



THE PROSPECT TOWER

Prospect United Methodist Church

A Growing Christian Community of Faith in Action

December 2009

Vol. 70, No. 10

From the Pastor's Pen

Dear Friends,

Are you ready for Christmas? Are you prepared? I don't mean do you have your shopping list made, your decorations ready to go, cards purchased. I mean are you ready for Christmas? Are you prepared?



A crowd of people once asked John the Baptist something of the same question: What should we do to get ready for the Messiah? His answer won't make you reach for another cup of eggnog, I assure you.

So what did John advise the people who asked what they should do? John said (and I'm telling you) that the proper way to get ready for Jesus' coming is to repent -- which means to clean up our act, to change our ways.

Talk about a deal killer! "It's Christmas, pastor, loosen up a bit! Have some fruitcake!"

Look, no one enjoys the sentimentality of Christmas more than this wayward pastor. I even sort of like fruitcake (but don't give me any, thanks anyway!). But John does have a point that none of us should miss. The point is found in how he thinks we should repent. He writes, "Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise." (Luke 3: 11)

If we were to ask John what this means for 2009 in Bristol, I wonder what he would say. Probably something about turning our eyes on others who are really needy rather than ourselves, and then following through with something significant and not just warm thoughts.

**Help us, dear God, to be an answer
to another's prayer so that we may
be one of your signs of hope in the
world you love. Amen.**

Cont. p. 2

Prospect United Methodist Church

Founded 1834
99 Summer St., Bristol, CT 06010

The Rev. Dr. Dennis Winkleblack
Transitional Interim Pastor

Rev. William S. Barnes,
Pastor Emeritus

The Rev. Albert H. Scholten
The Rev. George E. Harris
The Rev. Alan J. Krauss
Ministers in Residence

Heidi Flower,
Director of Music & Organist
Emily Flower,
Associate Music Director
and Chapel Organist.

Phone: (860) 582-3443
Fax: (860) 582-9224

E-Mail Addresses:
pastorpumc@snet.net
(information meant only for the pastor)
prospectoffice@snet.net
(all general information as well as informa-
tion necessary for the Church Secretary.)

Website:
[http://www.gb-gm-umc.org/
prospect-ct/index.htm](http://www.gb-gm-umc.org/prospect-ct/index.htm)

Cont. from p. 1

As the church asks us to focus on the scriptures of Advent in which John is a star it's recognizing that a lot can happen to us in a year. Good intentions aside, we can get lost in self-absorption.



Truth, though, for the Christian is that life, even our life, is not about us. It's about Jesus. And to love Jesus is to love others, especially those who don't have coats and food, etc.

Is there any way this bit of truth might inform the way we go about Christmas this year?

I've got some more thinking to do if I'm going to be ready for Christmas. Hope you do, too.

Deck the halls!

Pastor Dennis

■ STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN UNDERWAY

“If it is to be it is up to me” – “If not now when?” is the slogan for this year's stewardship campaign, chaired once again by Chris Wilson. In his letter to the congregation, Chris said these slogans were first told to him by former football coaches. “I think we can do more and achieve more if we all stick together.”

■ LOVE THY NEIGHBOR

- *Jill Wilson, Council Chair*

Some of us have had the pleasure of getting to know some of the children who live in our church neighborhood. Some of the kids were particularly interested in the Tuesday night yard work over the summer, and were actually participatory and helpful. The reality is that they are our neighbors and we know they use our parking lot as their playground.



Some of us have had property vandalized while at church. The reality is that we do not know who did it. Whether the two are linked or not, is unknown. In August the Trustees sent a letter to neighborhood addresses expressing our concerns about safety of the children playing in our parking area, and offering spiritual support.

Generally speaking, we have found the kids who play in our yard to be receptive to adult directives. Our general position is one of hospitality. If you see someone actually causing harm, please respond appropriately to the situation. Above all, please be kind. After all, they are our neighbors and just kids.

■ SPR SETTING PASTORAL PRIORITIES QUESTIONNAIRE

- *Bill Katt*

The Staff Parish Committee has been tabulating and reviewing the results of the “Setting Pastoral Priorities” questionnaire. To date it has received over seventy responses – this represents less than nine percent of our membership.

While the response in numbers has not been stellar it was evident that those who did respond took the time to think about the needs of

the congregation and our current problems before answering. Several took the time to add comments, some writing long letters and notes expressing their feelings.

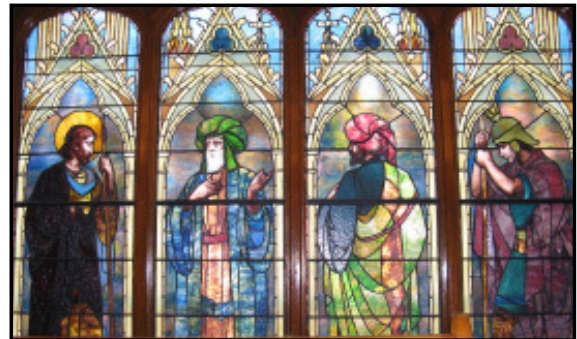
Many noted that it would be wonderful if Pastor Winkleblack could remain with us or if we could get another Pastor with his gifts and graces.

175th Anniversary Service Celebrated

-Kathy Dube

On November 8, a special service was held celebrating Prospect's 175th anniversary. Our Pastor Emeritus, Rev. Bill Barnes, delivered the sermon and our interim transitional pastor, Rev. Dr. Dennis Winkleblack, introduced Wesley hymns commonly sung in the era when the church was founded.

Pastor Bill's sermon was an interactive one that encouraged those who were able to come to the front of the church so they could fully appreciate the beauty and relevance of the Sessions stained glass memorial window and the stained glass window facing Summer Street. The sermon kept attendees guessing about the significance of numbers relevant to the history, and hopefully the future, of Prospect UMC.



Two members of Prospect's History Committee, Vivian Brackett, chairwoman, and Kathy Dube, in garb reminiscent of the olden days, related facts about Prospect's founding, growth and relocation to the corner of Center and Summer streets. Vivian shared the background of benefactor John Humphrey Sessions, who was converted to Methodism after attending a New Year's Day revival service in "Polkville," in the Edgewood section of town. She also talked about the construction of the current sanctuary and its style of architecture. Kathy went further back in time sharing information about the history of Methodist circuit riding and anecdotes told about Prospect's past on the occasion of the church's 100th anniversary.



Past Towers have detailed the history of the church back to the days when the first Methodist class was taught to local converts out of the former Burlington circuit. That history is available on Prospect's website: <http://www.gbgm-umc.org/prospect-ct/>. The History Committee hopes to publish a booklet in the future with historical facts and pictures about the history of Prospect Methodist Episcopal Church and the current Prospect United Methodist Church.

After the service, a picture cake of Prospect from early in the 20th century was shared during the Fellowship Hour.

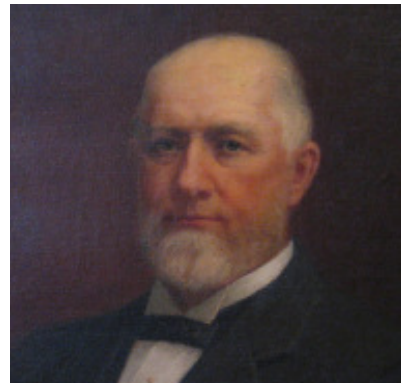


“What a great service yesterday! The reading of Flanders Fields and honoring Veterans was moving. Having the kids sing Jesus Loves Me was adorable! Pastor Bill Barnes, Vivian Brackett and Kathy Dube and Pastor Dennis Winkleblack gave a great history lesson about our beautiful building and Methodist heritage!” -Heidi Flower

“Thank you for a lovely service ... all the special elements were most appreciated. I really enjoyed learning about the windows, more history, the children singing “Jesus Love Me” (and wishing I was one of them to have been part of the singing of it). And not to forget, the beautifully designed bulletin!” -Melissa Brown

“This was a whole lot of FUN!” - Ricka Lynn Plourde

Prospect Benefactors



John Sessions



William Sessions

■ FIGHT AGAINST HUNGER

Ten walkers from Prospect participated in the Southington Crop Walk on October 25, raising more than \$650 toward the fight against hunger with walker donations and money placed in the soup pot in Sessions Hall.



The Prospect Walk Team

The ReThink Church Committee continued the fight against hunger with a food drive to collect non-perishable items in Sessions Hall following Sunday services on November 15, 22 and 29. Re-Think Church thanks all who participated in these programs.



Garth and Cassidy helped make the PUMC food donation box a lot more colorful

■ SOUP KITCHEN

After over 10 years of dedicated service Elaine and Bill Myhill are resigning from their position at Meals For The Needy soup kitchen, at the end of December 2009. PUMC has been volunteering every first Wednesday of the month since Meals for the Needy began at Zion Lutheran Church. We at PUMC would like to continue our ministry there but this can only happen if volunteers step forward and dedicate one day a month to prepare/serve dinner to the needy. Dinner is served from 4:30 - 5:30. For more information you can contact Elaine or Bill Myhill or Jackie Palance.



JUST A REMINDER

■ ALTAR FLOWERS

Altar flowers are often a way to memorialize or honor a loved one. But maybe you just like the altar to have flowers! If you would like to put flowers on the Altar, for any reason that pleases you, just notify the church office. It is \$40. Recognition will occur in the Sunday Bulletin.

■ LIGHTING OF THE TOWER

For \$15 the outside of the Church Tower will be illuminated for the week of your choice. It is a very visual way to highlight our church in our community. Recognition will occur in the Sunday Bulletin.

■ PROSPECT UNITED METHODIST CHURCH IS ON FACEBOOK

Facebook is a great way to connect to church members and have church members connect with each other. Facebook is also a great way to distribute church information. Check Prospect's page out by clicking on the link found on the home page of Prospect's web site <http://www.gb-gm-umc.org/prospect-ct>.

■ PROSPECT T-SHIRTS AVAILABLE

Show your pride in our church by ordering a new Prospect t-shirt. The gold t-shirts can be purchased for \$10 in four sizes: S, M, L and XL. The front logo says PUMC, Bristol, CT. The back logo says A NEW PROSPECT. They are ideal for wearing during community events, church dinners, yard clean-up, and more. Contact the church office, Joyce Rioux, or place your order during fellowship hour.

It is good to give thanks to the Lord, to sing praises to your name, O most high.

Psalm 92

On Laity Sunday the focus was on disciples transforming the world through prayer. Some quotes on prayer offered that day were:

Prayer is an expanding of our heart in the presence of God.

-John Calvin

Prayer does not change God, but it changes whoever prays. - Soren Kierkegaard

Through prayer I become one in love with Christ. - Mother Theresa

■ JOINT ADVENT SUPPER-WORSHIP SERVICES PLANNED -*Kathy Dube*

In celebration of the “full communion” status of the United Methodist Church (UMC) and Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA), three advent suppers followed by worship services are planned in Bristol among Prospect and Asbury Methodist and St. Andrew’s Lutheran churches. The dates are December 2 at St. Andrew’s, December 9 at Prospect, and December 16 at Asbury. All Advent suppers will start at 6 p.m. followed by worship at 7 p.m. Gloria Dei and Zion Lutheran churches also are affiliated with the ELCA.

Prospect’s interim pastor, Rev. Dr. Dennis Winkleblack, wrote the following article for our conference newspaper explaining the “full communion” status of the two religious denominations.

United Methodists and Lutherans in Historic Full Communion *By Dr. Dennis Winkleblack*

We are living in exciting ecumenical times. The United Methodist Church is now in “full communion” with the Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELCA) following their ratification in August. The United Methodist General Conference approved full communion a year ago. What’s more, it is hoped that we will enjoy the same status with the Episcopal Church in 2012 when it will be voted on by their General Convention and our General Conference in that year.

What does full communion mean? Full communion means that we acknowledge each other as a partner in Christian faith, recognize

each other’s understanding of the Eucharist and Holy Baptism, remove existing obstacles to the sharing of clergy and agree to work together to further Christ’s mission. More than 30 years of discussions have preceded this historic linking of our two denominations. The ELCA has a membership of 4.6 million baptized members in more than 10,000 churches in the United States. In comparison, the United Methodist Church reports a baptized membership of 13 million (8 million U.S.) in more than 40,000 churches (35,000 U.S.) worldwide.

It was my privilege recently to convene our Conference Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns for the first time in many years. One of our first goals is to encourage and assist local churches to make friends with their new partners in ministry, celebrate our oneness and discover new ways to work together to advance the reign of God. Resources are available through the General Board of Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns (<http://www.gccuic-umc.org>) to assist in “getting to know you” dialogues with both the ELCA and the Episcopal Church (with whom we have an interim Eucharistic agreement).

If you are working together in any way with one of our two new partners in ministry I’d like to hear about it so I can share what you’re doing with other churches. Please e-mail me at dwinkleblack@nyac.com or call me at 914 615-2234.

You might like to know that a few pastors in the New York Conference have been meeting with a few members of the New York Diocese of the Episcopal Church for more than a year now to learn about each other’s tradition. We have had a great time and look forward to getting our two bishops together to lead a grand service of Holy Communion/Eucharist within the next year. Those appointed by Bishop Park to meet with our Episcopal cousins are: Revs. Jeannette Bassinger-Ishii, Rev. T. Anne Daniel, Rev. Skip L’Heureux, Rev. Sungmu Lee and me.



Jesus prayed, “I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.” — John 17:20-21, NRSV

Together, let’s take ecumenism off the back burners of our church’s agendas and see what God can do with us when we strive to work together rather than compete – so that the world may believe.

DECEMBER AT A GLANCE

■ FOSTER CHILDREN'S PARTY

The annual Covenant to Care DCF Foster Childrens' Christmas Party will take place at Prospect on Friday, December 4, from 3:30 to 9 p.m. Volunteers will be working with an anticipated 200-plus children at craft tables, in the kitchen, at the photo with Santa table, etc.

■ CHRISTMAS GIVING TREE

Prospect has received the names of 123 children from DCF who are in need of Christmas gifts. Gift tags with the child's age and suggestions for gifts are on the bulletin board in Sessions Hall. All donated gifts should be unwrapped and dropped off in Sessions Hall by Sunday, December 13. Please see Susan Lee if you have questions.

■ CHRISTMAS EVE

5 p.m. Family worship with carols and candle-lighting
11 p.m. Service of Lessons, Carols, Candles and Holy Communion with our choir.

Order Your Poinsettias

Orders are currently being taken for poinsettias. These flowers will adorn our altar on Christmas Eve. The cost is \$10 each. For those wishing to take the plants home, they will be available Christmas Eve.



This form must accompany payment. Please submit orders during worship service or to the office no later than Thursday, December 17.

Thank you

In Honor of	
In Memory of	
Number Requested	
Given by	

SUNDAY SCHEDULE

8:30 a.m. Chapel Communion

A shorter version of the Sunday Service, with Holy Communion, in the Chapel, south side of Sessions Hall.

10 a.m. Sanctuary Service

Traditional service of worship in Sanctuary with hymns, prayers, sermon, children's and adult choir anthems and solos. Holy Communion the first Sunday of each month.

10 a.m. Church School

Children attend opening portion of service with family, then go to Sunday School classes.

11 a.m. Fellowship

Time of fellowship and friendship with coffee, tea, cookies and conversation in Sessions Hall.

FELLOWSHIP HOUR SCHEDULE

December 2009 History

MEETING SCHEDULE

December 8 Finance 7 p.m.
December 12 Women's Group 9 a.m.
December 13 Worship 11:30 a.m.

EVENTS

December 2 Advent Supper and Worship Service at St. Andrew's
December 4 DCF Christmas Party
December 6 Bristol Brass Band Concert 5 p.m.
December 9 Advent Supper and Worship Service at Prospect
December 13 Christmas Pageant
December 16 Advent Supper and Worship Service at Asbury

**PROSPECT UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
99 SUMMER STREET
BRISTOL, CT 06010
Dated Material - Please Do Not Hold**

**Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage Paid
Permit #349
Bristol, CT 06010**

Return Service Requested

Periodical: Published monthly except July and August.