



## ☞ THE BEACON LIGHT ☞

✝ MARCH/APRIL 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](http://www.fccr.us)

## ☞ PASTOR'S NOTE ☞

Dear Friends and Members of our First Congregational Church,

The snowless, brown and barren landscape of late winter is dreary. Even in days of sunshine, the garden in front of our church is looking particularly sad and beaten up. Sticks, leaves, large dead branches litter the beds and the large empty spaces where giant hosta once grew. The old and stately tree that served as a centerpiece of the garden is gone; only a very wide stump remains. A pile of tree refuse sits on the front lawn, just behind our church sign. The front of our building with chipped and cracked paint serves as a backdrop.

Maundy Thursday. A betrayer reclines with the others at the table. The bread, the "body," is broken. The wine, "the blood," is poured out. In the garden, disciples sleep while the Savior prays. Men come with clubs and swords. False testimony. Lies. Arrest. Beatings and spit. Denial. More lies.

Good Friday. A mock trial serves as little else but a pretense of justice. A gruesome crucifixion follows. The feet and hands are nailed to the cross. Blood drips. Cries are heard. "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Death prevails.

Darkness. Sadness. Emptiness. Hope stolen and broken. Even when the body is taken down, wrapped, and laid in a tomb, there is only lament and tears.

It's messy. It rips at the heart. Yet God makes it work. God works through, and at times even in spite of, human actors. The evil retreats, at least for awhile. The good do their part. The third day arrives. The emptiness gives way to promise. Hope is born anew. "Resurrection" is declared. Jesus lives! Pascha. Easter.

We see it each year as nature awakens from its winter slumber. There are already signs of new life. A crocus blooms. Green tips of spring flowering bulbs poke out from the brown earth. We've witnessed it, and are still witnessing it, with our sanctuary. It laid in dust-covered ruin, but now is again aglow with beauty. Garden work is about to begin. The beds will be cleaned, the pile will be hauled off. The church will get painted. God will help us secure the needed funds.

The dramatic mess, the heartbreak and the struggle, define and enhance the beauty of the recovery, the resurrection, the victory. Those who have travelled the dark and dusky beleaguered paths know well the rich blessedness of Easter light as healing takes hold.

As for our messes, special thanks go out to Allan Repp (a master gardener) for his work and willingness to bring the garden to new beauty. Other volunteers will be needed there as we cart things away, prune, thin out, and perhaps replant. Special thanks go out to Marion Maino for all her hard work of spearheading our Capital Campaign work, and thanks to you who have already helped much with that. Help is still very much needed. Thanks, too, to our Trustees who are at work in making it work for us as we figure out a plan and the contractors to get things done. God is good and will see us through.

Let the journey be a spiritual one too. Join us for our Holy Week and Easter services. Maundy Thursday and Good Friday will be celebrated at 7:00pm with our sister UCC congregations. We're at Baiting Hollow Congregational Church on Thursday, and Old Steeple Community Church on Friday. Come Easter, we will again offer Easter communion at our Easter Sunrise Service in Grangebel Park; that's at 7:00am. Our festive Paschal service is at 10:00am as usual, and will be followed by a time of fellowship with some "breads of the world."

May our God continue to bless you in the struggle and the celebration.

See you in church,

Pastor Sean

## ☞ CAPITAL FUND CAIMPAIGN ☞

The Sanctuary restoration work cost \$340,000; \$100,000 was paid from the Capital Fund Campaign monies raised in 2015; \$140,000 from church checking account and investments; plus \$100,000 from a loan. We are in a position where we must raise \$240,000 to replenish the working capital and investment accounts that are essential to the ongoing maintenance of church buildings and to pay off the loan. Please note the *Buildings and Grounds* report which has the Phase 2 restoration cost at \$132,500 and Phase 3 at \$31,500 (and this does not include the sanctuary air conditioner and sound system repairs). We have a lot of work in front of us.

Our major fund raising objectives for 2016 are targeted at reaching outside our church family for support and income. The brunch at the Dark Horse was successful, but we could have earned more than the \$3102 if we had more friends and neighbors attend.

We are already falling short on our capital fund goals for 2016. The cash raffle had the potential of \$24,000 in revenue; we will be fortunate if we realize \$7000 due to low ticket sales.

Our one major fund raising event for 2016 Raise the Roof Concert and Auction will be held on Sunday, April 24 at the Suffolk Theater. We encourage everyone to attend and to bring friends and neighbors with you. The event features a big band and choir concert conducted by George Moravek and a Chinese auction, silent auction and live auction. We are honoring Judy and Barry Barth for their dedication to the community of Riverhead and for helping those in need.

There are two tiers of ticket sales for the event:

3 pm - VIP hour including concert and auction - \$100 pp

Contact Barbara Parsons at 727-0103 for invitation

Includes open wine and beer bar, appetizers

4 pm - Concert and Auction tickets - \$35 pp available at Suffolk Theater box office and online at [suffolktheater.com](http://suffolktheater.com) 631 727-4343

This event has the potential of realizing over \$20,000 which will be contingent upon the number of people attending. It is up to all of us to reach outside our church family and sell tickets to friends and neighbors. This is our one major opportunity to raise much needed funds for the church restoration and maintenance.

The projected income for the capital fund campaign for the year 2016 is:

Dark Horse Brunch -	\$3,102.00 (actual)
Cash Raffle	\$7,000.00
Member 2016 Capital Fund Pledges -	\$38,410.00
Raise the Roof Concert and Auction -	\$25,000.00
Friends Donations -	\$5,000.00
Other fund raising events tbd	\$6,000.00
Total projected 2016 income	\$84,512.00

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.

Respectfully submitted,  
Marion Maino, Chair

There continues to be opportunities to contribute to our major fundraiser:

Chair

Bunny Burns, Cash Raffle Tickets Sales  
Nancy Repp, Journal Advertisements

Carol Gorman, Chinese Auction

Sue Conrad, Silent and Live Auction

Barbara Parsons, VIP ticket sales

What you can do

727-1576 *Sell ticket to neighbors and friends*

288-5315 *Help sell advertisements for event journal*

369-2877 *Donate or solicit gift cards from anywhere for the baskets/help day of the event*

793-2801 *Donate or solicit auction items/help day of the event*

727-3106 *Promote ticket sales to friends and neighbors*

## ❧ CHRISTIAN EDUCATION ❧

The Lenten Bible Study with Pastor Sean began on Friday, February 12 and will likely continue until May. There have been a dozen or more in attendance, including a few from other churches.

In Sunday School, the children have begun a unit on Lent. Church banks have been distributed to the congregation to raise money which will be used to shop for supplies for the LICC food bank. Banks will be collected at the end of Lent. On Souper Bowl Sunday, February 7th, cans of soup and money were collected.

~ Ginger Duvall

## ❧ BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS ❧

Things have been fairly quiet over the last two months. It's nice to have some time to reflect on our accomplishments and get ready to start phase two of our capital restoration. Phase two will include preparation and painting of the exterior of the church. We also will be replacing the front stairs and landing. We also received an estimate to repair the broken stained glass window and restore the other windows to their original condition. Before we can proceed with phase two, we will have to know what grant money we will be receiving. Some items may have to be put off until our finances have been replenished.

I know that everything will get done in God's time. We just have to keep the faith and continue to work hard on our capital campaign.

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

## ☞ PUBLIC RELATIONS AND EVANGELISM ☞

Our committee met on Tuesday, March 1st to talk about where we are and where we would like to go. The work of the Committee has been taken up with the Capital Campaign and we wanted to refocus on some of the projects we had begun before the Capital Campaign. We spoke about updating our brochure, reissuing the pew cards on stronger stock and adding to the bulletin board in the Fellowship Hall to reflect the courage and challenge of recovery. We also spoke about a column in the News Review written by Pastor Sean and fellow members of the UCC to shine attention on our churches' place in the community and the wider world. The Committee would like each member and friend to have a name tag. If you have lost your name tag or were never given one, please contact the church office so one can be made. As a joint venture with Christian Ed, we will be looking into a weekend vacation bible school. As always, any ideas or comments are always welcome.

Happy Easter,  
Sandy Gruner

## ☞ LENTEN BANKS ☞

Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent, was Wednesday, February 3rd. For the last two years we, as a congregation, made a commitment to add something during Lent, rather than give something up. Each family was given a Lenten bank. We have asked you to put the bank on the table or wherever you gather for a meal. Throughout Lent, as you reflect on your bounty and blessing, please consider putting your loose change in the bank. At the end of Lent, the Sunday School children, their parents and teachers, go grocery shopping with the money that has been collected. The food is then brought to the Long Island Council of Church's Food Pantry to feed the hungry here in Riverhead. Money that is not used for food is used to help the Food Pantry with other expenses. This mission project yielded over \$800 last year thanks to your unending generosity. We hope that during this season of Lent, feeding the hungry becomes a commitment that we all share. If you can, please return your bank on the Sunday following Easter. Let us pray: Heavenly Father, thank you for the opportunity to help people in our community who are hungry and struggling to survive. We are blessed and want to share what you have given us. Help us to know the satisfaction of adding rather than giving up during Lent. In your Holy name we pray. Amen.

## ☞ 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](mailto:deedeenewc@aol.com)).

## ❧ MISSION REPORT ❧

On March 13<sup>th</sup> our first of five UCC special offerings was collected—One Great Hour of Sharing. The major portion of the funds collected go toward refugee efforts around the world. In 2014, 2.2million dollars were collected toward this cause. The next of our special offerings will be in May, this one focused on Strengthening the Church.

During Lent there is an ongoing mission to raise funds for the Long Island Council of Churches. Please see the separate article regarding our Lenten banks.

Hygiene kits are being collected for UCC Women's Conference held this year in May at Watson Homestead in upstate N.Y. If you'd like to contribute a kit, please see me for a list of items to be included. And if you are interested in attending the 3 day conference, I have a packet of information with all the details.

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 ❧

At present plans are in the works for Easter/spring visits and cards for those unable to come out to church services. This spring we are coordinating the visits with Pastor Sean to offer communion to those who would like to receive it in their homes.

As always, we on the visitation committee try to reach out to those who are ill, in the hospital or nursing homes, or just unable to get out. If you are aware of someone needing a visit, call, or card please let one of us know.

For the committee,  
~ Janet Sanford

## ❧ BREAD AND MORE I.N.N. ❧

The soup kitchen with its affiliation with The Interfaith Nutrition Network continues to serve the community with a full hot dinner 3 evenings a week on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday at 5:30 PM. No questions asked. Each night has a dedicated crew of volunteers that arrive in the mid afternoon to set up and prepare, later to serve and clean up. The numbers served can be anywhere from 50 to 100 a night. Financial support is received from many sources: Grants, local churches and service organizations, and many regular individual donors. Heartfelt gratitude is often expressed by the guests for these special meals.

## ❧ 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. You will be contacted, so be prepared to lovingly say yes. New this year for the Capital Campaign, we will have a Chicken Barbeque, on June 12 in Grangebelle Park. Save the date and again be prepared to graciously say yes when asked to help. And when you see Dee from the Dark Horse, please say THANK YOU. She is generously providing a way for us to undertake this endeavor.



**Tickets are now on sale at the Suffolk Theater**  
**RAISE THE ROOF CONCERT**

To Benefit the Restoration of the  
**First Congregational Church of Riverhead**

*\* Honoring Judy and Barry Barth \**

George Moravek, Musical Director

Raise the Roof Singers

Island Jazz Express Big Band

Sunday, April 24, 2016

VIP Reception 3:00 - 4:00

\$100.00 VIP tickets (includes cocktails, food, concert & auctions)

Call Barbara 727-3106

\$35.00 General Admission to Concert & Auctions 4:00

Purchase at Suffolk Theater or [suffolktheater.com](http://suffolktheater.com)

631 727-4343

Suffolk Theater, Main Street, Riverhead

Purchase event journal congratulatory message

Contact Nancy Repp at 921-6778



## **CPR/AED Training**

**Saturday, April 2, 2016**

**9:30-12:30**

**First Congregational Church of Riverhead**

A training class for CPR/AED has been scheduled. Enrollment is open to all who are interested. The morning spent learning CPR and use of the AED is very worthwhile, especially when this knowledge may save a life. Those who have been trained may want to be retrained as certification expires after two years.

Class size is limited to eighteen. Much of the training is done on the floor, so trainees may want to bring a cushion to kneel on.

It would be great if various groups within the church and other groups who use the church could have someone trained.

Questions or to sign up, contact:

Jane at 727-4461 or call the church office at 727-2621

## ☞ 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, Fridays 10:00AM-11:00AM, Fellowship Hall. Beginning February 4
- Maundy Thursday, March 24 Baiting Hollow Congregational Church 7:00PM
- Good Friday, March 25 Old Steeple Community Church 7:00PM
- Easter Sunday, March 27 Easter Sunrise Service Grangebel Park 7:00AM
- Easter Sunday, March 27, 10:00AM\*
- Sunday, April 24 Raise the Roof fundraiser, Suffolk Theater

\* **IMPORTANT:** Please get your orders for Easter lilies into the church office by noon on Palm Sunday, March 20th.

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**UNITED CHURCH  
OF CHRIST**

