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# ❖ The Spirelite ❖

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Volume 79 Issue 03

March 2, 2007

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## WORSHIP AND PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Sunday worship, child care and classes for children through grade 8 are held each week at 10 AM.

March 4- Second Sunday in Lent – Communion Service  
Rev. Helen Bross, Associate Pastor, Preaching

March 11- Rev. Robert Bachelder of the Worcester  
Area Mission Society Preaching  
(Time Change: move clocks ahead one hour)

March 18- Youth Sunday Service  
Amy Hager and Heather Rugg Preaching  
Christian Youth Conference Reunion

March 25- 6:30 AM Men's Communion Breakfast  
10 AM Pastor Jonathan Wright-Gray Preaching



## HAL LANE TO SPEAK AT MEN'S COMMUNION BREAKFAST

The annual Men's Communion Service Breakfast will take place on Sunday, March 25, from 6:30 am to 8:30 am. Over 100 men from many area churches attend this ecumenical event which has been held at First Church for many years.

The speaker this year is Mr. Hal Lane, acting principal at Wachusett Regional High School in Holden. After serving for eight years in the state legislature, and then leading the Worcester Alliance for Education, Hal has returned for one year to the position he filled so admirably for over 20 years. His special ability to inspire and hold together faculty and students and staff in a

warm, person-centered way built Wachusett High School into one of the leading schools in Massachusetts. For many years he has also been an active member of the First Congregational Church in Holden. Hal's commitment to youth and to education, lived out over his entire career, is a reflection and outgrowth of his faith.

Tickets for the breakfast are \$7, and can be purchased from the church office, or from members of the Board of Deacons, which sponsors this event. This year there will be a continental style breakfast.



## LA ROMANA TRIP TAKES YOUTH, ADULTS TO ANOTHER WORLD

A four hour plane ride will take 33 people from central Massachusetts to the Spanish speaking Caribbean island nation of the Dominican Republic. It will take them into the world of Haitian immigrant sugar cane cutters and their families. It will take them to a place where many have come a long way from extreme poverty, and where faith is often at the very center of life. It will immerse them in medical clinics, construction work and Bible school activities for children. They will swim in the bright blue Caribbean water and eat hearty but different food. They will make friends both among those they travel with and those they meet there. And they will come home changed people.

Twenty two of the thirty three participants are connected to First Church—the largest group in some years—and ten of those are youth. Others come from several nearby communities and churches. (First Church has been sending people to La Romana for about 12 years.) Those from First Church include trip leaders Jonathan and Shantia Wright-Gray, Bill and Lucy Parker, Mary and Jennifer Colburn, Charlie Kretz, Diane Pedersen, Phil and Sean Holman, Mary Higgins, Steve, Lisa, Carolyn and David Noyes, Brandon and Brett Smith, Carly Smith, Shannon Lane, Caeli McGaunn, Lilly Harper and

Heather Rugg.

Beginning with the “Treasures of the Community Auction” last spring, thousands of dollars have been raised for construction materials and medicines; and hundreds of volunteer hours have gone into packing and preparing for this cross cultural adventure in faith and service to others. Please pray for these “missionaries” as they travel, and listen to their stories when they return. Both a worship service and a picture program will be held later this spring to share this experience with the church and wider community.

## A SHOPPING LIST FOR IHN WELCOME BAGS

While you are shopping in the next few weeks please add a few things for homeless families to your lists. It has been our custom at First church to pack welcome gift bags that we give our Interfaith Hospitality Network guests when they arrive at our church. This network is an organization that unites 31 churches in greater Worcester’s religious community in an effort to serve and nurture homeless families. These gift bags are left at the door of each family’s room in order to show them that we are sincere in welcoming them to our church.

Each bag is always packed with the ages of the family member in mind and contains personal care items and small objects that would be of interest to children. The following list contains items that are needed, but let your imaginations run wild! Watch for sale items which you think would appeal to



homeless parents, babies, or children. We will also need five tote bags in which to put everything.

Baby bibs  
Diapers, Desitin  
Baby board books  
Baby toys  
Teenage paperbacks  
Men’s shaving needs  
Men’s/women’s deodorant  
Soap and soap dishes  
Small Easter bunnies  
School supplies  
Small mirrors  
Toddler’s stuffed animals  
Breath mints  
Easter candy  
Very small toys

If you have any questions please call Carol Hoffman (422-8468). IHN welcome basket items should be left in the church office before March 28.

## CHURCH LEADERS READING BOOK, DISCUSSING CHURCH’S FUTURE

Both the Church Council and Deacons have been reading and discussing Transforming Congregational Culture by Anthony Robinson. Written by a UCC pastor, the book describes the “adaptive challenge” being faced by traditional, mainline Protestant congregations (like First Church) as society continues to change around them.

In the earlier, “civic faith” era, there was more of an assumption that everyone belonged to a church, and that to be a Christian and to be a good citizen were almost the same thing. There was an nearly seamless connection

between church and community—each one reinforced and supported the other.

That world is rapidly changing, according to Robinson. American is much more religiously diverse and traditional churches are no longer at the center of society. Even young people who grew up in the church do not automatically come back to it when they have families. Responding to this is more than just a matter of making the church more superficially attractive. It is an “adaptive challenge”—that is, it calls for some basic changes in the way the church understands itself and what it does. Robinson’s church in Seattle—and others around the country—are showing that mainline churches do not have to decline, but can renew themselves to minister in a changing world.

In what ways does First Church need to renew or reinvent itself, and in what ways does it need to reaffirm what it has always been? If you would like to join the discussion, several copies of the book are currently available in the church office. (They may be borrowed, or purchased for \$12.)

## BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP

Please join us.

**Date: Monday March 19 at 7:30** in the Chapel.

**Book: “44 Scotland Street”** by Alexander McCall Smith. He is also the author of the series about the “Number 1 Ladies Detective Agency”. “44 Scotland Street” is about the comings and goings of an interesting assortment of characters living

at that address in Edinburgh, Scotland. Definitely fun reading.

**Date: April TBA**

**Book: "At Home in Mitford" by Jan Karon.** This is the first in the series about Father Tim Kavanagh, Episcopal Rector, in "the little town with a big heart" in North Carolina.

Both books are easily available in paperback or as audio books. Come and bring your friends. If you have questions or suggestion please contact Helen Bross. 978-534-3076 or [hwbross@aol.com](mailto:hwbross@aol.com)

## LENTEN SERIES: PATHWAYS TO PRAYER

By Helen Bross

This series is for everyone: those who struggle with prayer, those who would like to learn



additional ways to pray and those who have a satisfying prayer life. All are welcome! We will meet in the Chapel from 7-8:30 on the Sunday evenings in March. The atmosphere will be relaxed and non-threatening. For questions or to sign up please speak to Helen Bross or call the office.

March 4: Exploring our experiences with prayer; discovering our personal prayer type.

March 11: Searching prayer (The Lord's Prayer); Experiential prayer (Breath prayer)

March 18: Innovative prayer: guided meditation; Relational prayer: confession, petition

March 25: a time of prayer; Communion as prayer

## CHURCH SCHOOL NEWS

By Ingrid Holmes

This Sunday March 4<sup>th</sup> a children's worship service will be held in the chapel downstairs for students in preschool through grade 8. Grades 4/5 will be leading the worship service. Children are to meet in their classrooms first. We will let you know when it is time to come down to the chapel, (usually a little after 10:00). Grades 7 and 8 have the option of joining the congregation for communion after the children's service.

The idea has come up to have another "Bring a Friend to Church" Sunday. Although there are no definite plans yet, we would like Sunday school children to begin thinking about inviting a friend to join them for Sunday school on a Sunday after Easter. (As you can tell, this is still in a very preliminary stage!) Classes could make

invitations for children to give to a friend to invite them to come. If anyone would like to help with plans for this day please let Ingrid know.

During the past several weeks Sunday school classes have seen some real ups and downs in their attendance. Hopefully this is just due to the school vacation week and I know there have been some illnesses going around. Several times Sunday school teachers have come in with a great lesson prepared and all the materials ready only to have just 1, 2 or 3 children in their class that week. So I guess this is just a reminder to parents to make Sunday school attendance a priority for their families. Just a reminder also, of our attendance pin policy as

stated in the Sunday School booklet: Children in grades 1-8 can receive an attendance pin if they miss no more than ten scheduled Sunday School classes during the church school year. (Credit will also be given for attending another church and for other appropriate worship activities.) Young adults in grades 9-12 can earn pins/bars for regular church attendance and/or teaching Sunday School. Regular attendance in church school gives children a place where they can learn about God in a community of Christians who are neighbors and friends. Please commit your family to a regular routine of attending church on Sunday.

## OUR CHURCH FAMILY

### PLEASE REMEMBER WITH CARDS AND PRAYERS

Alice Hasselmann at Sterling Healthcare, Viva Doucett at Birchwood Nursing Home, John Fitch Highway, Fitchburg, Dot Carlson, recovering from hip replacement surgery, and Helen Wessels, recovering from surgery.

### CHRISTIAN SYMPATHY

goes out to Eunice Fedler and family on the death of her husband, Julian, "Bud", this past week.

**HOUSING SITUATIONS**

An older member of the congregation would like to find a live-in companion to share her home and provide minimal assistance with daily living.

Also, a single woman who grew up in Sterling and in First Church is wanting to move back to the area and is looking for an apartment. She has a pet cat and a dog.

**INDOOR YARD SALE**

The Youth Fellowship will hold the next annual indoor yard sale on Saturday, March 31 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. (set up 7:30-9 a.m.). Table rentals are \$15. each. Please call Helen at the church office (978-422-6657) to reserve a table.

**KINDERWATCH UPDATE**

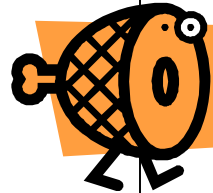
The latest improvement to the church's child care room is a beautiful painting done by Roseanne Mapp that is being placed over the blackboard. Roseanne is also doing a mural on the low back wall below the windows. Thank you, Roseanne! Drop in to see these ongoing improvements to what is rapidly becoming the most pleasant and inviting room at First Church!

**HAM & BEAN SUPPER**

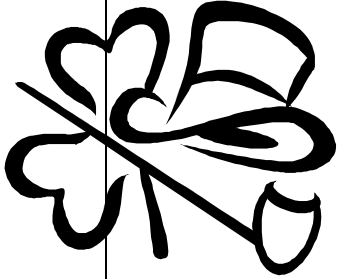

By Karen Bebka

Fellowship Board is sponsoring a Ham & Bean supper on Saturday, March 31 at 6 p.m. Menu will include ham, beans, coleslaw, brown bread and beverages with homemade desserts (macaroni & cheese substitute available also). Entertainment and a 50/50 raffle will round out this fun night out! All proceeds to benefit the church camperships. A signup sheet for desserts will be at coffee hours beginning Sunday, March 11. \$8.50/adult, \$5.00/child or \$25.00/family. Tickets available at coffee hour, the church office or any Board member: Eris Nash, Pam Dell, Karen Bebka, Linda E.

Davis, Carrie Wilder, Mary-Pat Bailey, Bob Kneeland.



# March 2007

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				<b>1</b> 9:35 VGPS Music & Movement - PH 1:20 Rad Kids - Rm. 2 7:00 Boy Scouts - PH 7:00 Palm Sunday Prom - B1 <b>7:00 Worship Bd. - Chapel B</b> 7:30 Cub Scout Comm Mtg - B2 <b>7:30 Outreach Bd - Chapel A</b>	<b>2</b> 9:00 VGPS - Chapel All Day - VGPS Spaghetti Supper - PH, Kitchen <b>5:00 Bell choir - Rm. 2</b> <b>7:00 Adult Choir Rehearsal</b>	<b>3</b> All Day - VGPS Spaghetti Supper - PH, Kitchen
<b>4 9:00 Adult Choir Rehearsal</b> <b>10:00 Church Service &amp; School</b> 1:00 Pack 34 Pinewood Derby Registration - Rm. 2 <b>7:00 Pathways to Prayer - Chapel</b>	<b>5</b> 7:00 Sterling Little League - Rm. 2	6 6:30 Auction - PH 7:00 Sterling Softball - Rm. 2	<b>7 10:00 Practicing Christian Faith - Chapel</b> <b>7:00 Building Bd - B2</b> 7:00 Girl Scouts - Rm. 2 7:00 Sterling Soccer - B5 <b>7:30 Christian Ed Bd - Chapel</b>	<b>8</b> 9:35 VGPS Music & Movement - PH 1:20 Rad Kids - Rm. 2 7:00 Boy Scouts - PH	<b>9</b> 9:35 VGPS Music & Movement - PH 1:20 Rad Kids - Rm. 2 <b>5:00 Bell choir - Rm. 2</b> 6:00 Girl Scout International Night - PH <b>6:30 Reiki Sessions - Chapel</b> <b>7:00 Adult Choir Rehearsal</b>	<b>10</b> 10:00 Greater Boston Soaring Club - PH
<b>11 9:00 Adult Choir Rehearsal</b> <b>10:00 Church Service &amp; School</b> 1:00 Pack 34 Pinewood Derby - PH <b>7:00 Pathways to Prayer - Chapel</b> 	<b>12</b>	13 6:30 Auction - PH <b>7:00 Practicing Christian Faith - Chapel</b>	<b>14</b> 7:00 Girl Scouts - Rm. 2 7:00 Boy Scout Committee Mtg - B1	<b>15</b> 9:00 Garden Club - HR 9:35 VGPS Music & Movement - PH 1:20 Rad Kids - Rm. 2 7:00 Boy Scouts - PH <b>7:00 Admin Bd - Chapel B</b> 7:00 VGPS Parent Advisory Bd - Chapel A <b>SPIRELITE DEADLINE</b>	<b>16</b> 9:35 VGPS Music & Movement - PH 1:20 Rad Kids - Rm. 2 5:00 CYC Reunion <b>5:00 Bell Choir - Rm. 2</b> <b>7:00 Adult Choir Rehearsal</b>	<b>17</b> CYC Reunion - All Day
<b>18 9:00 Adult Choir Rehearsal</b> <b>10:00 Church Service &amp; School</b> <b>11:20 Confirmation Class - Rm. 2</b> <b>7:00 Pathways to Prayer - Chapel</b>	<b>19 7:30 Book Discussion Group - Chapel</b>	20 6:30 Auction - PH <b>7:00 Practicing Christian Faith - Chapel</b>	<b>21 10:00 Practicing Christian Faith - Chapel</b> 7:00 Girl Scouts - Rm. 2 <b>7:30 Finance Bd - Chapel</b>	<b>22</b> 9:35 VGPS Music & Movement - PH 1:20 Rad Kids - Rm. 2 7:00 Boy Scouts - PH <b>7:00 Fellowship Bd - Rm. 2</b> <b>7:30 Diaconate - Chapel</b>	<b>23 9:00 Spirelite Committee - Rm. 2</b> 9:35 VGPS Music & Movement - PH 1:20 Rad Kids - Rm. 2 <b>5:00 Bell Choir - Rm. 2</b> <b>7:00 Adult Choir Rehearsal</b>	<b>24 10:30 Prayer retreat - Chapel</b> 12:00 Higgins Family Gathering - PH <b>6:00 Prayer Retreat - whole Building</b>
<b>25 6:30 Men's Communion Breakfast - PH</b> <b>9:00 Adult Choir Rehearsal</b> <b>10:00 Church Service &amp; School</b> <b>7:00 Pathways to Prayer - Chapel</b> 7:00 Boy Scout PLC - B1	<b>26</b> 6:00 Sterling Daisy Troop - Rm. 2 6:30 Sterling Garden Club - HR	<b>27</b> 6:30 Auction - PH	<b>28</b> 7:00 Girl Scouts - Rm. 2 <b>7:00 Caregivers - B1</b> <b>7:30 Church Council - Chapel</b>	<b>29</b> 9:35 VGPS Music & Movement - PH 1:20 Rad Kids - Rm. 2 7:00 Boy Scouts - PH	<b>30</b> 9:35 VGPS Music & Movement - PH 1:20 Rad Kids - Rm. 2 <b>5:00 Bell Choir - Rm. 2</b> <b>7:00 Adult Choir Rehearsal</b> 7:00 boy Scout Troop 189 Dance - PH <b>Set up for Yard Sale - PH</b>	<b>31 9:00 Indoor Yard Sale - PH</b> <b>6:00 Ham &amp; Bean Supper - PH</b>

# ANNIVERSARIES AND BIRTHDAYS IN MARCH

1. Elizabeth Perry – 101 <sup>TH</sup> Susan Quinn Gordon Smith 2. Linda Greene Marsha Bodine 4. Tim Holmes Mary Jane Johnson Meredith Iszlai 5. Sally Magaw 6. Greer Iszlai 7. Chris Johnson 8. Peter Cummings 8. JONATHAN & SHANTIA WRIGHT-GRAY 11. Heather Smiley-Papandrea Rick Molnar 12. Jim Shepardson Lauren Molnar 13. Johanna Koleshis Amy Hager Ranny Sabourin 14. Karin Brown Marge Borg	15. Donald Peterson 17. JAMES & PATRICIA LAFLEUR David Whitmore Guy Fallavallita 18. Brian Edwards 20. Beverly Kenney 21. Richard Quinn Leah Barwise 23. Allen Hoffman Clyde Palmer RIC & SHIRA McWATERS 25. GINNY & GERALD MICHAUD RENATA & PHIL WIGGIN 27. Barbara Dumont 29. Bob Kneeland 30. ERIS & PHIL NASH JON & PAM GUILD Meghan Morrow 31. Eris Nash ALICE & JACK WHITTAKER
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## SERVING THE CHURCH IN MARCH

<b>MEAL GIVER CONTACT</b> – Mellyn Shurtleff – 422-9044 <b>CAREGIVER CONTACT</b> – Rob Barwise – 422-8391 (Rides, Visits, etc.) <b>FLOWER CONTACT</b> – Carrie Wilder – 422-9747 <b>REIKI CONTACT</b> – Karen Iszlai – 422-8124 <b>PHONE PRAYER CHAIN CONTACT</b> – Gail Pineo – 422-6053 <b>E-MAIL PRAYER CHAIN CONTACT</b> – Cheryl Barwise- 422-8391 - <a href="mailto:r.barwise@comcast.net">r.barwise@comcast.net</a>	<b>HEAD USHER</b> – Dave Lawrence  <p style="text-align: center;"> <b>March 4</b> - Chris Noponen  <b>March 11</b> - Marge Long  <b>March 18</b> - Cheryl Barwise  <b>March 25</b> - Robin Harper         </p>
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## THANK YOU

Thank you very much for the gift from the Crimmins fund. Alice Hasselmann

I would like to thank the Brownies for their lovely Valentine Cards. Lorraine Holdridge

Dear First church Caregivers: Thank you for remembering my on my 89<sup>th</sup> birthday, February 2<sup>nd</sup>, better known as "groundhog day". Through the many years, I have observed that his predictions of how long winter shall last were not always correct. Yet, I am fond of the little creature and the legend surrounding him. Best wishes for a safe and healthy winter. Sincerely, Evelyn Kneeland

To First Church, Thank you for the beautiful flowers celebrating my 91<sup>st</sup> birthday. I appreciate it very much. My best to all. Madeline McLean

My Eagle Scout project was a huge success because of the strong support I received from the parishoners of The First church. This project would not have succeeded without your kindness and generosity. I know that all of the service ment and women will appreciate, not only all of the special items received, but also the sincere thoughts behind each donation. Out troops appreciate being remembered. My sincere thanks, Kyle Daigle

Thank you for the Valentines from the Sunday School and the Caregivers at First Church. It's nice to be remembered. Millie Hirst