - Lesson: "Christianity & Other Religions"**

Sunday, March 20th                      Session 12 in the Youth Room (5-7 pm)  
**Bible Readings "Death to Life" - Lesson: "Life of the Church"**  
Confirmands at PF Youth Group in the Youth Room (7-9 pm)

Thursday, March 24th                      Large Group Meeting (Holy Week & Easter) in the Youth Room from 7-7:30 pm for students, followed by the Maundy Thursday Service in the Sanctuary from 7:30-8:30 pm for students and parents.

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*Pilgrim Fellowship* (PF) is for all 9th through 12th graders no matter their religious background, or ideas about God. Everyone is welcome. PF is a place to play, discuss, worship, grow, serve, and love. PF is a place for teenagers to journey together in faith. PF meets for fellowship, retreats, mission opportunities, and more.

Sunday, March 6th                      Hands on Hartford Feet on the Street! (6:15-9:30 pm)  
The folks from Hands on Hartford will lead us on a tour of the homeless shelters in Hartford.

Sunday, March 13th                      Soup Kitchen! (5-8:30 pm) Food prep and card making, followed by serving at Immaculate Conception Shelter in Hartford

Sunday, March 20th                      Regular Gathering in the Youth Room (7-9 pm) Gabby DiCarlo, Evan Gross, Grantland Rogers and Kate Ziko will lead an evening on stereotypes, assumptions, and grace.

Sunday, March 27th                      Annual Easter Pancake Breakfast (PF is hosting!) (5-11 am)  
Sign up for a shift by contacting Andrew Hart at Ahart1023@icloud.com.

## An Experience Like No Other!

June 25-July 3, 2016 Youth and Young Adults Pilgrimage

This summer, come with us to UrbanSpirit in Louisville, Kentucky, where we will discover our character, gain understanding, and return with bigger hearts.



What is UrbanSpirit? UrbanSpirit is not a traditional mission trip, but a poverty immersion experience based in Louisville, Kentucky, created to help us look at our world in a new way, beyond the stereotypes and myths about poverty, wealth and privilege. On some mission trips, the focus is on serving those experiencing poverty by replacing a roof or serving at a soup kitchen. Through UrbanSpirit, we will learn what it is like to walk in their shoes.

What will it be like? **When we arrive, we will form small groups (or “Families”). In these simulated families, we will work in the local community and at UrbanSpirit. While we work, we will earn UrbanSpirit’s own currency to spend on what our family needs. We will be challenged with the weight of hard choices, and inadequate resources, which those experiencing poverty felt each day. In the evenings, we will engage in a variety of learning activities and faith reflections.**

**Details, details, details ...** Housing and group activities will all be located within the same facility—an old church building. Our families will sleep in a variety of shelters within the building. While UrbanSpirit is a simulation, it is a well-protected experience: even if our family ends up living in the street, we get the comfort of knowing that the “street” is indoors. All work sites will be accessible by foot or by public transportation.

As we are led through this week of poverty, we will not have everything we want, only what we need. We will live without many of the comforts of home. Each family will have only one phone to share, we will eat less than what we’re likely accustomed to eating, and we will work hard in conditions we may not be able to control. All of these challenges will become important parts of the experience.

At UrbanSpirit, the project is YOU. We will gain tools and insights that will help us become creative leaders in a broken world. We will discover our character, build strong bonds with one another, gain understanding, grow in faith, and return with bigger hearts.

There and Back We will travel to and from Louisville, KY, via a chartered coach bus with Kelley Transit. On our way home, we will overnight on Josh’s Hill, in Bloomsburg, PA, where we will enjoy a picnic, play volleyball or Whiffle ball, participate in a closing worship service, and sit around a campfire deep into the night.

### Payment Options

Standard Rate: \$475 (includes transportation, lodging, all meals with the exception of five travel meals, all materials and supplies for work site).

Ministry Enabling Rate: \$475 + contribution = Consider giving extra to assist those who require a full or partial scholarship.

Subsidized Rate: If the cost of this trip would prevent you from participating, please check this box. We will be happy to contact you to discuss full or partial scholarships. We want to make sure everyone is able to participate!

Payment Schedule: \$150 non-refundable deposit due May 1. Balance due June 1.

## Our Memorial Garden

On our church property outside of the church parlor we have a lovely Memorial Garden. It is a special place designed for the peaceful and respectful interment of the cremated remains of our loved ones. Many of our church members and friends may not be aware of it. It was created in the mid-1990s and currently holds the cremains of 59 persons. All of their names are inscribed on brass plaques mounted on larger plaques secured to two rocks near the entrance to the garden. There is a quiet sitting area with a wall, brickwork and benches. Surrounding this are trees, bushes, flowers and a flowing fountain in warm weather. There is a walkway down to the lower parking lot outside of Palmer Hall.

Present and former members of First Church and their families, and friends of First Church may use it for the interment of ashes of their loved ones. Ashes are buried directly in the ground in a biodegradable container. Any further enhancements, such as plantings, may be used only with the discretion of the Memorial Garden Committee. Use of our garden **is solely by agreement between the deceased's family and First Church**. The plaque with the name and dates of the deceased will be made after the information is given in writing to the Memorial Garden Committee.



A Book of Remembrance is kept in the church parlor entrance area. There is a page for a photograph and newspaper article or obituary of the deceased. These items are furnished by the family. Another copy is kept in another secure part of the church.

The fee for using the garden for members of First Church and their families is \$500 to be paid at the time of interment plus the cost of obtaining the brass plaque with the name and dates of the deceased. The fee for friends of First Church who are not members is \$700 plus the cost of the plaque. The cost of this is subject to change.

Gifts for the Memorial Garden are welcome at any time and they will be used to help maintain the garden now and in the future. All Gifts and Fees should be made payable to First Church of Christ and designated on the check for the Memorial Garden Fund. There is now an Endowment Fund established for the maintenance of the garden and any amount is welcome.

The Memorial Garden Committee now consists of nine members with the Senior Minister as an ex-officio member. The committee works closely with the Board of Trustees when considering alterations to the garden and the committee now has a line-item in the Trustees budget. The Garden Committee supervises all maintenance, enhancement and use of the garden. It is maintained by a professional landscape company.

The garden is here for our members and friends to use in a time when grief and sadness make decisions difficult. The time to consider using it is before it is needed. Brochures are available in the church office and they contain all the information that you may need to consider this alternative for the loss of a loved one.

The Memorial Garden Committee:

Donna Hopkins, J. John, Betty Keirstead, Anita McCoy, Wally Musick, Lee Ora, Peg Psarakis, Dick Wilde, Diana Woodberry

## Board of Mission and Outreach

Here's an update on some of our ongoing mission projects:

### Food Share Truck

This truck is in our church parking lot (in the back, near Boy Scout Hall) every other Monday from 1:15 – 1:45 providing fresh produce, bread and other items to many of our hungry neighbors. We serve 75 – 100 people every other week. To join First Church volunteers serving our neighbors in this way contact Jane Hadley at [janefacts@hotmail.com](mailto:janefacts@hotmail.com).

### Care Bags

Care Bags are provided to social workers through Covenant to Care and given to a child who has been **removed from their home in an emergency**. **These tote bags include pj's, underwear, socks, toiletries, a change of clothes and warm sweatshirt** along with some drawing or coloring material, a book, a small toy, a blanket and a stuffed animal. If anyone is interested in donating for girls 3T – 18 we could use travel size toiletries, shampoo, conditioner, soap, Kleenex packs, toothbrushes and small toothpaste, lip balm, etc. or packages of underwear or socks (any size from 3T to 16/18), books, and stuffed animals in like-new condition. Contact Nancy Wadhams at [nwadhams@comcast.net](mailto:nwadhams@comcast.net) if you can help with this worthy mission.

### Film/Discussion Series

Your Mission Board has sponsored sessions on Friday nights in Palmer Hall on Healthcare in America, Hunger, Poverty, Mass Incarceration, Transgender challenges and Islam 101. There have been 30 – 50 people at these gatherings. Join us for a light supper and great discussions. Future topics to be announced.

Your Mission board has donated nearly \$45,000 annually to agencies locally, nationally and globally. Our most recent donation included Gifts of Love, Back Bay Mission, Covenant To Care and Hands On Hartford.



## *First Church of Christ Boards and Committees*

### Information - Involvement - Enrichment

This is to continue a monthly "Cornerstone" series of articles intended to inform you (and, hopefully, to involve you and enrich your church life) about the various and diverse ministries that help make up the fabric of First Church. Each month will feature the ministry that will host Fellowship Hour in Palmer Hall following Sunday morning 10 am worship. This will afford a dialogue opportunity for ministries to present their purposes and activities and for congregants to explore and discover opportunities for personal involvement and faith growth.

#### Women's Praise Choir (March 6th)

**Women's Praise Choir is a close harmony treble voice choir that meets every Wednesday** at 4 pm in the Choir Room. Singing music in two to as many as eight parts, their musical styles range from early and present day classical to folk, jazz, contemporary, pop, or Broadway. They contribute music for Sunday services, special events and services, and go into other communities in New England for performances and concerts not only as performers, but also as representatives of First Church. This group strives for musical excellence and precision, while still maintaining a light, fun atmosphere during rehearsals and presentations. In addition to their endeavor for musical closeness, the friendships formed within the group and the supportive bond that all the members have for each other enhances and expands the experience of making music and adds to the meaning of their presentations for both performer and listener. There are no tryouts, and we encourage anyone to come sing with us to discover the joys of singing with others while at the same time finding your own voice.

#### Welcoming Church Ministry Team (March 13th)

*"As God welcomes us, we are called to welcome and seek Christ in one another."*

The Welcoming Church Ministry Team (WCMT) is a group striving to create and foster a sense of welcome at First Church by nurturing engaged involvement in church life and by building spiritual and personal connections - learning from each other and growing in faith. Over the past few years, WCMT projects have included Name Tags and Stoles, Welcome Centers, First Church Information Packets, Artwork hung in stairwell and hallways, Spring church Clean-up, and assistance with First Church's involvement in Simsbury Celebrates and Advent activities. The committee is open to all and has no term. Currently there are five members, but having more members would ensure more ideas and activities! Since biblical origins of welcoming are many and the practice of hospitality is at the heart of our faith, we are currently seeking people who will help us find room for God who comes to us as the neighbor, friend, stranger and outsider. Please consider joining our group and helping us embrace our mission statement above.

## ***President's Message***

I am sure you, like me, are excited when First Church is buzzing with activity. Our beautiful building is being used for many church and community events and meetings. I hesitate to start listing them, because I am bound to leave unmentioned some activity that is special to you. Nevertheless, I'll name just a few: **JF and PF meetings, Supper Club, Feeding Children Everywhere, Retired Men's Luncheons; Cub Scouts, Blood Drives, Concerts, Discussion/Film Series events, Prayer Shawl Ministry, and First Church Friends** are all examples of vibrant church and community activities **which spread God's love and touch many people.**

Yet, even with all of this activity, there are still many more hours when our building is unused. At Executive Council last month, we began a discussion of a vision for our future which included First Church being used for even more church and community activities, benefitting even more of our neighbors, and raising our profile as a place where good work is being performed all the time in the name of Jesus. I expect we will continue these discussions over the next several months. If you have any ideas, I and other members of the Executive Council would love to hear them.

Faithfully yours,

*Jim Trimble*



## Easter Sunday PANCAKE BREAKFAST

*Prepared and served by our First Church Youth*

~ Sunday March 27, 2016 ~

*anytime 6:30 am - 10:30 am*

*Palmer Hall*

*All You Can Eat Pancakes!!*

SERVED ALL MORNING

*Grab some after the Sunrise Service  
and/or before the 8:30 & 10:30 am Services*

*Buttermilk, Blueberry, Chocolate Chip,  
and Gluten Free Pancakes*

***Sausage Links...Orange Juice...***

*Fair Trade Coffee and Tea*

*A Free Will Offering is Appreciated*

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## FELLOWSHIP HOUR SCHEDULE

March 6:	<b>Women's Praise Choir</b>
March 13:	Welcoming Committee
March 20:	Diane & Brad Jones, Michael & Jo Ann Hogan, Bob & Christine Long
March 27:	Pancake Breakfast, hosted by Pilgrim Fellowship (PF) Youth Group

*~ Please notify the Church of any address changes. ~  
Sign up for our emails and check our website.*

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