



☞ THE BEACON LIGHT ☞

✠ MAY/JUNE 2016 ✠

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

☞ PASTOR'S NOTE ☞

Dear Friends and Members of our First Congregational Church,

Pentecost is here! Of all the liturgical holidays, Pentecost is climbing to the very top of the list of favorites for me. It's wonderfully uncomplicated and purely festive. It's a time of celebration without any concern of big gatherings or gifts. It's a time of hope, of visions, dreams, and new birth.

Since the dawn of the Christian age, Pentecost has been the day on which we remember and celebrate the gift of the Holy Spirit to the believers. Luke records it for us in the book of the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 2.1-21). As our faith developed, Pentecost became known as the birthday of the Church. The present of the day was the gift of presence, the Holy Spirit, our God with us. With God, with us, in us, and around us, new life from heaven pours forth, and the earth blossoms with the gifts of God.

Because Pentecost is celebrated 50 days after Easter, the earliest it can fall is May 10, and the latest is June 13. It's always a holiday solidly set in the heart of Spring. For us here in the Northeast, that means Pentecost is a real gardener's holiday. These days Pentecost and our church's gardens have a lot in common.

Part of the promise of Pentecost is recorded in Acts 2.17: "...your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams." Visions and dreams are what is happening now all around our church. The front garden, now without the large shade producing trees, is necessarily about to get a major make-over. It has long been looking a bit unkempt and overgrown. The plants that need full to partial shade, such as the skimmia, have to come out. The plants that have proven too aggressive, such as the ground elder (aka bishop's weed or snow-on-the-mountain) need to be pulled way back or completely eradicated. The large and unshapely shrubs that no longer fit the space will need to find another home. We're working on the vision of a new garden with sun loving and easy to maintain plants. Of course as most of us don't often see the front of the church, the back gardens by the parking lot are also being redone. Some of the shade lovers from the front will be moved to the back. Other plants suitable to our needs will need to be identified and sought out. Hope, visions and dreams, new life.

A big part of the first day of Pentecost was all that speaking in tongues. That makes for another connection to our gardens. There are quite a number of odd foreign words that are being tossed about as the plans are being considered: Weigela, Nepeta, Spiraea, Perovskia, Rudbeckia, Ilex. If God has got your tongue moving that way, or in any garden-ese, please join the conversation!

Of course, the variety of the gifts of God made possible by the gift of the Holy Spirit are known and shown in the way they work through the people of God. We are very blessed that God is at work in our gardens through Allan Repp. Allan (husband of Nancy Repp) is a Master Gardener and retired professional landscaper. He has already been at work cleaning up and trimming, and he and I, in consultation with others, have been discussing the comings and goings of the plants in various beds.

As for the timing of things, some beds will have to wait a bit, yet the season of Pentecost is a very long one -- it lasts all the way until Advent! Because our church is soon to be painted (the workers have already been busily scrapping and prepping the outside), and the front steps repaired, the beds closest to the building won't be replanted right away. Yet God is doing very good things in our midst, through a great number of people.

If you have some time and want to join the fun, please see me or Allan. Perhaps you even have plants to share (yet not the aggressive spreaders); that would be great, too. When all is said and done, I am convinced it's going to be truly wonderful. *Pentecost. Let the celebration begin!*

Peace, smiles, and lots of blessings your way this day,
Pastor Sean

☞ CAPITAL FUND CAMPAIGN ☞

We have realized excellent income in the past two months as a result of the two major fund raising projects for the year.

The Raise the Roof Cash Raffle winning tickets were drawn live on WLNG on April 1 and after all the winners were paid, our net profit was \$11,200.

The Raise the Roof Concert and Auction was a tremendous success with 261 paid guests in attendance, not counting the 85 musicians and vocalists. We were not only entertained with the music orchestrated by George Moravek, the Island Jazz Express Big Band and the Raise the Roof singers, but professional auctioneer Wendy Walsh had people standing up and calling out their bids on auction items and pledging bids to support the campaign. The net profit for the event was \$41,097 and breaks down as follows:

Ticket Sales - \$3789; Auction - \$24,074; Donations - \$795; Journal - \$12,439

Thanks to the continued generosity of our church members the following is a summary of the capital campaign income for the year 2016 to date:

Member Donations	\$8845
Friends Donations	\$7415
Memorial Donations	\$1885
Dark Horse Brunch	\$3102
Raise the Roof Cash Raffle	\$11,200
Raise the Roof Concert and Auction	\$41,097
Total 2016 Capital Fund Income	\$73,544

We should hear from the New York State Conservancy and the Gardiner Foundation regarding our grant applications in the very near future. These are matching funds grants which require us to raise funds equal to the grants received. The committee will then re-evaluate the capital fund needs.

We do have one fun event planned in June thanks to Dee Muma owner of the Dark Horse Restaurant who generously offered to do a Chicken Barbeque for the campaign. This is a great opportunity for us to reach out to our neighbors to join us in fellowship for a picnic in the park on June 12 from 4pm to 7pm. Collene Richardson is chairing this event and she will need lots of hands on deck that day. More details to follow.

☞ CHRISTIAN EDUCATION ☞

Bible Study will continue to meet from 10-11:30 on Friday mornings until early June. Pastor Sean's teaching of Deuteronomy has been well-received and led to many interesting discussions!

On Palm Sunday the Sunday school children handed out the palms. Their participation is always a highlight of the service.

The Lenten banks were again arranged for by Sandy Gruner. This very successful mission activity generated around \$600 for hunger relief. The children and youth will be shopping on Sunday, May 15 to purchase food, personal care items and diapers for the Long Island Council of Churches food bank. Thank you to all for your generosity!

A Vacation Bible School is being explored for a weekend in August. More details to follow.

~ Ginger Duvall

~ BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS ~

Think back to where we were a year ago. We had not even begun the restoration of the sanctuary. What a difference a year can make.

Our painting contractor has power washed the church and is ready to begin sanding and scraping in preparation of the new paint. If it would ever stop raining he could begin the process.

Egan Restorations has removed the broken stained glass window and taken it to their shop for repair. Again the weather has made it impossible for them to do the outside window restoration. It looks like next week we will see better weather and the work can continue.

You will notice that work has been done to improve the look of the rear entrance. Alan Repp removed to old overgrown bushes and put down mulch. The plan is to put in new shrubs and flowers after the exterior painting is completed. It looks much better already. Thank you Allan. This week, representatives from the Gardner Grant came to look at the church and discuss our grant application. They were impressed with the work that we have accomplished so far. Hopefully our application will be approved.

We still have much to do but with God's help it will all get done.

Respectfully submitted,
~ Ron Blake, Chairman

~ 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 coffee, or ice tea as the weather warms up (store bought goodies are fine). The signup sheet is on the kitchen door in the fellowship hall.

The Social/Fellowship committee recognizes that the congregation has been quite involved in attending the fundraising activities for the Capital Campaign. This year's fundraising will be winding down with the Chicken Barbeque. We would like to host church-wide activities that are not fundraising just purely social. The committee would like to do a Potluck and movie again and possibly a game night/afternoon with Potluck or Spaghetti dinner. If there are other Social/Fellowship events that the congregation would like to do please call or email me at 727-5504 or auntiej@optonline.net. All ideas/suggestions will be entertained.

Let's have some fun!
~ Jane Jones

~ PUBLIC RELATIONS AND EVANGELISM ~

The Committee will try to refocus on some of the projects that we had started before the Capital Campaign. We would like to replenish the new and improved pew cards in the pew holders, now that the sanctuary has been put back together. Name tags for new members and existing members will be made available soon. Pastor Sean has visited some of our members who cannot get to church as an example of active evangelism. If you know of someone who needs or wants a visit, please contact the church office. Communion

can also be served if prearranged. A very special thank you to WLNG radio and especially David Kline, who has worked very closely with us publicizing all of our events. We are trying to establish a Facebook presence which has the widest reach for promoting our church and church activities. Along with the Christian Education Committee, we are looking into a weekend Vacation Bible School in August. If you have a child or grandchild that would be interested, please call Sandy Gruner, 631 722 3248.

~ Sandy Gruner

~ LENTEN BANKS ~

Thank you to everyone who participated in our Lenten Bank Mission Project. Your continued generosity is greatly appreciated. This year the banks yielded around \$600. On Sunday, May 15th, Children's Sunday, The Sunday School children, along with their teachers and parents will go shopping for the Long Island Council Of Churches Food Pantry. This year the children will be shopping for personal hygiene products such as diapers, soap etc., as well as food. The children will then deliver the groceries to the LICC food pantry. If you still have your bank, it is not too late to bring it to church to be counted. Again, Thank you!

~ CPR/AED TRAINING ~

On Saturday, April 2, 2016, fifteen people, including one from Old Steeple Church and several from the Bread and More INN and Feeding the Mind, were trained by four volunteers from the Riverhead Volunteer Ambulance Corps. The three- hour training course follows the American Heart Association's guidelines, and includes training in CPR and the use of the AED. Certification is for a two year period. The following individuals successfully completed the training and received certification:

Nancy Tesoriero	Sandy Gruner	Laurel Huebner	Cathy Musick
Louise Wood	Jane Kulesa	Pastor Sean Murray	Barbara Parsons
Roberta Chuisano	Janet Sanford	Sandy Reeve	Rose Hogan
John O'Hare	Ursula Ellerkamt	Jack Ellerkamt	

A heart-felt thanks is extended to each of the trainees and to the volunteers who led this excellent training session.

It is hoped that another training session can be held next year.

~ PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY ~

The women of the Prayer Shawl Ministry continue crocheting. The group meets each Thursday at a different member's home and share fellowship and fun. Come join us for the fun and needlework. Knitters are welcome, and if you would like to learn, come join us. Contact any of us to find the location.

The group includes, Jane Jones, LuAnne Seaman, Nancy and Sandy Daniels, Bunny Burns, Barbara Parsons, Fran Nill, Pat DiScioscia, Ginger Duvall and Marion Stark. A big thank you goes to Judy Blake who can't attend our weekly get-togethers, but makes beautiful pieces. ~ Marion Stark

~ LADIES NIGHT ~

The women of the church meet on the last Thursday of each month. This is an informal get together and the participants vary from month to month. The last couple of months we have met at Jerry and the Mermaid. It is open to all and is a wonderful opportunity for us to get to know each other. If you would like to join us, please let Deedee know by phone (631 369-9379) or by e-mail (deedeenewc@aol.com).

❧ MISSION REPORT ❧

On Sunday May third at the Suffolk Association meeting the Rev. 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 Your 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 24th, with a Mission Moment the previous week.

For the committee,
~ Janet Sanford

❧ 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.

❧ VISITATION ❧

Our visitation committee has continued to keep in touch with members of our congregation who are unable to attend services regularly and those who have been ill or hospitalized. In addition we have made condolence visits as necessary. If you become aware of someone who would like a visit, card, or phone call please let one of our visitation members know.

For the committee,
~ Janet Sanford

❧ BREAD AND MORE I.N.N. ❧

Bread and More I.N.N. continues to serve a delicious, hot dinner on Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday evenings from 5:30 to 6:30. The dedicated volunteers prepare and serve the meal, and then clean-up. The number of guests served has been lower than in previous years, but all are very appreciative of the meal received.

❧ FUND RAISING ❧

The spring quiche fundraiser will be Thursday, May 26. As always we need bakers for quiche and dessert, delivery drivers, salad preparers the Wednesday night before, and order takers. Susan Conrad will contact you by email, if you have volunteered previously.

New volunteers or those without email, please let Susan know that you are willing to help. See her in church, email her stc21756@gmail.com or call her 631 793-2801.

For the Capital Campaign, we will have a Chicken Barbeque, on June 12 in Grangebel Park. If you are available to help please let Collene Richardson know. We need volunteers to hull strawberries and to set up, serve and sell on Sunday, June 12. Email collenerichardson@msn.com or call 631 722-4089 and leave a message if you are able to help.

THANK YOU'S

Thank you to the men in the church who provided a delicious Mother's Day brunch after church on May 8th. The opportunity for fellowship was enhanced by good food and conversation. Men, get ready for royal treatment on Father's Day, June 19th.

~Sandy Gruner

I would like to send my heartfelt thanks to the visitation committee, Pastor and other church members for all the prayers, cards, calls and visits during my recent recovery.

~Peace and Love, Jane Jones

L.I.C.C.

Excerpts from the Long Island Council of Churches' newsletter:

The LICC is seeking a reliable temporary worker in our Riverhead emergency food pantry, Monday through Friday, particularly 9:30 to 4:00, while Marianita recovers from shoulder surgery. Must be able to lift 60 pounds occasionally. To apply, please contact Carolyn Gumbs at 631-727-2210.

The LICC also needs volunteers in our Riverhead office (220 Roanoke Ave. at 2nd St.) anytime 9:00 to 4:30, Monday through Friday, to help receive guests and sign them in, answer the phone, sort and shelve donations, and help with copying. Heavy lifting is not required of volunteers, though we certainly would not turn away one who is strong. If you can help, please contact Carolyn Gumbs at liccriverhead@optonline.net or 631-727-2210.

Calendar items:

Friday, May 20, 12:30	Eastern Area Steering Committee at the Birchwood in Riverhead
Monday, May 23	Working but Still Poor Conference at Tuoro Law Center in CI
Tuesday, May 24, 1:30	Multi-Faith Forum at Islamic Center in Westbury
Wednesday, May 25, 6:30 pm	LICC Finance Workshop at Momma's House in Hempstead
Thursday, May 26,	Multi-Faith Festival at Great Hollow Middle School in Nesconset
Monday, May 30	LICC offices closed for Memorial Day

Additionally, the Annual Meeting of the LICC was held Thursday, May 5, at the First Presbyterian Church of Smithtown. The program featured, "How to say 'Goodbye' and 'Hello!'" as the occasion marked the election of a new Executive Director, the Rev. Dyanne Pina. The Rev. Ms. Pina will begin her ministry with the LICC on June 1st. After many years of faithful service in ministry, the Rev. Tom Goodhue is retiring.

☞ 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 & Thursdays 10:00– 2:00; Saturdays 9:00-1:00
- Bible Study, Fridays 10:00-11:30, Fellowship Hall.
- Thursday, May 26 Quiche lunch fundraiser
- Sunday, May 29 Mosaic Street Painting Festival, Noon-5:00, Main Street
- Sunday, June 12 Our Chicken Barbeque, 4:00pm – 7:00pm in Grangebel Park
- Sunday, June 19 Father's Day Breakfast after church

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**UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**

