



EVENT

Summer
2006

The Newsletter of First Church in Cambridge, Congregational—United Church of Christ
11 Garden Street, Cambridge, MA 02138 Phone: 617-547-2724
www.firstchurchcambridge.org

*When the world tells us
we are what we do
with our activity, our acumen, or achievement,
let us learn...*

We are what we do with our silence.

*When the world tells us
we are what we do
with our spending power, selling power, or our power of speech,
let us learn*

*We are what we do with our silence.
When the world tells us
to drown the silent sufferings of others with indifference or noise,
or to forget the art of stillness in the storm,
let us learn*

We are what we do with our silence.

*When the world tells us
to rush in where angels fear to tread,
let us learn that angels listen first
before they take a step
for the voice of God in the silence...*

– from *The Pattern of Our Days: Worship in the Celtic Tradition*
from the Iona Community (edited by Kathy Galloway)

Dear Friends,

I often hand out these words when I meet with a new Spiritual Formation group. We read them together as a preparation for a time of quiet and stillness. One voice reads the stanzas, while the group recites the refrain. When the meditation time begins, "we are what we do with our silence" echoes as a mantra in many of our minds.

The story of Pentecost suggests almost the opposite to meditative silence: a cacophony of voices with people speaking in different languages. But the season of Pentecost invites us to listen deeply through the crowd to see if we can hear just one voice, the voice of the Spirit that is ever present in each of our hearts and whose first language is silence.

Through the past year in our community, we have done a great deal of listening for the silent voice of our living God. At a Church-wide retreat, in our classes on discernment, through the gentle promptings of our Vision, in the beautiful wordless creations of our Children's Worship & Arts program, we have listened and heard. Between the lines of stories told at GBIO gatherings and in heart-to-heart embraces when we share

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Christ's peace during worship, we have listened and heard God's still-speaking, silent voice. In so many ways and through much of our doing, we have listened and we have learned.

Now the season of Pentecost is upon us, and summer too. While it's far from Mary's "mythical land of when things settle down," the reality is that things should feel calmer during these weeks, at least on Sundays. I'll be offering a new Spiritual Formation group in the fall for any who are interested. In the meantime, though, I offer you the prayer above as preparation for what I hope will be summers wherein each of you can find a good stretch of quiet and stillness and learn that, above all else, "we are what we do with our silence".

Yours in faith,
Dan Smith



HARVARD SQUARE ECUMENICAL SUNDAY

On Sunday, July 23, the Harvard Square churches will share in ecumenical worship at 10:00 a.m. at Harvard-Epworth United Methodist Church (corner of Massachusetts Avenue and Waterhouse Street, across from Cambridge Common). There will be no morning service at First Church on that day. Stick around for fun and fellowship after the service, as we celebrate our oneness in Jesus Christ.

From July 2 through September 3 Sunday Morning Worship will begin at 10:00 a.m.

There will be no education programs for adults or children during the summer, but there will be weekly "pickup choir" rehearsals starting at 9:00 a.m. Morning worship will be a simplified service that will be welcoming of all children, and we encourage their participation.

Childcare in the nursery for our youngest little ones will be available through the summer. The Hastings Room (for quieter activity) and the outdoor play area (for more energetic activity) will be available to accommodate older children for whom the service becomes too long, provided that at least two adults are supervising in each location. Adults who volunteer to supervise children playing board games or reading in the Hastings Room will be able to follow the service in the sanctuary via the audio system in that room.

Jazz and Gospel service will continue every Sunday at 5:30 p.m., in Margaret Jewett Hall except as noted in the schedule on page 3.



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Layout & Design: Peter Johnston, pjohnston@firstchurchcambridge.org

June 4. Pentecost Sunday**10:00 a.m. Church School for all ages.****Last day of Church School****11:00 a.m. Morning Worship**

Intergenerational Holy Communion, Celebration of

Peter Sykes' 20th Anniversary

Mary Luti, preaching

5:30 p.m. Jazz Service, in the Sanctuary

Dan Smith and Nancy Weil, leading

6:30 p.m. First Church Musicale,

in Margaret Jewett Hall

June 11. 2nd Sunday after Pentecost**10:00 a.m. Intergenerational Activities in Margaret****Jewett Hall****11:00 a.m. Morning Worship**

Joining Sunday, Recognition of Milestones

Dan Smith, preaching

12:30 p.m. Church Picnic, on Weston Lawn**5:30 p.m. Jazz Service**, in Margaret Jewett Hall

Nancy Weil, leading

June 18. 3rd Sunday after Pentecost**10:00 a.m. Pickup Choir. No Church School****11:00 a.m. Morning Worship**

Mary Luti, preaching

5:30 p.m. Jazz Service, in Margaret Jewett Hall

Dan Smith, leading

June 25. 4th Sunday after Pentecost**10:00 a.m. Pickup Choir. No Church School****11:00 a.m. Morning Worship**

Dan Smith, preaching

5:30 p.m. Jazz Service, in Margaret Jewett Hall

Dan Smith and Nancy Weil, leading

July 2. 5th Sunday after Pentecost**10:00 a.m. Morning Worship**

Holy Communion

Mary Luti, preaching

5:30 p.m. Jazz Service, in Margaret Jewett Hall

Mary Luti, leading

July 9. 6th Sunday after Pentecost**10:00 a.m. Morning Worship****5:30 p.m. Jazz Service**, in Margaret Jewett Hall

Nancy Weil, leading

July 16. 7th Sunday after Pentecost**10:00 a.m. Morning Worship**

Mary Luti, preaching

5:30 p.m. Jazz Service, in Margaret Jewett Hall

Nancy Weil, leading

July 23. 8th Sunday after Pentecost**NO MORNING WORSHIP AT FIRST****CHURCH****10:00 a.m. The Annual Harvard Square Ecumenical****Service will be held at****Harvard-Epworth United Methodist****Church****5:30 p.m. Jazz Service**, in Margaret Jewett Hall

Nancy Weil, leading

July 30. 9th Sunday after Pentecost**10:00 a.m. Morning Worship**

Mary Luti, preaching

5:30 p.m. Jazz Service, in Margaret Jewett Hall

Nancy Weil, leading

August 6. 10th Sunday after Pentecost**10:00 a.m. Morning Worship**

Holy Communion

Dan Smith, preaching

5:30 p.m. Jazz Service, in Margaret Jewett Hall

Dan Smith, leading

August 13. 11th Sunday after Pentecost**10:00 a.m. Morning Worship**

Dan Smith, preaching

5:30 p.m. Jazz Service, in Margaret Jewett Hall

Nancy Weil and Dan Smith, leading

August 20. 12th Sunday after Pentecost**10:00 a.m. Morning Worship****5:30 p.m. Jazz Service**, in Margaret Jewett Hall

Dan Smith, leading

August 27. 13th Sunday after Pentecost**10:00 a.m. Morning Worship**

Mary Luti, preaching

5:30 p.m. Jazz Service, in Margaret Jewett Hall

Nancy Weil, leading

September 3. 14th Sunday after Pentecost**10:00 a.m. Morning Worship** (last Worship at 10:00)

Mary Luti, preaching

5:30 p.m. Jazz Service, in Margaret Jewett Hall

Nancy Weil, leading

September 11. 15th Sunday after Pentecost**10:00 a.m. Regathering Breakfast****11:00 a.m. Morning Worship**

Intergenerational Holy Communion

Mary Luti and Dan Smith, preaching

5:30 p.m. Jazz Service, in Margaret Jewett Hall

Nancy Weil and Dan Smith, leading



UPCOMING CHRISTIAN FORMATION OPPORTUNITIES

Children

Feeling called to teach? Have a passion for making our church open to and affirming of children? If so, serve the entire First Church community by teaching in our Church School program during the 2006-2007 school year. Many teachers from this year are returning, but we are eager to have new folks involved. If you might be interested in considering this vital form of service, contact Mark Destler, 617-504-6021, or mdd@massed.net.

Youth

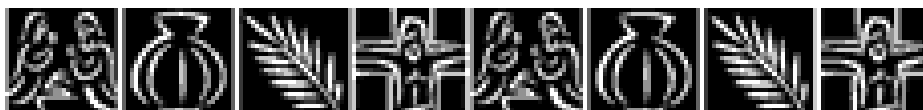
Next year's Christian Education and Formation offerings will include expanded programs for middle and high school aged youth, including regular Sunday 10:00 a.m. meetings in our newly renovated Youth Room in the basement. The youth room is the product of the hard work of our recent high school graduate Chris Lo, who rehabbed the room as part of an Eagle Scout project. Thank you very much, Chris, for this lasting contribution to First Church, and congratulations on your Eagle Scout achievement! Look for more details on these new youth programs coming soon.

Adults

For adults our four-fold approach to formation, learning, and growing together will continue in the areas of Spiritual Practices, Our Living Tradition, Scripture, and The Church in the World. In addition to regular class sessions at 10:00 a.m., you can look forward to new small groups starting in the fall. Another bi-weekly Spiritual Formation Group will be starting under the leadership of Dan Smith. Mary Martha Thiel and Mary Robinson will again be leading a monthly small group on the theme of Parenting as a Spiritual Journey. We also hope to offer a range of other group opportunities that will create small communities of spiritual practice within our wider congregation. We hope to devote one Sunday 10:00 a.m. hour each month to cultivating our new and existing small group life at First Church. Another new element of our 10:00 a.m. offerings in the fall will be intergenerational 10:00 series. We anticipate an exciting fall of deepening our individual lives of faith while strengthening our bonds as a diverse community of God's people.

Church School for All Ages

While there will be no regularly scheduled Christian Education offerings on Sunday mornings in the summer, see the weekly bulletins for announcements of small group meetings, Bible studies, and "one shot" learning opportunities. Church School for all ages will resume September 17, with Godly Play for kids, a youth group meeting, and three sessions of "Christianity 101" for searchers, seekers, and First Church veterans alike. Stay tuned for more details.





Greater Boston Interfaith Organization

Healthcare Campaign Victory? Yes! But, the fight is not over!

Having celebrated the fact that the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *Boston Globe*, NPR, and ABC all recognized the contributions GBIO has made to securing the recent landmark healthcare reform in our state, GBIO is now committed as ever to keeping the pressure on our legislators to ensure fair implementation of the reform plan and affordable and accessible healthcare for all. We are taking the next step to qualify our ballot initiative, which is our leverage, as lawmakers determine the details of what counts as affordable healthcare. To this end GBIO is organizing one last round of signature collections. Having already submitted 113,000 signatures with the MassACT (Affordable Care Today) Coalition, we now need an additional 7,500 new signatures to move our legislation to the state ballot in November. We have until June 18. Contact Alice Kidder or Dan Smith if you'd like to join First Church's signature collection efforts or plan to attend the GBIO Delegates Assembly on the evening of June 8 (location and time TBA in Sunday bulletins). And thanks to all of you who have already signed or helped collect signatures.

GBIO North Elder Care and School Aged Care Campaigns

On May 25 over 150 members of congregations "North of the Charles" met with public officials to act on several local and state budget, policy, and program initiatives that could directly relieve the pressures many experience, as they care for elders, disabled, and also school aged children. The Rev. Hurmon Hamilton, Pastor of Roxbury Presbyterian Church and President of GBIO, further recognized the work of GBIO North congregations and the added power our involvement is bringing to GBIO. Stay tuned for a further report on this exciting event!



NEWS FROM CHILDREN'S WORSHIP & ARTS

As Children's Worship & Arts (CW&A) completes its second year of ministry at First Church, there is much for which to be thankful. From poetry to parables,

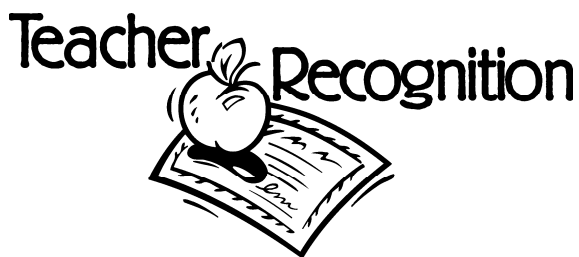
drawing to design, flower planting to fabric art, our children have celebrated their church life through the arts. CW&A projects have allowed creative First Church adults to work side-by-side with our amazing children, planting the seeds of relationships rooted in faith and love that cross the generations.

When I give thanks for CW&A, I am most excited by our intergenerational worship celebrations. Through communal storytelling, participatory liturgy, active mission work (who thought you'd ever ask someone to "pass the peanut butter" in worship, as in our Feeding Sunday on May 7?), and intergenerational choral singing, First Church is living into its vision of hospitality to our children. By truly welcoming them into our worship experience, we are shaping their understanding of what "church" is really all about. Sure, it's all about the cookies and the activity packets, but more and more it's also all about the joy they experience in the company of their First Church friends.

While the CW&A program year comes to a close at Pentecost, the visioning never ends! As CW&A Coordinator, I will use the month of June to lay a strong foundation for next year's ministry. Keeping the focus on strengthening our intergenerational connections, I will be looking to the adults of First Church who would like to offer their time and talent in CW&A. What are the practices in your life that bring you joy and meaning? What is it that makes First Church your spiritual home? Would you be willing to share your answers with our children? Or perhaps you'd like to be a part of creating the next set of saint puppets or designing the next artistic installation for the chancel? Whatever your interest, let me know! I am eager to broaden the circle of CW&A, as it moves into its third year.

Many thanks to First Church for nurturing the growth of CW&A.

-- Sarah Higginbotham, CW&A Coordinator



On behalf of the whole congregation, we wish to thank the following teachers, caregivers, and leaders for their loving dedication and contributions to this church community during the 2005-2006 year:

- Church School Coordinators: Niki Gilsdorf, Audrey Bellinger, Tom Fitzgerald, Ann Curby
- Nursery Care Providers: Courtney Carter, Rosemarie Ripley, Marsha Greenstein, Abby Cyr
- PreK-1st Grade Teachers: Nora Willcutts, Marie Miller, Connie Pyle, Laurie Friedman
- 2nd - 4th Grade Teachers: Mark Destler, Stephanie Paulsell, Patricia Gnazzo Pepper, Jan Lo
- 5th - 6th Grade Teachers: Nancy Cyr, Rachel Dorr, Paul Efthim, Beth Loomis
- Confirmation Class Mentors: Art Anger, Tom Clough, Mary Luti, Dan Smith
- Sunday Morning Bible Study Leader: Sarah Marshall
- Friday Evening Bible Study Leader: Jan Lo.

In addition, many thanks to all those who substituted and served as teachers' helpers and all those who led Adult Education sessions throughout the year.



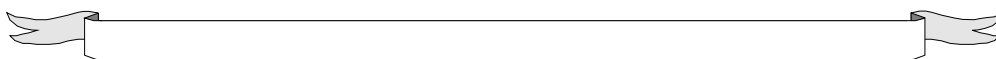
*Everyone (yes, everyone!) is warmly invited
to a celebration of the marriage of
Nancy Kitchen Kilburn*

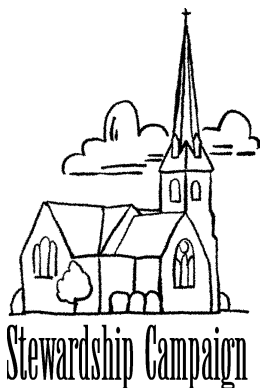
and

*Daniel Albert Smith
at First Church in Cambridge
on August 26th at 11:00 a.m.*

*Cake and a champagne or cider toast will
follow in Margaret Jewett Hall. We
hope you can join us for our big day*

~ Dan and Nancy





STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE: Celebrating First Church's Gifts of the Spirit

It's Pentecost — a time of new abundance!

As we enter the fullness of spring and move from Easter to the season of Pentecost, we sow the seeds that we'll harvest in the fall. More than at any other time of year, we are mindful of

how we choose to use our time, talent, and treasure to create abundance in partnership with the Holy Spirit. Works...and faith!

And so we have been inviting...

This spring the Stewardship Committee once again invited First Church to examine and celebrate its generosity and commitment to the vision of "A Way of Hospitality" — The Open Door, the Open Road, the Open Spirit, and the Open Table.

We welcomed members to share testimonials to

God's grace and abundant love.

We offered two 10:00 Adult Education hours on Exploring our Generosity and Gratitude.

And we extended a spring invitation to new giving.

And we have been challenging...

As the dandelion disperses its seeds, creating fields of golden flowers, we continue to challenge First Church to sow its seeds of generosity for bearing fruit in our congregation and in the wider world. And it's not too late to join in this fruitful sowing!

Where is the wind of the Spirit blowing you?

TO THE OPEN DOOR? Then contribute to the cost of rebuilding and redesigning the *First Church website*, so that it can be an even more effective tool of communication for our church and for ministry in the world.

TO THE OPEN ROAD? Then contribute to offset the cost to the endowment of our \$20,000 loan to "Shared Interest" for micro-lending in South Africa.

TO THE OPEN SPIRIT? Then contribute to a *scholarship fund for First Church youth* to become involved in UCC camps and other special activities, such as the New England Regional Youth Event in Maine, and Camp IF, an annual interfaith youth encounter in New Hampshire.

TO THE OPEN TABLE? Then help strengthen our communion and covenant with one another by making a *new pledge* to the general financial support of First Church or by *increasing the pledge* you've already made for FY 2006.

How can you contribute?

Just write a check payable to First Church in Cambridge, Congregational, UCC, with a memo line that indicates the target for your gift, as follows:

- Open Door—Website
- Open Road—Shared Interest
- Open Spirit—Youth Camp

Then drop your check in the offering plate at worship, or mail it to:

First Church in Cambridge, Congregational, UCC, 11 Garden Street, Cambridge 02138
Attention: Karen McArthur, Treasurer's Assistant.

Want to make a pledge?

If you wish to make a new pledge for FY '06 or increase your existing pledge, just pick up an orange pledge card at the tables outside the sanctuary doors, fill in the new pledge amount, and return the card to the church office at the above address.

If it's a new first-time pledge, please note that on the card. If you are increasing your existing pledge, be sure we know that too!

If you can't come to church or will be away for a while, simply call or e-mail Parish Administrator Peter Johnston, 617-547-2724, or

pjohnston@firstchurchcambridge.org,

and request that a pledge card be sent to you.

Any Questions?

If you have questions about pledging, about these spring giving opportunities, or about stewardship in general, call Shirl Mulford, chairperson of the Stewardship Committee, or any of its members—Pam Pacelli, Karen Estrella, Joanne Paul, Susan Gere, or Pastor Mary Luti.

By the Way...a Celebration!

On Pentecost, June 4, we will celebrate our church's amazing generosity at morning worship by announcing the gifts we have received to date.

SENIOR MINISTER SABBATICAL PLANNING UNDER WAY



At its April meeting First Church's Executive Council approved a four-and-a-half month sabbatical for Mary Luti, to begin February 28, 2007, and conclude July 7, 2007. When the sabbatical begins, Mary will have served nearly seven years since she was elected our Senior

Minister in May, 2000. This sabbatical was provided for in the covenant Mary and the church made when she was elected. Also with our Vision now widely owned across the congregation and Dan Smith now fully on board and providing solid leadership, it feels like a "natural" time in the cycle of ministry for Mary to be given some time away.

Churches routinely grant sabbaticals to pastors (usually three to six months in length), so that they may rest, refresh their call to ministry, pursue continuing education, or go on retreat or travel, and enjoy uninterrupted time with family and friends. Sabbaticals are good both for the pastor and for the church — everyone gets a chance to step back for a time, reflect on the path we've traveled together, and ready ourselves for the path ahead.

Some pastors and congregations prefer to have the sabbatical period coincide with a "slow" time in the congregation's life, such as the summer months, so that the church is not left without pastoral leadership during its program year. Often this option is chosen for sole pastors of smaller churches or pastors whose families include schoolchildren, who might not otherwise be able to accompany the pastor on the sabbatical.

Increasingly, however, pastors are being encouraged by their denominations and by foundations that make grants of sabbatical funds to take their leave during the program year. They encourage this timing, so that pastors can enjoy an authentic break from the daily labors of ministry. They believe that the sabbatical should not be seen as an extended vacation during a period when both pastors and congregations tend to be on vacation anyway.

Churches that have a multiple-member pastoral staff are well positioned to give their pastors the gift of time away during a "busy season," and First Church has chosen to do so in this case. Our congregation has always understood the importance of sabbaticals. Our church-wide Advent

program on Sabbath-keeping last year also reminded us that rest and renewal are part of God's dream for us, and that when we embrace the gift of time apart, we honor God.

Although the sabbatical is still many months away, planning for it has already begun. In early March Mary convened an informal sabbatical planning team of First Church members. The team includes Minister of Christian Discipleship Dan Smith, immediate past Moderator Carolyn Coffin, current Moderator Gaylen Morgan, Chair of the Board of Deacons Ellen Rohan Ball, Ruth Hsiao, Jim Greaney, Joanne Paul, Dick Harter, Laurie Friedman, Peggy Bendroth, Stephanie Paulsell, Anne Minton, and Mary Luti.

From March to May the team met four times as a whole group and several more times in sub-groups. They helped Mary and Anne think through their sabbatical ideas and make decisions about the shape of their plan. They discussed and made recommendations about pastoral coverage and support for Dan Smith during the sabbatical period. And they brainstormed ideas about a focus for our congregational life while Mary is away.

One of the most important tasks the sabbatical planning team undertook was the writing of a proposal to the Lilly Foundation's National Clergy Renewal Program. This program offers substantial sums to congregations to be used to help both pastor and congregation do things they might not ordinarily be able to afford, enhancing the spiritual benefits of sabbatical time for all. Writing the proposal was very satisfying work. The team laughed a lot, dreamed a lot, asked penetrating questions, and gave great feedback on many drafts of the application. The proposal that the team submitted on May 15 was a strong one, made all the stronger by the teamwork that produced it. If the application is successful (and we will be notified by October), we will receive nearly \$15,000 to support church activities and staff during the sabbatical period. The church will also receive nearly \$30,000 to fund Mary's sabbatical activities. (To learn more about the National Clergy Renewal Program, go to www.lillyfoundation.org and click on "Religion.")

The grant proposal has many parts and details, but it centers on the interplay between the church's recent focus on *practices* (such as discernment and hospitality) and our *interfaith relationships*, especially with the Greater

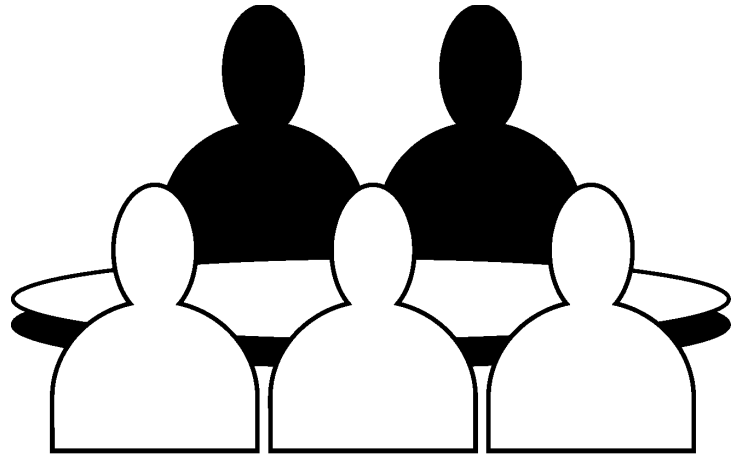
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Boston Interfaith Organization and the Daughters of Abraham. The planning team envisions, for example, a public dialogue among local Christians, Jews, and Muslims about the role that practices play in all our traditions that will take place during Lent. It will include lectures, conversations, music, art, meals, and activities with kids. We will invite theologians and artists to help us frame this dialogue. During the sabbatical period, and especially in Lent, we also hope to lighten the load of “church business as usual” as much as possible to concentrate more on opportunities for fellowship and for strengthening our church's intergenerational bonds.

Mary and Anne meanwhile will also be focusing on religious practices and interfaith conversation, but they will be doing so in Spain, where they will reside for three of the four and a half months of the sabbatical. Their plan includes a five-week immersion in the rhythms of daily life and faith in the city of Seville and another five-week period in the Andalusian countryside, where Mary will do some writing. During this time Mary will revisit and refresh some of the abiding themes of her academic and pastoral ministries — the renewal and reform of the church, its panoply of devotional practices and “means of grace,” the possibility of shared life among the Abrahamic faiths, and the conviction that, as she once said in a sermon, “delight is the permanent sub-text of the Christian life.”

Excerpts from the full grant proposal will be available to anyone who would like to read them during the month of June and thereafter. Copies will be left on the tables outside the sanctuary doors and will also be posted on the First Church website. We hope that the whole church will begin to catch the excitement that the planning team feels about the possibilities for growth and renewal in the ideas we proposed to the Lilly Foundation, and we pray that we may all reap many blessings from this upcoming time of rest and renewal for our Senior Minister and our church.

-- Gaylen Morgan, Moderator
Dan Smith, Minister of Christian Discipleship
For Mary Luti and the Sabbatical Planning Team



EXECUTIVE COUNCIL NOTES

At the April meeting of Executive Council Mary Luti and Dan Smith led a discussion of church governance, focused on three questions:

- Who has gifts/call to governance?
- How do we find out what we are called to?

Do people know what their gifts are?

With suggestions from Council members, Dan then listed gifts that determine which members might be particularly skilled at governance. Communication was clearly a major issue, and the ability to communicate within Council and to a broader audience in the congregation was seen as a key gift. Dan challenged Council to think about our current structure, how it promotes or restricts the exercise of these gifts of governance, and how we might do things differently.

Stewardship Committee Chair Shirl Mulford reported that pledges of over \$300,000 have been received so far. The Committee is planning a spring campaign, with opportunities for new pledges and for those who have already pledged to make amendments. This fall the Committee will launch a Planned Giving Program.

Council approved a four-and-a-half-month sabbatical leave for Mary Luti. At this time her focus during the sabbatical is expected to be deepening relationships abroad with other faith traditions, building from approaches taken by the Daughters of Abraham. In addition, grant funds are being sought to support special initiatives for the congregation during Mary's absence.



NEW FIRST CHURCH WEBSITE COMING SOON!

Work on the new church website project is progressing steadily. In the past two months I have constructed a content

management system that will allow First Church staff to update the site's content easily and also to upload files (images, audio clips, documents, newsletters, etc), photo albums, and sermons. I have used content from the existing website and from the materials provided by Dan and Mary to populate the new site.

I've received a few e-mails from members of the congregation, providing me with content updates, some photos, and music to be featured on the site, but more is better: Impromptu photographs of congregation members in any number of different settings would be a powerful way to portray the community nature of First Church. The whole church can potentially take part in this effort. With pleasant weather finally here, we have a great opportunity to get some colorful outdoor photos too.

The next step in the website project is to create the new design. We now have a number of ideas for color and layout, and in the next few weeks I will be working with the church staff to settle on a design that will be really pleasing for the congregation.

Please feel free to send any ideas or questions about the new site to me via phone or e-mail. Thank you.

-- Stewart Rosenberger
stewart@moderatedesign.org
413-687-3704



The Outdoor Ministries Program of the UCC Massachusetts Conference provides opportunities for children, youth, and adults to enjoy Christian fellowship, have fun, learn about themselves, and experience God in a variety of outdoor settings. The Conference seeks to involve a broad mix of people in the camping program, realizing that the diversity of our community enriches our overall camp experience. Registration in the program is open to all people without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, orientation, or physical ability. The camping program welcomes your friends and neighbors who come from church backgrounds other than the UCC. For more information about the camps visit www.macucc.org or contact Carl McDonald, the Conference's Associate for Christian Education and Young Adult Ministries, 508-875-5233, or mcdonaldc@macucc.org. There is also information on the Conference website about other area youth camps, for which there is First Church scholarship money available.

Camp IF (Interfaith), sponsored by the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), will be held August 15-21. For more information contact ADL's New England office, 617-406-6300, or boston@adl.org. The camp is free and open to teens who have completed the



"DAUGHTERS OF ABRAHAM" ON PILGRIMAGE IN JERUSALEM

The Daughters of Abraham, an interfaith women's reading group founded by First Church member Edie Howe in September, 2002, has now given rise to three additional groups in the Boston area, with over seventy women participating (for more information see www.daughtersofabraham.info). Although primarily a book group for Muslims, Christians, and Jews, some of the Daughters also traveled together to sites of interfaith significance in Andalusia, Spain, in January, 2005.

Now another group of Daughters is on pilgrimage, this time to Jerusalem (May 18-29). Seven women from First Church are among the travelers — Gay Harter, Ruth Hsiao, Mary Luti, Anne Minton, Susie Neubauer, Mary Robinson, and Linda Ziebell, joined by two Jewish women from Temple B'nai Brith in Somerville, and two other Christian women.

Based at St. George's College (Anglican) in Jerusalem (www.SGCJerusalem.org), their interfaith journey will begin with a tour of the Old City, only a short walk from the College. The group will hear from a Jewish scholar on the subject of Jerusalem in Jewish prayer before they go to the Western Wall to pray; from a Christian scholar about the significance for Christians of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, followed by a visit to the church; and from a Muslim scholar about

Jerusalem's Muslim life and shrines before the group visits the Dome of the Rock and the Al Aqsa Mosque.

Interspersed with lectures and site visits, the Daughters will meet with interfaith women's groups, including the "Women of the Book," a Jerusalem-based book group of Muslims, Christians, and Jews, similar to the Daughters of Abraham. The group will also engage in conversation with women from Interfaith Encounters (www.interfaith-encounter.org), meet with a Christian Palestinian peace group, Sabeel (www.sabeel.org), and with a Jewish peace group, Bat Shalom (www.batshalom.org).

Outside Jerusalem, the Daughters will travel to the Judean desert, the Jordan River, Nazareth, Capernaum, the Mount of the Beatitudes, the Sea of Galilee, Tiberias, the tomb of Maimonides, and Zippori/Sepphoris, an excavated city from the 1st century CE and the home of Rabbi Judah ha-Nasi, the compiler of the Mishnah. A trip to Bethlehem is next on the agenda. There the group will pray for peace near Rachel's tomb, which is now in the middle of a secure military enclosure, and recall how inconsolably Rachel once wept for her children.

In addition to Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Museum, the Mount of Olives and Gethsemane, Daughters may choose to visit various other Jerusalem museums or travel to Masada and the Dead Sea. On the last Friday the group is in Jerusalem they will participate in a "Welcoming Shabbat" service at Kehillat Yedidya Synagogue and share Shabbat dinner with members of the congregation in their homes.

Throughout the journey the women will gather for shared reflections and prayer. The Daughters of Abraham hope that this interfaith journey to our respective holy sites will deepen our understanding and respect for all the Children of Abraham and give us new insights into peace movements and interfaith explorations underway in Jerusalem and beyond.

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-- Anne Minton