



∞ THE BEACON LIGHT ∞

✝ NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 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

∞ PASTOR'S NOTE ∞

Dear Friends and Members of our First Congregational Church,

Grace and peace of our God of abundance to you. Here's hoping you have some pep in the step and smiles to share. If not, deep breaths, a prayer, and thoughts of the season might well help.

The season of Thanksgiving is upon us. A common exercise this time of year is to invite children around the table in church or at home to name what they are thankful for. I like it. And I'm convinced the exercise shouldn't be for children only. I'm also convinced that it shouldn't be solely reserved for Thanksgiving celebrations.

Through my conversations with others, I've learned well that many of us are dealing with a variety of issues that run the risk of raising the stress levels and lowering the spirits. Additionally, the waning sunlight of our days seems to do very little to help cheer our hearts (hmm, imagine that). It's not hard to fall into despair or lament.

In addition to being a rather unavoidable downside of the living of our days, lamentation is actually a part of the life of faith. There's even a book in the Hebrew Scriptures (aka, OT) that's entitled "Lamentations." It's not a particularly joyful read (go figure). However, after bemoaning through two-plus chapter of sorrows, the author's spirits finally pick up in the last chapter; there we find words for all of us. Lamentations 3:21-26 reads:

But this I call to mind,
and therefore I have hope:
The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases,
his mercies never come to an end;
they are new every morning;
great is your faithfulness.
'The LORD is my portion,' says my soul,
therefore I will hope in him.'
The LORD is good to those who wait for him,
to the soul that seeks him.
It is good that one should wait quietly
for the salvation of the LORD.

Even one who has endured much reminds us that even in tough times there are reasons to hope and to give thanks. These are sentiments worth hanging on to. If the season of waning light, weeks of dealing with issues, or just basic holiday blues have you feeling down, revisit the Lamenters' words.

Another great thing to do is to start each morning with a prayer of thanksgiving. Consider, each new day, what you have to be thankful for. List a bunch of the blessings. Then hold onto them as you maneuver through the stressors, worry triggers, pains, and huddled masses of the Advent season.

Additionally, two shorter-term fixes for brighter, more thankful hearts are offered for us this month. The first is our Riverhead Interfaith Thanksgiving Service. Clergy from our area churches and local temple will again lead a Service of Thanksgiving. As is our tradition, that will be the Sunday before Thanksgiving (Nov. 22). This year the service is at 4:00pm at Riverhead United Methodist Church. The prayerful power and witness of people of mixed faith traditions coming together is wonderful and is sure to cheer your spirits. Then the following Sunday afternoon (Nov. 29), doors open to the majestic Suffolk Theater for a musical benefit for our church. The "Raise the Roof" concert will feature three bands: Who Are Those Guys?, Blue Ice, and Mean Gene and the Flame Throwers. It's sure to get your good foot tapping, your face smiling, and your heart happy and thankful for a fine night out.

Please read on for more news of our adventures, concerns, and good reason to give thanks.

Blessings your way this day. Happy Thanksgiving, and a grace-filled Advent season to you. Hope to see you in church!

With thanks to God for all of you,
Pastor Sean

🌀 CAPITAL FUND CAMPAIGN 🌀

We are starting to see the thermometer on our sign in front of the church rise ever so slightly as the Capital Fund Campaign progresses. At this writing, we have taken in \$76,000 which has already been spent on the renovation of the Sanctuary. In addition, we received excellent news that the New York Landmarks Conservancy is awarding us a sizeable grant, up to \$50,000 depending on our final expenses. We also anticipate that we will receive another grant in the next few months from the Gardiner Foundation which could cover up to half of all our expenses.

Even though this sounds like a lot of money, it falls short significantly of our projected needs for the renovation needs. We must continue to stay diligent in our efforts to raise funds until all the work is complete.

With that said, we all need to thank those who have either generously donated or pledged monies to the campaign fund. It takes a congregation to make a church; without each and every one of us doing our part, we will not be able to restore our beautiful Sanctuary.

In addition to donations, we are starting to realize income from other campaign efforts. The Cooperage Inn dinner profited \$3700 and we are ever so grateful for the generosity of the management of the Cooperage Inn for the spectacular dinner. The Cash Raffle campaign is gaining momentum; we encourage everyone to either buy or sell a few tickets. We received \$200 in donations from people approaching the bake sale table at the street fair in October. Some dropped twenty dollar bills in our donation jar, others just a few dollars – it all adds up and we are very appreciative and grateful for every penny we receive towards the campaign.

Future events include a band concert at the Suffolk Theater on November 29 and an after service community brunch at the Dark Horse in January. Your support of these events is greatly needed. Even if you can't attend, it would be great if you could buy a ticket. Please step forward and volunteer to help make these events successful.

~ Marion Maino
For the Committee

❧ CHRISTIAN EDUCATION ❧

Our mighty Sunday School under the direction of Sue Hubbard, Shelly Walker and Cathy Musick has been keeping very busy.

On September 12 the children helped out with the Card and Game Party and received many compliments for their service. A very successful car wash was held on September 27, garnering \$456 for the Capital Campaign Fund. Fourteen children and adults worked on this project. Several of the children helped out with the Yard Sale on the day of the Country Fair.

Confirmation class began meeting again on October 18. AJ Walker and Matthew LaCombe will meet every other week with James Wooten. Beginning in January, Pastor Sean will supplement their lessons, at a time to announced. Confirmation will take place at the end of May, 2017.

Adult Bible Study began on October 23. Pastor Sean is picking up in Exodus where he left off last spring.

As part of the Capital Campaign, the children with the help of Shelly Walker and James Wooten are writing a letter to Bill and Melinda Gates, asking for funds from their foundation. The children will be including pictures from their recent car wash along with pictures from the shopping expeditions, funded with the proceeds from the Lenten banks.

College kits for six of our youth were packed on November 8 by the Sunday School and notes were written to be included in the packages.

On December 13, the Sunday School will participate in an Advent Fair. The following Sunday the children will actively participate in the service, lighting the candles, taking up collection, doing readings, leading the Lord's Prayer and...delivering the sermon! Are you ready?!

There will not be Sunday School on December 27. Lenten banks will be handed out February 7. Thank you to each and every one of you who have contributed in any way to the endeavors of the Sunday School. Your support and participation are deeply appreciated!

~ Ginger Duvall

~ BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS ~

Progress continues to be made on the restoration of our church. The church now stands on its own. All of the cribbing that was holding everything up has been removed. The next step is to finish sheathing the roofing and getting a roofer in to install the shingles. Once that is complete the new ceiling can be installed. After that, cleaning and painting and getting the pews back in place. We have come so far over the last 6 months. What once seemed like an impossible task is now coming to an end. With God's help you can accomplish anything. Finding the right people to do the work was surely guidance from above; that I am sure of. We are still hoping to have our church back for the Christmas Eve Service. I sure hope so.

~ Ron Blake
Chairman, Buildings & Grounds



☞ 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 (store bought goodies are fine). The signup sheet is on the kitchen door in the fellowship hall.

Special thanks are extended to all of our volunteers who regularly jump in to help us out with all of our fellowship events. These days, most of our events are being handled through our Capital Campaign committee and fundraisers. Hope to see you at them.

☞ PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY ☞

The women of the Prayer Shawl Ministry are now crocheting hats and scarves for Maureen's Haven. The group meets each Thursday at a different member's home and share fellowship and fun. Come join us for the fun and needlework. 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. It is open to all and is a wonderful opportunity for us to get to know each other better. Due to Thanksgiving and Christmas the next dinner will be on Thursday, December 10. 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 (631 369-9379) or by email (deedeenewc@aol.com).

☞ PUBLIC RELATIONS AND EVANGELISM ☞

The work of the Committee continues to be to support the Capital Campaign Committee. Radio spots on WLNG, articles in the News Review, Newsday's Calendar of Events, Dans Papers have all featured information on our situation and fundraising opportunities. At the Suffolk Association's Fall Meeting held Saturday, November 7th, posters for the cash raffle were distributed. It is our hope to have information regarding fundraising projects be placed in the church bulletins of all the local churches regardless of denomination. On an evangelism note, the phrase "Do not be afraid" is written in the Bible 365 times. This is a daily reminder from God to be fearless every day. During this time of great renewal and restoration, may we always be reminded of God's presence in our lives.

~ 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.

❧ VISITATION ❧

As the year draws to a close, we plan our visits around Thanksgiving and Christmas. For the November holiday, we generally send out Thanksgiving cards and make visits as able. At Christmas time we give have traditionally given out poinsettias, but have found over the past several years that many health care facilities don't allow live plants, so have made adjustments as needed. Whenever possible, a home visit is part of our holiday program, but if a great distance is involved, a Christmas card is mailed.

As always, we ask if you are aware of any of our church family in need of a visit or a get well card, please pass on the information to our committee.

~ Janet Sanford

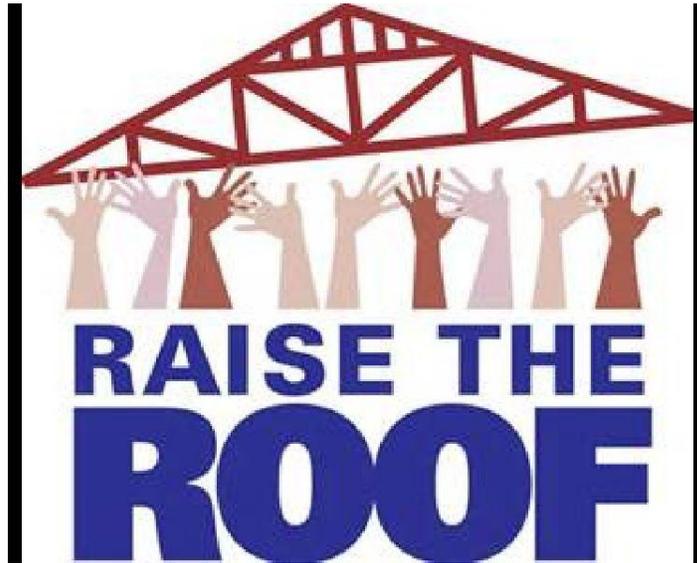
❧ BREAD & MORE I.N.N ❧

Volunteers continue their good works of serving a full warm dinner to members of the community (no questions asked) three nights a week on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday. We gratefully acknowledge being able to serve along with the dinner, two times a month, peanut butter and jelly sandwiches prepared and delivered to us by the good folk at St Mark's of Shoreham. As is expected as the colder weather approaches and outdoor jobs are no longer available, our numbers served are increasing to 70 and 80 a night. One recent night had close to 100. A successful fund raiser under the guidance of co-president Judy Barth was held at Hallockville on Oct 9.

~ Deedee Newcomb

~ FUND RAISING ~

Thanks to the many volunteers who are truly blessings to our church, the yard and bake sale and the quiche luncheon were both successful. It is amazing what the hands of few and the hands of many can accomplish. If you didn't have an opportunity to volunteer there will be other chances to help our church and join in fellowship with some very special folks.



OUR SUFFOLK THEATER CONCERT EVENT!

Sunday, November 29, 6pm

Raise the Roof Fundraiser to benefit

First Congregational Church of Riverhead's Restoration Efforts.

All ticket proceeds go to benefit the
First Congregational Church of Riverhead.

FEATURING BLUE ICE, MEAN GENE AND THE FLAME THROWERS,

& WHO ARE THOSE GUYS

Tickets \$25

Ticket options for this event includes:
row seating, and cabaret seating.

Doors, Bar & Restaurant open at 5:30. Music Starts at 6:00.

Cash Bar, A La Carte Menu available for additional purchase.

Tickets available at: www.suffolktheater.com

❧ MISSION REPORT ❧

Our most recent mission, Neighbors in Need, done in October brought in \$229. Our other mission efforts include the local CROP Walk on October 18th and our college kit distribution done in November. The college kit collection is a joint outreach project done with the Sunday School.

The next upcoming UCC mission will be at Christmas time. It is known now as the Christmas Fund, and formerly as Veteran's of the Cross. Monies raised through this effort support retired ministers as well as current ministers going through difficult times.

As a congregation we have always generously supported our mission outreach programs and have been a "Five for Five" church for many years. Having heard the powerful message given by the Reverend Dr. Marcia Williams, associate pastor of the New York Conference, on the meaning of being in a covenant relationship, I feel especially thankful to be a member of a church committed to helping our wider mission efforts, even at a time when we ourselves are in desperate need of funding to rebuild our beautiful sanctuary.

~Janet Sanford

❧ CROP WALK ❧

On Sunday October 18th our church joined four other area churches in the annual CROP walk. There were 5 members representing us, (Shelly and AJ Walker, Barbara Parsons, Pat DiScosia, and Janet Sanford) and our contribution was a little over \$700. The total amount raised was \$2300 which will be distributed between the local LICC and our Church's Wider Mission. Our Bread and More/INN soup kitchen recently received a check for over \$400 from our participation in last year's CROP Walk.

The weather was perfect—sunny and cool, and we had wonderful support from the Riverhead police to insure safety at the numerous street crossings on our 5 K route. Many thanks to all who donated so generously to this most worthwhile cause!

~Janet Sanford

❧ SUFFOLK ASSOCIATION ❧

The Suffolk Association Fall Meeting was held on Saturday November 7th at the Baiting Hollow Congregational Church. Four delegates attended: Deedee Newcomb, Jane Kulesa, Janet Sanford and Sandy Gruner. The meeting began with a beautiful and moving devotion given by Pastor Stan Knavel. The business meeting commenced with the usual approval of the minutes of the Spring meeting and review of the 2016 budget. A new line in the budget was added for a Unified Fitness Board whose responsibility would be to determine the fitness of a Pastor for service. Ann Van Cleef spoke about the UCCNY Women's Conference which is held at Painted Post, New York each spring. Rev. Van Cleef urged all women to attend and said there would be some scholarship money available for women who might want to attend. Information will be available early next year.

Long Island Council of Churches report is available later in this newsletter.

There was a report from the General Synod delegate who spoke about the possible restructuring of the Conference. A task force will be formed to review the Constitution and by-laws of the Suffolk Association which will report back to the body at the Spring meeting.

The program for the day was given by the Rev. Dr. Marsha Williams, Associate Conference Minister, on Covenant in the UCC. It was an inspirational talk that reaffirmed the need to not only speak of the covenant but to live it; to not talk about "our" church, but God's church and to see that the commitment to work together involves responsibility, accountability, and interdependence. These three facets support autonomy and the interconnectedness with Christians everywhere. Dr. Williams is also conducting sacred conversations on race in two upstate locations and we, as an Association, hope that one can be planned on the east end of Long Island soon.

~ Sandy Gruner

☞ COLLEGE KITS ☞

In early November college kits were sent out to six young people from our church family who are currently attending college. Thanks to your generous donations the boxes were filled to capacity with lots of food snacks, stationery supplies, and personal care items. Our Sunday School children, with the help of their teachers, filled them as part of their class time on Sunday Nov. 7th. Each box contained a hand written note from the student with best wishes from us here at First Congregational. Postage for mailing was also donated, and we thank everyone who contributed to this long-standing popular project. The young people in college appreciate the goodies and are thankful to know they are being thought of by their friends here in Riverhead.

☞ LONG ISLAND COUNCIL OF CHURCHES ☞

It has been announced that Tom Goodhue is planning to retire as executive director of the Council, perhaps within the year. The Board of Governors is in the process of forming a search committee to seek a new candidate. This person will have big shoes to fill, and it is hoped that he or she may have time with Tom to learn the "some of the ropes" for this important job.

The Eastern Area Steering committee is hosting a gathering of outreach ministries on the east end this Friday Nov 13, at Riverhead Methodist Church to share information.

The Council is again hosting their annual Migrant/Community Thanksgiving dinner on TUESDAY, November 24 at Polish Hall on Pulaski Street. Volunteers are welcomed and needed, especially for cleanup. Call Carolyn Gumbs at 727 2210.

~ Deedee Newcomb

☞ 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 10AM–2PM, Saturdays 9AM-1PM
- Bible Study, Fridays 10:00AM-11:00AM, Fellowship Hall.
- Sunday, November 22, Riverhead Interfaith Thanksgiving Service, at the Riverhead United Methodist Church, 4PM
- Sunday, November 29 Raise the Roof fundraiser, Suffolk Theater 5:30PM
- Sunday, December 13 Sunday School Advent Fair

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UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST

