

NOVEMBER 2009

THE WHOLE BODY OF CHRIST
giving thanks to God

ALL SAINTS SUNDAY WORSHIP

Sunday, November 1

10:00 AM

The Sanctuary

--giving God thanks for those who have gone before us

INTERFAITH WORSHIP

Sunday, November 8

10:00 AM

The Sanctuary

--giving God thanks for the common joy we share in faith

ORDINATION OF CHRIS DELMAR

Sunday, November 15

4:00 PM

The Sanctuary

--giving God thanks for God's call to clergy to serve the church

THANKSGIVING SUNDAY

Sunday, November 22

10:00 AM

The Sanctuary

--giving God thanks for the harvests of this earth

“Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, **serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received.**” (2 Peter 4.10)

As I write this column I have before me my pledge card for support of the WPC Operating Budget in 2010—you know, for the kind for the infrastructure “stuff” that enables our church home to be open; the staff who makes the church and our joint venture with St. Matthew’s run day-by-day, week-by-week, month-by-month; and provides support for the programs and mission that lay at the core of who we are as a Christian community. I will complete my pledge before this coming Sunday and delightfully present it as my thank offering to God at the Celebration of Stewardship at the Lillie’s home following worship. Our pledges—yours and mine—are the hub of the wheel that makes WPC both go and grow. I encourage you to join me and serve this body of Christ and the God who makes our gathering possible by submitting your pledge of support as promptly and as generously as you are able.

And yet... And yet, while the hub is essential to the wheel’s effective work, it is the spokes that connect the wheel’s hub to its rim that makes contact with the earth. In short, while the spokes would collapse under pressure without the hub, the hub itself needs the spokes to move well. This stewardship is a central, but hardly the only grace of God evident in our life together, **servicing others with whatever gifts each of us has received.**

Last Sunday, courtesy of Ann White and WPC’s Mission Committee, we welcomed Angela Larkan, Executive Director of the Thanda project in South Africa, to worship and, following worship, to a jewelry sale in the Lounge. Thanda After-School provides a full, diverse after-school program for children orphaned by HIV/AIDS and the Thanda Jewelry Project provides employment for women who make jewelry for sale in the United States. Proceeds from this sale, in addition to supporting these working women, also underwrite the cost of Thanda After-School. At worship, members spontaneously applauded Angela for her commitment and dedication in the Thanda project and, after worship (together with St. Matthew’s Episcopalians), raised from the jewelry sale \$8,250 to serve others—enough to support the after-school program for an entire month! How generously you have **served others!**

In this Newsletter, you will note elsewhere that Session has received a bequest from the estate of Janet Sprout which Session has designated for the WPC General Endowment Fund. Earnings from the endowment funds are distributed each year, with half of its grants targeted for mission projects advocated by members of the congregation **to serve others.** Unique at WPC is that, by charter, none...as in zero, nada, goose egg...of these earnings go to the General Operating Budget.

This coming Sunday, November 1, Jennifer Reese will present an opportunity to worshippers to fill Thanksgiving baskets for Wilton folks in need identified by Wilton Social Services and for Connecticut foster children through Covenant to Care. I know and you know how many folk at WPC have raised their hands at worship to fill a basket **to serve others** by providing the most basic of human needs: food and clothing.

The Gift of Christmas catalogue, begun at WPC almost 20 years ago and now including St. Matthew’s Episcopal and Wilton Congregational churches will be mailed out the week of Thanksgiving. This “alternative Christmas” catalogue lists opportunities for Christmas giving for local, regional, and international agencies serving people in need—from chickens and crayons, to water buffalo and oil heat. Many eagerly await the catalogue and look forward to passing along the “angels of our better natures” to others as a Christmas symbol of gifts members and friends here give **to serve others.**

Servicing others: it’s what we Christians do. It’s what WPC does. All these opportunities for giving, I believe, are possible because of your stewardship of God’s manifold graces. They are opportunities for us **to serve others.** And they are, each and all, examples of what a joyously generous congregation you are.

Grace and Peace,

David Graybill
Your Pastor

WORSHIP AT WILTON

Sunday, November 1, 2009
Pentecost 22
ALL SAINTS' SUNDAY

Reading of the Necrology of Wilton Presbyterian Church
The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper
Presentation of Bibles to 4th Grade Seekers
Family Sunday
David Graybill, preaching

Call/Worship: Lisa Caswell
Scripture: Hebrews 11.1, 4, 8, 23, 32-34; 12.1-3
Ushers: Steve, Patty, Shelby & Brendan Connor
Hymns: 526 For All the Saints
364 I Sing a Song of the Saints of God
Anthems: Highland Cathedral
Pilgrim's Hymn
In Remembrance

Sunday, November 8, 2009
Pentecost 23
The Service for the Lord's Day

Interfaith Service with
Temple B'nai Chaim and American Institute for Islamic Studies
Kareem Adeeb, Leah Cohen, and David Graybill, preaching

Reader: Christy Kinsman
Scripture: Ecclesiastes 3.1-8
Ushers: Greg, Carolyn & Lindsay Wheeler
Hymns: 264 When In Our Music God is Glorified
554 Let All Things Now Living
564 America the Beautiful
Anthems: To Everything There is a Season
New Jerusalem
One Voice

Sunday, November 15, 2009
Pentecost 24
The Service for the Lord's Day

The Sacrament of Baptism
A Guest Minister, preaching

Call/Worship: John Celentano
Reader: Mark Rice
Hymns: 476 O Worship the King
527 Near to the Heart of God
361 How Firm a Foundation
Anthem: Be Still My Soul

Sunday, November 22, 2009
Christ the King
In the WPC Sanctuary

The Giving of Five Grains
David Graybill, preaching

Reader: Patty Connor
Scripture: Psalm 100; Colossians 2.6-7
Ushers: Bruce, Debra, Christine, Jennifer & Ryan Gehrlein
Hymns: 551 Come, Ye Thankful People, Come
559 We Gather Together
555 Now Thank We All Our God
Anthems: Seek First the Kingdom
Sing to the Lord of Harvest

Sunday, November 29, 2009
Advent 1
Joint Service of Wilton Presbyterians and St. Matthew's Episcopalians
In Parish Hall

Episcopal Eucharist
Mary Grace Williams, preaching

MORNING PRAYER

Every Thursday
7:15 AM
In the Sanctuary

THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

This sacrament will be celebrated again on Sundays, November 15 and December 13. Parents wishing to present their child(ren) for this sacrament are urged to contact the church office as far in advance as possible. Ordinarily, only two baptisms are celebrated at a single service in order to preserve its specialness for children, families, and congregation alike.

A bequest from
the Estate of Janet E. Sprout
has been received and given to
The WPC Endowment Fund

CELEBRATION OF STEWARDSHIP

Please join us on Sunday November 1st immediately after worship at the home of Lisa and Jim Lillie, 230 Nod Hill Road in Wilton for a BBQ celebration of our fall Stewardship campaign. Please bring your pledge card, if you have not already returned it, and please bring a friend or neighbor who might also enjoy our community of fellowship. BBQ, drinks and Halloween/Harvest treats provided.

WEPCO WORKDAY
Save the Date
Saturday, November 21st

Please volunteer for the SMC/WPC/WEPCO WORKDAY

- Where? Right here, at our church complex
- When? Saturday, November 21st 9 A.M. 'til Noon
- What? Fall cleaning; simple projects indoors and out
- Why? Our church home needs your loving care
- What's in it for me? Lots of fun, fellowship, coffee and donuts!

For details talk to: Jim Neighbors, Mac MacGregor, Steve Connor, Kevin Quinn, Dave Hapke, Matt Schmitt, Chip Fuller or Sandy Muschler.

CHURCH SCHOOL NEWS

Wanted: Gently Used Winter Clothing for Children & Infants for the Mercy Learning Center in Bridgeport and food/paper good donations for the Norwalk Emergency Shelter and Wilton Food Bank. Donations accepted until Thanksgiving. Place donations in the blue box outside the Christian Education Office.

Advent Calendars: Celebrate the Meaning of Advent with a Child

- Sunday, November 15th-2:30 to 4:00 pm in the Upper Core
or
9 am to 4 pm Monday, November 16 through Friday, November 20th
- Come assemble an Advent Calendar designed for children ages 4 years to 5th grade.
- A donation of \$9.00 covers the cost of the materials.
- Please call the church school office (762-7992) or send an email (JCCEC@hotmail.com) to reserve a calendar.

Thanksgiving Mission Project: Empowering Your Children To Be Givers

- November 15th children make gifts in their classrooms
- November 22nd families deliver the gift bags as a way to give smiles to 20 friends in our two churches

Joyful Noise on November 8th.

November 29th -Holiday Church School Sunday (children grades 4th and up attend worship with their families).

WOMEN'S MINISTRIES NEWS

In the past three months, a new chapter has begun for WPC's Women's Ministries program. Women have opened their homes and their hearts to one another, beginning in August with a summer social at the home of Cathy Thomas, and continuing with an early September gathering at the home of Sandy Shifrin. September 18 marked the beginning of another six-week installment of "A Girlfriend's Guide to the Bible," and the women who gathered on Friday mornings for those six weeks laughed more than anyone should in a Bible study class!! In October, we resurrected the tradition of Friday Evening Gatherings as we met at Jane Field's home to discuss the importance of friendships in our lives. Friday, November 6, our next evening gathering will be at the home of Linda Rost, when we will roll up our sleeves and work on our "Women Helping Women" mission project, preparing care packages for female soldiers serving in Iraq and Afghanistan. All women friends and members of WPC are welcome to join us!

NOTES FROM THE CHOIR ROOM

Hard to believe, but Christmas is only weeks away. And that brings up two things. The first is a sincere request:

My annual ChoirPlus message. If you want to play a role in our annual Big Music Sunday (or BAAAMS – Big Al's Amazing Advent Music Sunday) by participating in an expanded Sanctuary Choir, please let me know ASAP. I'll get a choir folder prepared for you. This year BAAAMS will be on December 20. The Choir has already started rehearsing some of the music we'll be singing, so if you want to join us for ChoirPlus, it's important you hook up with us now. And it's equally important you attend as many rehearsals as possible between now and the 12/20 service.

Second is an equally sincere plea:

Our Special Music Fund is in need of some financial assistance. Periodically, we hire extra musicians – trumpeters, vocal soloists, etc. – to bolster special music planned for special services. Big Music Sunday is a major example. So if you feel moved to help support our 2009 Musical Economic Stimulus Package, please consider making a hilariously large gift to the Special Music fund. The opportunity to write that check is particularly easy leading up to Thanksgiving and Christmas. Susie even has my Brazilian forwarding address. (*Kidding!*)

On an entire different, but somewhat related note, I received a card this week from WPC member Jane Neighbors; enclosed was a newspaper clipping – a letter-to-the-editor which had appeared in the 10/4/09 edition of the NY Times Sunday Magazine. The author of the letter was a gentleman named Richard A. Block. It hit a home run with me and I thought it worth passing it along at this time. So here is Mr. Block's letter in its entirety:

Headline: *Is There a Right Way to Pray?*

Text: *Personal, private prayer thrives on solitude, but the spiritual engine of communal prayer is music. Whether it be the praise band of the Brooklyn Tabernacle, the "old-time music" of Berkeley Springs' love church, the antiphonal call and response of the Roman Catholic Mass, austere Gregorian chants, our Reform synagogue's packed services or the powerful gospels of the African-American Baptist church that makes its home in our auditorium, music lifts the spirit, stirs the soul and enables us to experience transcendence in ways that even the most well-written liturgy cannot. Those who seek to learn how to pray should look for a congregation where the music is inspiring and worshipers sing their hearts out. (Boldface for emphasis.)*

The author of the letter, Mr. Block, is Senior Rabbi at Temple Tifereth Israel, Beechwood, Ohio.

Hallelujah!!

Al

NOTES ON PEOPLE

We hold close in prayer Rick Smith, brother of Kit Smith, who has been hospitalized for a perforated ulcer in Lowell, Massachusetts.

We extend our Christian sympathy to Carole Telyan at the death of her father, Carey, on Monday, September 28 in Columbia, Missouri. A service of Tribute and Celebration of his life will be held at the Missouri United Methodist Church in Columbia on Saturday, November 21.

We hold close in prayer former WPC member, Bob Dillingham, father of Carol Rowe, who underwent hip replacement surgery last in Sarasota, Florida.

and Heather Sacktleben, friend of Jane Melani, who has been a patient at Stonybrook University Hospital in New York.

We extend our Christian sympathy to Patty Connor at the death of her mother, Judy Griswold, on Saturday, October 24. Her funeral service was held in Milford on Wednesday, October 28.

Phil Jacoby's father, Phil, continues his battle against lung cancer in Wilmington, North Carolina.

Skip Ploss is home recuperating from an appendectomy on Sunday, October 4th.

Congratulations to Melissa Friedman and Stephen Baker, friends of the church, who were married at Brandford House in Groton, CT on Saturday, October 3.

and to Tobin Waskom and Ted Bassani, who were married on Saturday, October 10 in the WPC Sanctuary. Tobin is the daughter of Pat and Mike Waskom.

and to Whitney Richards and Seth Wensinger who were married in the WPC Sanctuary on Saturday, October 24. Whitney is the daughter of Gary and Sheri Richards.

We hold close in prayer Gladys Bendix, mother of Bill Bendix, who continues to battle lung cancer at Sunrise Assisted Living in Wilton.

We extend our Christian sympathy to Gary Richards at the death of his father, Paul, on Sunday, October 25 in Sun City West, Arizona.

Bob Miller, friend of Sam Halsey, in West Boylston, MA, is battling esophageal cancer at Massachusetts Medical Center in Worcester, MA.

Debbie Gehrlein is recuperating with physical therapy after shattering her left wrist following a fall at home. She had surgery on Thursday, October 15.

Congratulations to Heather Wilson who completed the Marine Corps Marathon on October 24th.

We extend our Christian sympathy to Karen Zurheide and her children, Molly and Andrew, at the death of her husband and their father, Jeffrey, of cancer at Dartmouth-Hutchinson Hospital in Hanover, New Hampshire ON October 28. Jeff was a much-beloved, former Pastor of Wilton Baptist Church, having most recently served as Pastor of First Baptist Church, New London, New Hampshire.

YOUTH NEWS FOR NOVEMBER

Monday, November 2

High School DC Mission Trip Orientation, 7:00-8:00pm

(**Mandatory** for students who have applied and **mandatory** for those considering applying.)

Tuesday, November 3

Rake & Roll Mission Project for 7th through 12th graders, 12:00-3:30pm

Please RSVP to Jane Field—Adult Chaperone-Drivers Needed!!!

Wednesday, November 4

7th and 8th Grade Youth Group, 6-7:30pm

RSVP to Faye Maier (fayeray@optonline.net, 966-0509)

Sunday, November 8

Koinonia 9th Grade Youth Group, 4:30-6pm

Katalysta 10th-12th Grade Youth Group, 4:30-6pm

Sunday, November 15

8th Grade Confirmation Class, 10:00-11:15am

Tuesday, November 10

Sixers 6th Grade Youth Group, 5:30-7:00pm
RSVP to Jane Field

Wednesday, November 18

7th and 8th Grade Youth Group, 6-7:30pm
(Required for 8th Grade Confirmation Class)
RSVP to Faye Maier (fayeray@optonline.net, 966-0509)

Sunday, November 22

Faith In Action High School Youth Group, 4:30-6pm

WPC is a partner in the Joint Youth Ministries Program, a cooperative venture with Zion's Hill United Methodist and St. Matthew's Episcopal Churches. Unless otherwise noted, youth groups meet at the WEPCO complex, 48 New Canaan Road. Please contact Director of Spiritual Formation, Jane Field, jane@wpc.net or 762-5514 if you have any questions or concerns. If your family includes a 6th-12th grader and you have not been receiving our regular email reminders or "snail-mail" postcards, please let Jane know and we'll add you to the list right away!

WPC YOUTH PUT THEIR FAITH INTO ACTION

WPC's high school youth were busy putting their faith into action during September and October with Habitat for Humanity and with Heifer Project International. Two different teams spent a Saturday hard at work on a Habitat for Humanity house in Danbury. The brainchild of Elder Geoff Brown, this new project in our youth mission portfolio was a wonderful success. In fact, the students have asked Geoff to book additional work days in the winter and spring so that more teens can have a chance to work on the house. If you haven't done so already, be sure to go to www.wiltonpresbyterian.org to check out the great photos from our two fall Habitat work days. A special thanks to Geoff Brown, Max Gabrielson, Paul Lourd and Sally Carta who were WPC's volunteer chaperones, and to the WPC youth who participated: Sabrina Gutknecht, Mac Keers, David Lourd, Chris Nugent, and John Rider.

October 16-18, ten WPC high school youth participated in an intense and challenging retreat at Heifer Project International's Overlook Farm in Rutland, Massachusetts. The experiential learning program was designed to teach us about global poverty and hunger, development, and sustainable agriculture. Our students did all the barn chores required to care for the 20 different species of animals HPI provides to families living in poverty around the world. They also spent about 24 hours in the farm's "global village" where they lived, cooked, ate and slept in conditions that simulated a life of poverty—this year our team was divided into two families and sent to Appalachia and to Colonias, a Texas/Mexico border town. Despite the frigid cold temperatures and high winds, the group was able to survive village life, and learned a great deal about what life is like for the world's impoverished and hungry people. If you'd like to hear more about the experience, be sure to ask one of the WPC participants: Alex Bendix, Alex Bernabei, Christine Gehrlein, Elliot Gorkin, Isabel Jimenez, Reade Keelips, Margot Steele and Charlie Watkins. To see pictures from the trip, go to www.wiltonpresbyterian.org.

Closer to home, WPC's 7th through 12th graders will be participating in the annual "Rake & Roll" community service project, helping to rake leaves for Wilton's elderly and disabled residents on Tuesday, November 3. And WPC's 8th grade confirmation class will be preparing and serving a meal at the Interfaith Housing of Westport's Gillespie homeless shelter.

SMALL GROUP MINISTRIES IS GOING STRONG!

Wednesday, October 14 marked the kick-off event for all of WPC's new small groups. The evening provided each group with the opportunity to meet face-to-face and plan for a year of community-building, faith-sharing, friendship, and fun! Here's what they have planned already:

- The Back 2 Nature group went hiking at Devil's Den in Weston on Sunday, October 25 (check out the church website for some great photos from the hike), and has plans to meet again in early November. This group has decided on an "open enrollment" membership, and will accept new members all year long.
- The Get Real! Group will host its first Christian ethics lecture on Tuesday, November 3, at 7:30am. WPC's own Kit Smith will be speaking about energy use. All are welcome.
- The Good Book group is reading Mitch Albom's "Have A Little Faith" and discussing the book together on October 28.
- The Popcorn & Presbys group chose "The Invention of Lying" as their first movie, and will be meeting to discuss the film on November 8.
- The Times On Sunday group has been meeting every Sunday morning at 9am in the Gathering Space meditation room to discuss current events in the light of faith. All are welcome.
- The Two By Two dinner group for couples is meeting for their first meal together on November 5.

In addition to these groups, the women's Bible study group, "Girlfriend's Guide to the Bible," and the men's Bible study group, "Bible with the Boys," have been meeting since September. Both groups are using the provocative and challenging new curriculum, "Saving Jesus," as the basis for their study. The Women's Ministries Friday evening gatherings have begun—the first was October 9 at the home of Jane Field, and the next will be Friday, November 6, at the home of Linda Rost. And the "One-Shot Wonder" This I Believe workshop has had the first of two meetings designed to help participants write their own personal brief statements of faith.

WPC's Session inaugurated this ministry with a vision of providing our church family opportunities to meet together over the course of a year with the same small group of brothers and sisters in Christ. Participants get to know one another on a deeper level than is sometimes possible during coffee hour or committee meetings. This strengthening of relationships within each small group then benefits our entire congregation as we feel more and more "blessed by the tie that binds." If you would like to start a small group, it's never too late!!! Just contact Director of Spiritual Formation, Jane Field (jane@wpc.net, 762-5514) to get started.

SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

At its October 20 Stated Meeting, Session

- Conducted its annual review of the Church Rolls;
- Designated a bequest from the estate of May Banninger, pending receipt, for the WPC Endowment Fund;
- Received a bequest of \$41,908.99 from the estate of Janet E. Sprout for the WPC Endowment Fund;
- Received a report from Paul Lourd concerning WPC's information technology systems;
- Approved two overtures from Session to the Presbytery of Southern New England:
 - a request of Presbytery to overture the 2010 General Assembly to delete a section of *The Constitution* that defines marriage as between a man and a woman and denies from ordination as Elders, Deacons, or Ministers persons who self-acknowledge they are practicing homosexuals or not chaste in singleness and substitute for it a section that stipulates that the ordination questions of these leaders be defined by the ordination questions themselves;
 - a request of Presbytery to overture the 2010 General Assembly to issue an authoritative interpretation that, in states where same-gender marriages are legally permitted, Presbyterian clergy in those states be permitted to conduct such marriages.
- Scheduled an Elder Dinner for Friday, January 8, 2010 and the Joint Officers' Conference for Saturday, January 9, 2010.

THE GIFT OF CHRISTMAS IS COMING!!!!
Watch for your "Gift of Christmas Catalogue" to arrive
the week of Thanksgiving

PLAN AHEAD FOR

THE WPC CONGREGATIONAL CHRISTMAS PARTY

Sunday, December 6

4:30 – 7:00 PM

Crafts and Carols

Food and Fellowship

For people of *all* ages

AND

THE ADVENT QUIET DAY

Tuesday, December 15

9:30 AM – 1:30 PM

Four hours of guided
quiet meditation/reflection

And

small group sharing

A "time out"/sabbath time amidst

The most hurried and hectic time of year