



## ∞ THE BEACON LIGHT ∞

† MAY/JUNE 2015 †

First Congregational Church of Riverhead

An Open and Affirming United Church of Christ  
103 First Street Riverhead, New York 11901  
Tel: 631-727-2621 ♦ Web: [www.fccr.us](http://www.fccr.us)

## ∞ PASTOR'S NOTE ∞

Dear friends and members of our church,

Good and gracious greetings to you. As we begin the last and longest of liturgical seasons, our season of Pentecost, here's a bit of history along with some fodder for holy contemplation. Did you know that in many of our sister Christian congregations, the name "Pentecost" is reserved solely for the day of Pentecost and the remaining Sundays of the season (with the exception of Trinity Sunday -- the first Sunday after Pentecost) are referred to as being "in Ordinary Time"? It seems an odd tradition to me, because if we take a moment to examine Pentecost, it's clearly anything but ordinary.

Let's begin with the word "Pentecost" itself and consider its origins. Many of you who are familiar with word etymologies are likely to readily identify the first part of the word (*pente-*) as signifying "five," as in pentagram, pentagon or Pentateuch (i.e., the first five books of our Bible). You'd be right in that. What about the second part of the word, the *-cost*? And no, it has nothing to do with a price, as if ancients' tickets for the day's festivities cost a nickel :-). The *-cost* comes from the Greek root *-kosta* meaning "times ten;" so that, Pentecost refers to "the fiftieth," specifically the fiftieth *day*. But what does that have to do with day we know? In order to find the fifty, we have to trace Pentecost to its Jewish roots. Because Luke writes, "When the day of Pentecost had come" before the coming of the Holy Spirit, we know that this particular religious and popular Jewish holiday was already well established. And yet we've heard of Passover, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, and the like, but Pentecost? It's not on today's list of Jewish holidays. Hmm, more intrigue.

For our Jewish ancestors in Luke's time, "Pentecost" was the Greek name given to the Festival of Weeks (Hebrew: *Hag ha-Shavuot*, Exodus 34:22, Deuteronomy 16:10). Greek was the common language of the people following Alexander the Great's conquest and the subsequent hellenization. Oddly enough, the holiday was also known as the Feast of the Harvest (Exo 23.16) or the Day of First-fruits (Num 28.26). It marked the end of the barley harvest and the beginning of the wheat harvest, and was originally, almost certainly, a midsummer celebration of ancient Canaanites that was revisited and restyled by the Israelites. In the odd process of

convergence and divergence, the festival became one of the three pilgrimage feasts for the Jews. As per, Leviticus 23:15, Pentecost was calculated seven weeks after the sickle had been put to the standing grain, *fifty* days after the Sabbath that followed Passover. (Yep, there's the "fifty.") It involved rest from work and was marked by the note of joy. Two leavened loaves of wheaten flour were presented to the Lord along with peace offerings and burnt offerings. In later Judaism, the Pharisees and Sadducees disagreed over the interpretation of Lev 23.15 regarding the exact day of the celebration, yet for both groups the Feast of Weeks came to be regarded as the concluding feast of Passover. It retained, at least for a while, the character of a harvest festival, but by the end of the second century CE, it was reinterpreted to commemorate the giving of the Law at Sinai. Today the Jewish name *Shavuot* is used. The description "concluding feast" as well as the Greek name "Pentecost" was dropped, and its original meaning and importance was completely refigured. Pretty extraordinary, right?

Now for us, Pentecost has retained some of its ancient roots as it's celebrated on the fiftieth day of Easter. But any other connection to the older tradition necessitates some creative exegesis. We, perhaps, can associate the gift of the Holy Spirit to the leavened bread, as through this mysterious third person of the Trinity, God both nourishes us and raises us up. We could also, perhaps, tie in the aspect of the diversity of the crowd in Luke's original Pentecost to the large and varied Christian community of our world today. But these connections admittedly make for a bit of stretch. Today, our Pentecost celebrations, like Shavuot, have largely given new meaning to the day. It all results from a creative, exciting and extraordinary process of revisiting and restyling the old.

Another less than ordinary aspect of Pentecost is that in the UK the day is also known as Whitsunday. Some point to "white" as the root for that name, averring that the name derives from the white garments worn by those expecting to be baptized on that Sunday, or from the tradition of the young women in the parish wearing new white dresses. However, Augustinian canon, John Mirk (c1382 - 1414), of Lilleshall Abbey, Shropshire, had another interpretation:

Good men and wimmen, this day (Dies Penthecostes) is called Wytsonday by cause the holy ghost bought wytte and wisdom into Cristis dysciples, and so by prechying after in all Cristendom and fylled him full of holy Wytte.

Thus, he maintained the root of the word was "wit" (formerly spelt "wyt" or "wytte") and Pentecost was so-called to signify the outpouring of the wisdom of the Holy Spirit on Christ's disciples. I, for one, am a fan of Mirk's read on the matter.

All in all, I find Pentecost quite curious and not at all "ordinary." I also think it's a fine time to seek to grow wiser with God, and to revisit and restyle all the old stuff that needs some sprucing up to remain relevant. My prayer for you this season is that God may reignite the flames of creativity and spirituality in your life, and that prayer, scripture and church, serve as fonts of grace for the excitement of the Holy Spirit to take hold of your heart.

Blessings to you this day. – Pastor Sean

## ☞ LENTEN MISSION ☞

Each family in the church was given a bank at the beginning of Lent. The idea was, that all during Lent, as you gathered for a meal, you would reflect on those in our own community who were hungry and put coins in the bank. The banks were collected the Sunday after Easter. Jane Joerchel and Ann Bianco opened each bank and divided the coins from the bills and checks. Melinda Topping took all the coins to the counting machine at the bank and the results were astounding. Our little church collected \$693.00. (Two additional banks were brought in after the money was totaled). The Sunday School along with their teachers and their parents will go shopping on Sunday, May 3rd for groceries, which they will deliver to the new site of the Long Island Council of Churches' Food Pantry on Children's Sunday, May 17th. Additional money collected will be donated to help with other needs at the food pantry, i.e., paying for prescriptions, paying cab fare for doctor's appointments, etc. Thank you, thank you to everyone who so generously gave.

## ☞ CHRISTIAN EDUCATION ☞

The Friday morning Bible study led by Pastor Sean has been studying Exodus with lots of Bible history woven in. Twelve to fifteen people have been in attendance each week. There is always room for more!

Sunday May 17 is Children's Day. The Sunday School children and youth will be delivering food purchases from BJ's Wholesale Club to LICC that day. Around \$700 was collected from the Lenten banks with \$400 going to the LICC for groceries and \$300 to the LICC to use where it is needed most-food, prescriptions, bus fare, etc. Thanks to all for your generosity!

Vacation Bible School will meet August 17-21 from 9 am until noon each day at our church. The Suffolk Association awarded a grant to FCC to purchase curriculum and supplies for VBS. The VBS kit has already arrived. Thanks to Sandy Gruner for writing and submitting the grant! Heartfelt thanks to our teachers-Sue Hubbard, Shelly Walker and Cathy Musick for all of their efforts on behalf of our children and youth.

-- Ginger Duvall

## ☞ FELLOWSHIP/SOCIAL ☞

Coffee hour after church is a time to relax and visit with fellow worshippers. Volunteers are always needed to provide something to eat and prepare the coffee (store bought goodies are fine). The signup sheet is on the kitchen door in the fellowship hall.

## NEW MEMBERS

Terry Minnick will be an incredible asset to our church. She joined her parents, Alice and Jim Davis, fifteen years ago as they searched for a church they would come to know and love. Always a friend, never a member, Terry attended worship, but did not join. Then, Pastor Sean came to First Congregational. Soon after, Alice became sick and soon after that, she passed away. Pastor Sean became Terry's friend and through that friendship, Terry decided to become a member.

Terry's nickname is "Mountain Woman", a nickname that is the result of Terry's strengths and interests. Terry is self sufficient. She can chop wood, hunt, skin a deer, make sauerkraut, put up jam and build a cabin. Terry credits her late husband, Robbie, an accomplished carpenter, with acquiring many of these skills. Terry and Robbie were married for sixteen years, before he tragically died in 2007. "Robbie taught me so much. We enjoyed doing everything together and we enjoyed different things in each season-hunting, sailing, diving and skiing."

A cabin that they built together in 1994, sits on 37 acres in upstate New York, north of Binghamton. Much has changed, but the cabin and the property upstate remain a safe and happy respite for Terry. This year, Terry hopes to bring electricity to the property. Terry has worked twenty years for the Health Department.

Terry has endured loss and challenges. The losses of her mother and husband have been opportunities, not to doubt, but to increase her faith. Terry loves First Congregational and feels at home here. "I feel the love here and there is no where I would rather be." Alice would be very happy.

-- Sandy Gruner

Introducing new member Lyde Routh: Lyde has come back to First Congregational church and reconfirmed her commitment at a service in April. She has lived on Pegs Lane where she raised two daughters both of whom attended Sunday school here. Jennifer is now a High School Physics teacher in Shoreham, lives in Miller Place and has five children. Allison lives in Bellport and has three children. Lyde worked for the telephone company and then had to leave because of a serious injury which has taken years of recovery. Lyde has had a lifelong interest in art. She has studied with the Arts Student League in Manhattan. We welcome her back and pray for her continued recovery.

-- Deedee Newcomb

On Sunday, April 10, 2015, Roberta Chiusano became a member of First Congregational of Riverhead. Roberta was born in Brooklyn and attended St. Patrick's Church and School. She moved to Riverhead from Brooklyn in 2002. After many years as a real estate broker, she retired. However, she now works at Main Stream House where she is Intake Coordinator and a Woman's House Manager. Roberta has a great passion for gardening. Her best friend and the

love of her life is Alexander, her beautiful poodle. After attending many functions and meetings at the church, Roberta met Pastor Sean. At his invitation she came to Sunday service and has been a regular ever since. A very warm welcome to Roberta.

--Dot Walsh

### ☞ PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY ☞

The prayer shawl ministry continues to meet and enjoy comradery and crocheting. If you would like to participate contact any of the following members: Bunny Burns, Nancy Daniels, Sandy Daniels, Pat DiScioscia, Ginger Duvall, Jane Jones, Fran Nill, Barbara Parsons, LuAnne Seaman, or Marion Stark. If you know of someone in need of a shawl they are available in the sanctuary.

### ☞ LADIES NIGHT ☞

The women of the church continue to meet on the last Thursday of the month. This is an informal get together and the participants vary from month to month. It is open to all and is a wonderful opportunity for us to get to know each other better. Deedee Newcomb is our coordinator and sends a reminder each month so she can inform the restaurant of the approximate number who'll attend. If you would like to join us, please let Deedee know by phone (369-9379) or by e-mail ([deedeenewc@aol.com](mailto:deedeenewc@aol.com))

### ☞ PUBLIC RELATIONS AND EVANGELISM ☞

Public Relations and Evangelism Committee will meet on May 20th @ 10:00am in the church office. We will be generating a list of outlets for our events and programs. Mission Insite will be discussed as well as promoting Vacation Bible School which will be held from August 17-21, 2015. We welcome Jane Joerchel.

--Sandy Gruner

### ☞ THRIFT SHOP ☞

The Alley Cat Thrift Shop hours are Tuesday and Thursday from 10:00AM – 2:00PM and Saturday 9:00AM – 1:00PM. If you have some time you can devote to this very important income generator for our church please call Nancy at the church office 727- 2621. If you don't have four hours to devote, that is okay. Coming in for a couple of hours and helping with the merchandise (i.e., cleaning, sorting, displaying) would be greatly appreciated.

## 🌀 BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS 🌀

I am happy to report that we have the approval of the building engineer to proceed with the stabilization of the east wall of the sanctuary as designed by Joel Snodgrass of Steward Restoration Services. You will remember that they were hired to prepare a building evaluation report and oversee the restoration. The repair consists of four 1” steel rods running across the interior of the sanctuary from east to west. This should arrest the movement of the wall until they can engineer a permanent solution. Work should be starting soon. The special corporate meeting on Sunday May 17<sup>th</sup> deals with the Trustees request to approval to spend the funds for the repair. *Meanwhile, beginning the Sunday of Memorial Day weekend we will move our Sunday morning worship services into the Fellowship Hall.*

On Saturday May 23rd we are having a garage clean out so that we can build shelves to better utilize the space in the garage. If anyone is free that morning we could sure use your help. Jim, AJ and I will be there about 8AM.

--Ron Blake  
Chairman, Buildings & Grounds

## 🌀 BREAD & MORE I.N.N 🌀

Bread and More INN soup kitchen continues to serve a full dinner 3 nights a week, Monday, Wednesday and Thursday, in the fellowship hall at 5:30 PM. Donations of breads, bagels, rolls and desserts continue from Beach Bakery and Sunset Deli in West Hampton Beach and King Kullen and Blue Duck Bakery of Riverhead. We remain most grateful to the many who give of their time and their goods to help meet the need around us.

--Deedee Newcomb

## 🌀 FUND RAISING 🌀



The quiche lunch fund raiser was a huge success thanks to the many volunteers who called, emailed, shopped, baked, washed, chopped, sliced, counted, advertised, took orders, collected money, and/or delivered lunches. As always, the amazing members and friends of First Congregational show how generous they are with time and resources. The lunch raised \$1660.00.

On Sunday, May 24th we will be holding a bake sale on the front lawn from 12-3:00pm. This will be held in conjunction with the chalk decorating contest in the village. We are in need of baked goods and volunteers to staff the table. James Wooten is the Trustee who is spearheading the event. Please let James know if you can help. Thank you.

Clean out the garage and the basement and donate to our YARD SALE on Saturday, June 6. Volunteer to help. See Ron Blake to let him know when you can help, between 8:00AM – 3:00PM. Any amount of time is greatly appreciated – work a shift or work a day.



## MISSION REPORT

On Sunday May third at the Suffolk Association meeting The reverend Freeman Palmer awarded our church two certificates of recognition for our participation in mission giving; one for Our Church's Wider Mission, (OCWM,) and one for our "Five for Five" participation.

Our mission- giving continues to be quite generous. Our One Great Hour of Sharing, collected during Lent brought in \$279.00. In addition, we had a special Lenten offering with our Lenten banks and details about that project headed by Sandy Gruner are in this paper in a separate article. It was a huge success!

The New York Women's Conference, scheduled for the beginning of May had requested donations of health/hygiene kits to be distributed where needed. Again, our congregation came through with a total of thirty three kits which were taken to the Orient Church for Pastor Ann Van Cleef to transport to the gathering.

Our next mission project will be the Strengthen the Church offering collected on May 24<sup>th</sup>, with a Mission Moment the previous week.

--Janet Sanford

## MEMBER NEWS

### NJROTC Scholarship Winner

Brianne Corwin, a graduating senior this June at Riverhead High School, is one of our youngest members here at First Congregational. Her parents are Miriam and Todd Corwin, and she's big sister to Kirsten, who's in this year's confirmation class. Brianne went through our Sunday School and was confirmed during Pastor Joan Finck's time with us. She has volunteered in our thrift shop and also helps out at our Card and Game Parties each September.

Brianne has been in the NJROTC program at the high school all four years. She's been selected for their Leadership Academy held for a two week period in Newport R.I. and has also been invited twice to the Rotary Leadership programs in MA. Despite an ambitious academic schedule with a concentration in the sciences, Brianne has also participated in tennis, track, and golf—and still has found time for lots of community service activities!

Brianne has selected the University of Florida to pursue a career in material science and engineering. Congratulations! We are all so proud of you!

--Janet Sanford

## ❧ VISITATION ❧

Our report this time is brief. After the Spring/Easter visits, our committee members have continued to keep in contact with our frail and homebound members. Several new names have come to our attention who have undergone surgery or have been feeling a bit under the weather. Please let the church office know if someone you know is in need of a card, phone call, or visit. A big thank you to all who help out by offering assistance to make someone's day brighter with their friendship—whether you are “on the committee” or not!

For the Committee,  
--Janet Sanford

## ❧ SUFFOLK ASSOCIATION ❧

Old Steeple Church hosted the spring annual meeting of the Suffolk Association on Sunday, May third. Pastor Sean and our four delegates Deedee Newcombe, Sandy Gruner, Jane Kulesa, and Janet Sanford attended. The Reverend Gary Brinn of Sayville, our moderator, conducted the business part of the meeting. At this time our application for a grant to help defray the cost of summer Vacation Bible School was approved. Orient also received grant money for their new community garden. Much of the business discussion focused on the ever changing and increasingly challenging role our UCC churches, on all levels—local, state and national—plays in today's society.

The Reverend Freeman Palmer gave a brief presentation about the upcoming State Conference at Silver Bay in early June and also distributed certificates for mission giving—OCWM and 5 for 5—both of which we earned!

The program portion was a presentation by Jane Wright of Old Steeple who had recently visited Palestine. Her remarks were quite thought provoking and she handed out some suggested websites for more in depth study of ongoing efforts to achieve reconciliation in this troubled area.

Karen Maust of Sayville, our Suffolk General SYNOD delegate gave a brief presentation on the national meeting to be held in Cleveland at the end of June. At this time serious consideration will be given to a major restructuring of the leadership of this organization. The Reverend Arlen Vernava conducted the concluding worship service, followed by refreshments served in the parish hall.

--Janet Sanford

## 🌀 CONCERTS 🌀

Concerts by the combined choirs from Riverhead First Congregational UCC and Mt Sinai UCC were held Saturday evening, April 25 in Riverhead and Sunday afternoon April 26 in Mt Sinai. This was a project led by Jeff Wentz and George Moravek, directors of the choirs, respectively.

Rehearsals were held for several weeks by each of the choirs separately ... with just 2 combined rehearsals. A few extra singers were invited in and a wonderful string quartet was assembled. George led the performance and Jeff played the organ. The music performed was especially beautiful ... Mozart's "Ave Verum," Faure's "Cantique de Jean Racine" and Vivaldi's "Gloria." A lovely reception was offered after the concert in Riverhead prepared by the ladies of the church. A free will offering was taken which helped to pay for the musicians. The performances were very well received with glowing comments still coming in. It is hoped that similar projects can be done in the future.

--Deedee Newcomb

## 🌀 LONG ISLAND COUNCIL OF CHURCHES 🌀

Excerpts from their May Newsletter:

**NEW LICC LOCATION IN RIVERHEAD:** Our current location in Riverhead has been sold and we are moving to 220 Roanoke Avenue (at 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, kitty-corner (a.k.a. catawampus) from Suffolk County National Bank. It is a good building but a smaller space, where we will not have room for clothing donations. *Editor's note:* The move has happened. Their phone number remains the same: 631-727-2210. The best door to use for deliveries is the 2<sup>nd</sup> Street entrance. Parking is available across 2<sup>nd</sup> Street.

**LICCDonate.org:** We invite you to visit our website at [www.LICCDonate.org](http://www.LICCDonate.org) to make convenient cash contributions so we can buy food for our guests with dietary restrictions and Feed a Family of Four. If you donate through this website, we will do all the work for you, and the ever-increasing number of our guests with special dietary needs will be able to eat.

### **HELP FOR VETS—INCLUDING HOUSING ASSISTANCE**

No agency on the Island has received Emergency Food and Shelter Program funds yet this year for rent, mortgage, or utility assistance. Services for the Underserved, however, has funds available for rent and mortgage assistance for veterans. They can even pay up to five months of rent arrears, which is quite rare. They also assist vets with benefit applications, job placement, and other supportive services. They are located at 600 Albany Avenue in North Amityville, next to Concern for Independent Living's wonderful new Concern Liberty apartments for veterans. There is room available in the building for other agencies assisting vets. For further information, please visit [www.sus.org](http://www.sus.org) or call 631-227-0777.

## ☞ SOME CHURCH CALENDAR ITEMS ☞

- Every Monday, Wednesday and Thursday 5:30-7:00pm: *Bread & More/INN*
- Every Tuesday and Friday, 7:00pm and Saturday, 8:00am: *AA (English-language meetings)*
- ALLEY CAT THRIFT SHOP: Tuesdays and Thursdays 10:00AM – 2:00PM Saturday
- Bible study classes, Fridays 10-11:30, Fellowship Hall.
- May 17. Children's Day -- Sunday school children receive their certificates and gifts, and are donating food to the LICC's food pantry. Church meeting on sanctuary repairs after church.
- May 24. Pentecost Sunday -- Wear some red to church. Bake sale on the front yard following worship. East End Arts 19th Annual Mosaic Street Painting Festival on Main Street.
- May 25. Happy Memorial Day.
- May 27. Trustees' meeting, 5:30pm, conference room.
- June 3. Meeting of the Joint Boards, 6:30pm, Sunday School room.
- June 21. Happy Father's Day.
- June 28. Bylaws meeting after worship. Sunday School room.  
Riverhead's Cardboard Boat Race, 12noon.

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**UNITED CHURCH  
OF CHRIST**

