



THE PROSPECT TOWER

Prospect United Methodist Church

A Growing Christian Community of Faith in Action

February 2009

Vol. 70, No. 2

From the Pastor's Pen



Dear Friends,

You may have heard that I am preaching a series of four sermons titled, "If We're Really Serious."

The purpose of the series is to raise consciousness about our current reality as a congregation; learn what makes for an effective church based on the experience of others; and eventually to make necessary changes so we can be the best possible church for the future. In addition, I'll lead a Lenten study on the Sunday afternoons of March from 4 to 5:30 using the sermons and scriptures as guides for discussion.

The sermons will be my interpretation of the "Eight Characteristics of an Effective Congregation" as compiled by Bishop William Willimon based on a study of strong, growing churches (see inside cover page for the list).

I hope you will make an extra effort to be present for the Sundays of the series. For those who can't be here, printed copies of the sermons will be available following each Sunday's service and by e-mail. If we don't have your e-mail address, please let us know: prospectoffice@snet.net.

Instead of being overcome with worry about our church's future, we can take heart that God will show us a way to return to strength. We will do this best if you are part of the solution. Please pray daily for Prospect.

See you in church,

Pastor Dennis

Prospect United Methodist Church

Founded 1834
99 Summer St., Bristol, CT 06010

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Transitional Interim Pastor

Rev. William S. Barnes,
Pastor Emeritus

The Rev. Albert H. Scholten
The Rev. George E. Harris
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EIGHT CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE CHURCHES

Effective Congregations:

1. Love their particular community. Their pastors have found a way not only to love their congregations but also their neighborhood. Effective pastors help their congregations move beyond love of themselves, turning their congregations outward.
 2. Rise above mere contentment with things as they are and do what is necessary to expect and welcome change, disruption, and movement, similar to that of the Risen Christ.
 3. Find a way to welcome the stranger and to practice radical hospitality in the name of Jesus Christ. They find a way to be as interested in those who have yet to join the church as those already in the church.
 4. Enable lay leaders to lead, not just manage. Have lay leadership that feels a strong sense of responsibility for the future of their congregation.
 5. Have a strong, change oriented, gifted pastor.
 6. Make growth a priority and figure out how to grow.
 7. Have a clear sense of their primary purpose and keep focused on their primary God-given mission.
 8. Keep focused upon Jesus Christ as the originator of, and the purpose for the church. Church is not just another human oriented institution.
- Bishop William Willimon

■ VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Kathy Dube

By now, church members should have received a letter from Jill Wilson, Church Council chairperson, with an update about changes made in light of the budget shortfall. While the Stewardship Campaign chaired by Chris Wilson was successful in netting 45 new pledges and increasing another 50 pledges, the positive results will make up only about 60 percent of the planned expenditures for the year.



Mayor Richard Daly was quoted as saying “Volunteers are partners working together for improving America’s future.”

The same can be said of Prospect.

As a result, the difficult decision was made at the Charge Conference to eliminate the staff positions of Secretary and Sexton in order to cut \$25,000 from the budget. Since we will no longer have the two positions effective February 1, volunteers will be needed to do the work previously done by these two staff positions.

There has already been a good response to the announced need for volunteers. Carol Rivard is organizing the custodial volunteers and Beth Provost is the church office coordinator. Nevertheless, there is an on-going need to continue to build a small “volunteer army” for Prospect.

“Everyone can do something. And most of us can do one more thing than we did before. Whether it is straightening up the sanctuary after the worship service or helping to send out the Tower newsletter, it is all part of keeping our church going,” Jill says. If you can help, please contact Carol or Beth.

■ ARE YOU LOOKING FOR A VOLUNTEER?

The Men’s Club is willing to help out Prospect members who need odd jobs done around their house but can’t afford to pay for it. For more information, please speak with Pastor Dennis.

DID YOU KNOW?

■ PRAYER CHAIN LINKS

There are four separate Prayer Chain links at Prospect Church: two daytime telephone chains headed by Rita Farren and Charlie Ricker (the latter facilitated by Lillian Lozefski) and a nighttime telephone chain headed by Louise Schaffrick. There also is an e-mail chain headed by Prayer Chain Program Director Charlie Ricker.

If you have a request for the Prayer Chain, please contact the Church Office (582-3443) first. If no one is there to take your message, either leave a message on the answering machine or call Charlie Ricker personally at 583-2963 or email him at ricker2000@yahoo.com. Contact Charlie if you would like to join one of the Prayer Chains.

■ WEBSITE RESOURCE

For those who are computer-literate, don't forget Prospect's website, which can be accessed at the following address: <http://www.gbkm-umc.org/prospect-ct/>. The website is a good resource for church members. In addition, it's a way for prospective church members to get to know the church.

■ CHECK OUT CAMP QUINIPET

Summer 2009 is right around the corner (really!) and there are great Christian camps for children and families to attend. The facilities, in a new era of management, are clean and comfortable. Quinipet, located on Shelter Island, NY, is a one and a half hour ferry ride from Connecticut. The camp offers youth programming that will give youngsters a chance to grow both spiritually and emotionally while sailing, kayaking, or participating in a new fine arts camp. Quinipet also has a family camp - June 28th to July 4th – with meals, lodging and program included under one low fee. Greg Nissen, director, says, "Registration for Quinipet is open now at www.quinipet.org or call (631) 749 0430 and talk to Lauren, the registrar! Blessings on a new year from your camp staff."

■ MARKING YOUR PLEDGE

Please help your Contribution Counters and Finance Secretary! If you have pledged to both the Prospect General Fund and to the Building Fund, please note on your envelope how much of your check is for each fund. Otherwise we will assume the entire amount is to be posted to the General Fund.

UPCOMING EVENTS

■ POWER PENNY SUNDAYS

Laura Taylor

Power Penny Sundays will begin on Sunday, February 1, and will end on Sunday, March 8. You know the drill—each committee/work area has provided a jar. (Any committee that wishes to, can replace their jar if they want a new look). To win, a group needs lots and lots of pennies in their jar. Any silver or dollar bills (or checks) will count as “negative” money, sending your group backwards, while pennies count as positive money. Each week, the Stewardship Committee and other volunteers will tally the jars and post the results on the following Sunday. The group with the largest cumulative positive balance on March 8 will win a pizza party on the date of their choosing. (If no group has a positive balance at the end, it’s the group closest to zero—the one with the smallest negative total—that will win). The Fair Committee and Friends of Prospect are past winners, and enjoyed their pizza parties! Good luck!

■ "TOUCHED BY THE CHRIST"

Heidi Flower

Once again, the Senior Choir will be presenting a cantata on Palm Sunday. *Touched by the Christ* recalls the last days of Jesus’ earthly life through the eyes of individuals who were directly impacted by His ministry. The beautiful music in this work composed by Lloyd Larson invites us to be changed by God’s eternal love and grace.

Rehearsals will begin on February 4th from 8 – 9 p.m. in Room 208. Any persons high school age and above are invited to join us. The score also calls

for a number of monologues. Our performance will take place on Palm Sunday, April 5th at 4 p.m. in our beautiful sanctuary. Please see Heidi or any Senior Choir member if you are interested in taking part in this cantata.

■ SNEAK PREVIEW

A Chamber of Commerce After Hours event will be held at Prospect Church on May 20. Rita Fasci has agreed to organize the event on behalf of the church. A key part of the event will be tours highlighting historical aspects of Prospect, assisted by the History Committee. Rita will be putting together a small committee to assist her. If you can help, contact Rita Fasci.

OUR CHURCH

■ NATURAL CHURCH DEVELOPMENT: PASSIONATE SPIRITUALITY

Tim Krauss

The last article about Natural Church Development (NCD) which appeared in the October Tower provided a brief explanation of our NCD minimum factor (passionate spirituality), the Church Health Team, and ways to find out more about NCD.

This month we will describe our minimum factor in more detail and share the first steps that have been taken by your Church Health Team.



What is Passionate Spirituality? Passionate Spirituality includes how we experience God, our passion for Prospect U.M.C. and the greater Christian Church, our passion for devotions, and our spiritual interconnectedness. Put a different way, our weak point right now is our enthusiasm for practicing our Christian faith. The challenge for each of us as individuals, each committee, the Church Council, and all of us as a congregation is to decide what Passionate Spirituality means to us and how to change our actions to improve it. Below are some suggestions to help you think about Passionate Spirituality in your daily life and in our lives together at Prospect.

Experiencing God is about how we experience God each day and how we integrate our faith into all areas of our lives. As a church, what are we doing to teach members how to recognize God working in their lives and the lives of others?

Passion for the Church (Prospect U.M.C. and the Christian Church) is about how enthusiastic we are about our church and how we see God working in the church. As a church, how do we share and show how God is working in the life of the church?

Passion for Devotions is about how we spend time connecting to God each day and how we see the power of prayer working in our lives individually and together. As a church, what opportunities do we provide for people to learn how to use the Bible?

Spiritual Interconnectedness is about how we talk about God's work in our lives and how we pray for each other. As a church, what opportunities do we provide for people to share God's work in their lives?

The Church Health Team's Survey Questions: On four Sundays last October and November, questions were placed in the Sunday bulletin about different aspects of passionate spirituality. Extra copies of the "purple sheets" with these questions are available in Sessions Hall on a table adjacent to the Minimum Factor Barrel. Completed questionnaires can be placed in the barrel. The questions are also available on the website and answers can be submitted online. The answers collected from the eight questions were grouped and reviewed by the Church Health Team and the Church Council. At the Church Council meeting on November 18, we spent an hour discussing the results and talking about ideas for possible activities to address weaknesses in each of the four areas of Passionate Spirituality. You can read more about this in the article about "Brainstorming by the Church Council."

What's next? Information about NCD at Prospect will soon be available on the church website and you can look for another NCD article in the March Tower about the next steps in our journey to increase our passionate spirituality together. The Church Health Team will be communicating soon with all committee chairpersons and group leaders about their part in helping to improve the spiritual life of our congregation. During the coming months different events and activities will be planned and announced in this regard.

■ NATURAL CHURCH DEVELOPMENT: BRAINSTORMING BY THE CHURCH COUNCIL



Now that we have begun a new year, it's a good time to share a summary of the brainstorming that happened at the November Church Council meeting. Tim Krauss, representing the Church Health Team, recapped our NCD journey thus far, talking about the four components of Passionate Spirituality and sharing the results of the NCD surveys that were in four Sunday bulletins last fall.

This was followed by a brainstorming session during which the Council considered the survey results in the context of the goals of NCD and our lives together as a family of faith. (It is important for all of us to remember that the NCD process is about understanding what is keeping Prospect United Methodist Church from growing. It's about understanding concepts that promote natural growth and about getting out of our own way and letting God guide our growth; also, about letting loose our God-given potential.)

Below is a list of ideas for goals and plans generated by the brainstorming session.

- Begin adult Bible study
- Establish study groups; e.g. study of Social Principles
- Organize small home-based groups; e.g. cell groups or classes (the Methodist Church grew around this type of group; class meetings with mutual accountability)
- Create opportunities to gather for fellowship and service
- Begin a book discussion group
- Make one-to-one connections; unearth talents
- Increase spirituality through committee work
- Create informal opportunities to increase Bible knowledge
- Create opportunities for dialogue; e.g. a Blog

Following the generation of ideas, the Council discussed which goals should be the priorities and what objectives should be set to begin progress toward some of the NDC goals.

The initial list of objectives are:

- Begin adult Bible study
 - Sunday morning - Diane Ashworth and Shirley Paulette to plan and organize.
 - Weeknight - Tim Krauss and Jan Moore to investigate possibilities and lead (maybe a Disciple study)
- Organize some small home-based cell groups (Diane Ashworth has had experience with this type of group)
- Create opportunities to gather for fellowship and service (e.g. a new infant/toddler group is beginning)
- Create opportunities for dialogue; e.g. a Blog

This is just a beginning. Watch for more plans and news in the near future and please share any ideas you may have with a member of the Church Health Team, Pastor Dennis, or our Church Council Chair, Jill Wilson.

A HISTORICAL PRIMER

Kathy Dube

Prospect Church has been a bastion of mainline Protestantism in Bristol for close to 175 years, but it was not the first Methodist Church in the area. The first official Methodist presence in the immediate area was the Burlington (Conn.) Methodist Episcopal Circuit, formed in 1816. The original Methodist preachers were “Circuit Riders” who conducted classes in the developing religion based on the teachings of the Anglican preacher John Wesley.

In future issues of the Tower, the History Committee will review the developments that led to the eventual establishment of the Methodist Episcopal Society of Bristol, the precursor to the Prospect Methodist Episcopal Church, today known as Prospect United Methodist Church.

If you are interested in purchasing commemorative ornaments or sketches of Prospect Church to assist the History Committee with preservation projects, please see Vivian Brackett, committee chairperson, after the 10 a.m. service Sunday mornings.

SAVE THE DATE

■ LENTEN SCHEDULE

A Shrove Tuesday supper on February 24 will launch the season of Lent at Prospect Church. The supper will feature a traditional dinner of pancakes and sausage.



There will be games, a costume and mask contest. Come and put your costume on and join the fun. Of course costume is optional. If you would like to help out and bring a dessert, that would be appreciated.

Other important dates to mark in your calendars:

- Ash Wednesday, February 25, with two services at noon and 7 p.m. The Senior Choir will participate in the evening service.
- Lenten Study beginning March 1, continuing Sunday afternoons from 4 to 5:30 p.m.
- Palm Sunday, April 5, usual services at 8:30 and 10 a.m. A Cantata by the Senior Choir will be presented in a concert setting starting at 4 p.m.
- Maundy Thursday, April 9, 7 p.m. service.
- Easter Sunday, April 12, sunrise service at Barnes Memorial Chapel at West Cemetery and 10 a.m. service at Prospect. There will be no 8:30 chapel service on Easter.

More details will follow in the next Tower.

■ SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS

Applications are ready for 2009 and are available in the office. They must be returned with completed essay on “Why I wish to further my education” by May 1. School records may be forwarded to the church in care of Barbara Fasci, if records are not ready when the application is completed.

FEBRUARY AT A GLANCE

SUNDAY SCHEDULE

8:30 a.m.	Chapel Service
10:00 a.m.	Sanctuary Service
10:00 a.m.	Church School
10:00 a.m.	Nursery School
11:00 a.m.	Fellowship

MEETING SCHEDULE

February 8	Worship 11:30 a.m.
February 10	Finance 7 p.m.
February 16	Staff Parish
February 17	Church Council 7 p.m.
February 23	Member/Nurture 7 p.m.

EVENTS

Men's Fellowship, Monster Trucks: Saturday, February 7 at the Hartford XL Center. Cost, Adults \$17.25, Children 2-12, \$7.25. Free pit passes from 10-12:30. Show at 2:00.

On February 7 the Women of Prospect will be hosting "An Evening With Old Blue Eyes" Spaghetti Dinner. Come join them for spaghetti w/meatballs, salad, bread, dessert and beverages. Cost is \$10.00 for adults, children 10 and under \$5.00. Continuous seating from 5 pm - 7 pm. For more information please see Jackie Palance or Luisa Gladu.

FELLOWSHIP HOUR SCHEDULE

February 2009	Women's Group
March 2009	History
April 2009	Trustees

**PROSPECT UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
99 SUMMER STREET
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