

THE PARISHIONER

THE FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST, WOODBRIDGE 1738-2009

Sunday Worship 10:00 a.m.

Telephone (203) 389-2119

Fax (203) 389-2110

E-mail: office@uccw.org

Website: www.firstchurchwoodbridge.org

UCC Website: www.ctucc.org

October 2009

Church Council

Your Church Council met on the evening of August 24, 2009. During our Spiritual Stretching exercise, Sara encouraged us to listen carefully and courageously to the myriad ways in which God speaks to us individually. We welcomed Barbara Marks, our new Director of Christian Education, and shared together our visions for the church school and youth programs. Jan Drummond shared her thoughts on our theme of change, seeing it as both stressful and invigorating at the same time.



Committee report highlights included a discussion of the refugee resettlement project, the youth work trip to Pine Ridge, outreach efforts at the concerts on the Green, and upcoming Women's Fellowship activities. Stewardship shared their plans for the fall campaign, and our Treasurer reported his work on assembling the preliminary budget for us to consider at the Congregational Meeting on September 27.

Special Offering—Neighbors in Need Sunday, October 4, 2009

Neighbors in Need provides funds to address poverty, economic development, human rights, peacemaking, violence, racial and economic justice, environmental concerns, and public policy advocacy.



Neighbors in Need expresses the UCC commitment to ministries of justice and compassion to alleviate suffering through justice advocacy and direct service.

Two-thirds of Neighbors in Need funds supports programs and direct grants offered by the UCC's Justice and Witness Ministries. While grants are made to address a wide range of justice priorities, a significant portion of these grants are made to reduce hunger and poverty. One-third of the offering supports the work of the UCC's Council for American Indian Ministry, which is the voice for American Indians in the UCC.

This year our congregation will participate in this offering which will be dedicated October 4.

Neighbors in Need helps make another world possible. It needs your support, so please give generously.

Board of Christian Service



Habitat for Humanity® Habitat for Humanity—Amity Cares III, the third Habitat for Humanity house being sponsored in part by our church through Amity Cares, is progressing well. It is anticipated that the build will be completed by late fall or early winter. We have become one of the largest groups in terms of volunteers within Amity Cares. It has been a great opportunity and privilege to contribute to our wider community in a very tangible way.

Please come and join us! Our next scheduled workday is Saturday, October 17, from 9 AM-4 PM. The site of the build is 32 Dewitt Street in New Haven. If you are at least 16 years old and interested in volunteering or have any questions, please contact Rich Altman at 393-0796 or by email at raaltman@optonline.net.



Pastors Corner

The Rev. Dr. Sara E. Penn-Strah

GROW, TEACH, TOUCH, GIVE

My Dear Friends,

The First Church of Christ has been a faithful presence in Woodbridge since our formation in 1738! We have weathered much change in the surrounding world.

In early 2008, we took it upon ourselves to discern anew God's vision for our church's mission and ministry in the face of changing ways. We met together and committed ourselves to focus on **Building our Community** of Faithful Disciples (including welcoming new members), **Expanding in Mission and Service**, and **Nurturing our Children and Youth**. So much has happened since we met and formed these focus areas! Surely the Holy Spirit has flourished among and worked through us in the year that has followed, with a groundswell of energy in our midst.

Now it is time for us to see how much further we can take our commitments. Can we sustain and build upon them for mission and ministry? Can these three focus areas help us to give witness to the glory and greatness of God? Can they help us share God's loves and mercy with the broken world around us? Can they allow us to pass on the amazing legacy of our tradition?

Our Board for Stewardship has asked us to consider four pillars for that very building process. They are: **GROW, TEACH, TOUCH, GIVE**.

The first pillar, to **grow**, recognizes that we are already a dynamic and loving community of disciples. We have such a compelling vision of mission and ministry that we must share with others the Good News that Jesus is present and active here in this place.

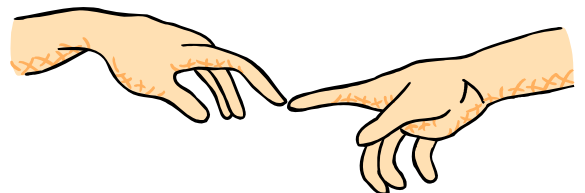
The second pillar, to **teach**, demonstrates our commitment to passing on all that we have received to our children and youth. We can share with them our conviction that a life of meaning can be found through the knowledge of God as known in Jesus Christ and as experienced within a loving and supportive community of faith.

The third imperative in our vision is to **touch** the lives of others. To touch someone, in its purest sense, is to claim a relationship with that person, reaching out to a neighbor in a time of need, welcoming the refugee, or advocating for justice--we express our connections to all who dream of a better future.

The fourth pillar is to **give**. We worship a God of abundance, a God who is ready and willing to offer us forgiveness, welcome, love, grace and mercy again and again. We have been showered with gifts of many sorts. If we give back to God a proportion of the gifts we have received, we will indeed support and build the mission and ministry of our church. We can increase our giving so as to become even more vital in the work we do to make a difference in the lives of our members and in the lives of others in our community and our world. Each of us bears a responsibility for furthering our mission through our giving --no matter how large or how small.

Grow, teach, touch, and give. As we practice each of these, we will find that they enhance our ability to stay focused on our vision for the future mission of Jesus Christ at First Church. We will bring the presence of Christ to this community through them.

Watch the mail for information about an exciting worship and sermon series on these four pillars of mission and ministry. Plan to join us on October 11 (GROW), October 18 (TEACH), October 25 (TOUCH), and November 1-All Saints Sunday (GIVE). Then bring your commitment card on November 8 and plan to stay for a potluck lunch after church to celebrate and give thanks.



Sara

The Labyrinth

Did you know we have a labyrinth on our church grounds? Our labyrinth can be found on the flat grounds adjacent to our choir garden, to the right of the church sanctuary as you face the front doors. It was built a few years ago by our members and is intended for your spiritual nurture. Want some guidelines for use? Here are just a few possibilities:



1. Offer a prayer as you enter the space, inviting God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit, to walk with you and help you receive whatever you need for your own spiritual well-being. Ask to be opened to the experience God wants you to have.
2. As you walk, take with you an issue, concern, or dilemma (especially some place in your life in which you feel stuck) and at each turn in the path, invite God to help you see the problem from a new angle. Or, if there is a person or situation about which you are concerned, as you walk, imagine that person or situation being encircled in prayer.

There is no one right way to use the labyrinth as a spiritual tool. If you have ideas of your own, please feel free to share them with your community of faith. Pass them on by emailing pastorsara@uccw.org or writing or calling the church office and we'll share them in this space.

Worship Corner

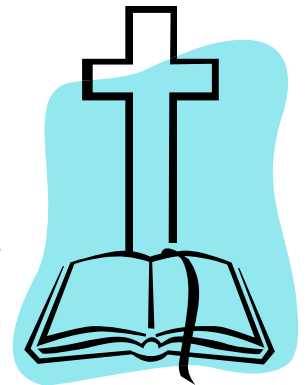
Our deacons have suggested that many people have questions about why we do things the way we do them during worship. If you have a question, please send it to pastorsara@uccw.org or call the church office. We will try to answer one question each month in this space.

Question: Who picks the hymns?

Answer: I do. I try to pick the hymns very carefully, taking in several different factors. The most important factor is, of course, whether singing this hymn helps people encounter God during worship. Ways I approach that ultimate question include the following: How does it fit in with, augment, or illuminate the rest of the worship service? Does it lift up a theme or image from the scripture, the liturgical season, happenings in the congregation, the community, the world? Does it speak to a particular mood or issue? I also consider whether it is a familiar tune. If not, is it worth introducing into the congregations' repertoire? Will it speak to any of the diverse preferences within the congregation? Is it musically sound? Music, for many of us, can open us to God's presence in our midst, so know that we on the staff take it very seriously.

I am eager to hear your questions.

Sara



Do you have a family member away at school? Would they like to hear from their church? Please send us their contact information (send to office@uccw.org or call the office at 203 389-2119 and we'll see that they receive the church newsletter via e-mail.)

**New members will be received during worship on November 8.
Please e-mail the pastor, pastorsara@uccw.org, or call the church office
if you want to find out about uniting with us in membership.**

Upcoming Worship

October 4: **Intergenerational Worship, World Communion Sunday.** Mark 10: 2-16. Jesus teaches "Let the little children come unto me."



October 11: **Stewardship Theme: Grow;** Mark 10:17-34. Growing in faith may require us to go in new directions and do things we find difficult. What will we choose? Growing in numbers may require the same – reaching beyond our comfort zones to invite others to know the love of Jesus; welcoming those who are different from us; responding graciously when they bring change to what makes us comfortable.

October 18: **Stewardship Theme: Teach;** Mark 19: 35-45. Jesus came not to be served but to serve. Jesus teaches about serving. How do we teach about Jesus?

October 25: **Stewardship Theme: Touch;** HYMN SING, Mark 10:46-52. Jesus heals the blind beggar, Bartimaeus who asks "Let me see again." Jesus teaches not only by telling stories, but also by his actions. How do our actions touch others?" We will hear about our Youth Mission Trip to South Dakota.

November 1: **Stewardship Theme: Give; All Saints Sunday; Intergeneration Worship.** We will celebrate the Lord's Supper and remember the Saints that have gone on before us. Ruth 1:1-8; Mark 12:28-34. Jesus teaches about the greatest commandment. Kids in church. We give because so much has been given to us.

November 8: **Stewardship Theme: Thanks;** Ruth 3: 1-5; 4:13-17; Mark 12: 38-44. Please bring your commitment cards to worship and receive a blessing. We will receive members during worship. **Potluck lunch** and celebration after worship.



Locally Connected Author Here for Book Signing Nov. 8 *Finding Pete: Rediscovering the Brother I Lost in Vietnam*

In November, 1965, a civilian aid worker, Peter Hunting, was killed in the Mekong Delta. His sister, Jill, was left filled with questions. For decades these questions would remain unanswered, with Pete's family struck silent by the overwhelming grief and his many letters home destroyed in a basement flood. Then, in 2004, boxes of Pete's letters emerged and Jill began a process of historical detective work and an emotional re-acquaintance with a brother lost too soon.

Jill Hunting's memoir, *Finding Pete*, traces Pete's journey from an idealistic college student to a savvy member of the International Voluntary Services—digging wells, laying brick, teaching English and writing witty letters home describing the small absurdities of everyday life in a foreign land.

The book also highlights Pete's family roots in Woodbridge, his visits with his extended family here and his ultimate funeral and burial from the First Church of Christ.

Join us in the Parish Hall from 2:00 p.m. until 4:00 p.m. on Sunday, November 8, to meet Jill Hunting, who will present historical footage from that time. She will also talk about the family's First Church of Christ, Woodbridge connections. We will have copies of *Finding Pete* on sale and Jill Hunting will be available to autograph them.



News from Christian Education



This year we have started a new curriculum called Live B.I.G. It encourages children to hear, see, and live their belief in God. Each week we will explore a short video segment, have music, a hands on project pertaining to the lesson, and closing prayer.

Our teachers will help our children come to know the love of God through Jesus by making Sunday School a place they want to be. We are so blessed to have a wonderful teaching staff that includes Bettina Thiel, Cathy Hubbard, Jan Drummond, Emma Altman, Margot Maley, Bob Tucker, Jen Huestis, Katie Glusac and April Rock. We are still **looking for one more teen** (to teach every third week) to complete our teaching staff. If you are interested, please let me know.

Our September theme will be **God Created the World** exploring how God Made the Earth, The Lakota Pine Ridge Story (we are made in God's Image), God Made Plants and Animals, and God Rested.

Our October theme will be **Jesus Is the Messiah** with lessons surrounding Jesus and Peter, Jesus and the disciples, Jesus and the children, and Jesus and the Woman at the Well.

Please ASK your children about their projects and what they are learning about God; they are an amazing group!



Youth Group News

Well, we are off to a great start! Our first youth/parent meeting was a great success with the youth sharing their ideas on what would make Youth Group a great place for them. The Youth now have their **own big room** on the third floor upstairs in the parish house and in the coming months will be making changes to suit their needs. Do NOT get rid of any comfy chairs without asking us first!

Upcoming Events:

September 20 4:15-6:00 YG fun at the church

October 4 3:30 Meet here for Laser Tag Sports Center of CT-Shelton

October 18 4:15-6:00 church service project

November 1 4:15-6:00 YG "All Saints" fun at the church

The Youth are looking for ways to serve church members with small outreach projects. Please contact Barbara at the Church with your ideas and ways we can make them happen.

Church School Calendar – 2009 - 2010 Draft**

Sunday September 27 - Church School
 Sunday October 4 - World Communion Sunday - Youth Group 4:15-5:30
 Sunday October 11 - All in Worship
 Sunday October 18 - Church School -Youth Group 4:15-5:30
 Sunday October 25 - Church School
 Sunday November 1 - Church School -Youth Group 4:15-5:30
 Sunday November 8 - Church School
 Sunday November 15 - Church School -Youth Group 4:15-5:30
 Sunday November 22 - Church School
 Sunday November 29 - All in Worship - No Church School -Youth Group (tbd)
 Saturday December 5 - Trimming
 Sunday December 6 - Church School
 Sunday December 13 - Church School - Youth Group 4:15-5:30 Christmas Party
 Sunday December 20 - Pageant Sunday+
 Thursday December 24 - All in Worship Service
 Friday December 25 - Merry Christmas!
 Sunday December 27 - All in Worship-No Church School
 Sunday January 3 - All in Worship*
 Sunday January 10 - Church School - Youth Group 4:15-5:30
 Sunday January 17 - Church School
 Sunday January 24 - Church School - Youth Group 4:15-5:30
 Sunday January 31 - Church School
 Sunday February 7 - Church School - Youth Group 4:15-5:30
 Sunday February 14 - All in Worship
 Sunday February 21 - Church School - Youth Group 4:15-5:30
 Sunday February 28 - Church School
 Sunday March 7 - All in Worship - Youth Group 4:15-5:30
 Sunday March 14 - Church School
 Sunday March 21 - Church School - Youth Group 4:15-5:30
 Sunday March 28 - Church School - Palm Sunday
 Sunday April 4 - EASTER
 Sunday April 11 - Church School - Youth Group 4:15-5:30
 Sunday April 18 - Church School
 Sunday April 25 - Church School - Youth Group 4:15-5:30
 Sunday May 2 - All in Worship
 Sunday May 9 - Church School - Youth Group 4:15-5:30
 Sunday May 16 - Church School
 Sunday May 23 - Church School - Youth Group 4:15-5:30
 Sunday May 30 - Church School*
 Sunday June 6 - Church School - Last Youth Group 4:15-5:30
 Sunday June 13 - Teacher Appreciation - Last day church school*

* **“All in Worship”** are subject to change-**there is no church school on these dates**

+ Snow date will be decided for the Christmas Pageant

Youth Group times may change according to the events scheduled

Women's Fellowship News

Spring 2010 Rummage Sale

When you clean out your closets at the end of the seasons, please remember the Women's Fellowship Spring Rummage Sale. Clean clothing in good condition would be welcome at the time of the Rummage Sale. (Please do **not** bring donations to the Parish House ahead of time.) Thanks so much.



Houses for Christmas Home Tours

Women's Fellowship members are looking forward to Friday and Saturday, December 11 and 12, when we will have "Home Tours." We are planning to bring you a really great happening with candlelight on Friday night and a Tea on Saturday. (A Boutique will run on both Friday night and Saturday during the day.) If you can clean up your house and decorate it nicely for Christmas—show it off. We know that there are many gorgeous abodes in our community; we need yours! Please call Hope Patton at 389-0942 if you can participate. Bring the Christmas spirit and good cheer to us! Do think about it as you walk through your house.



A Resource for Seniors

Mary D'Ostilio is the Senior Services Social Worker with the Town of Woodbridge. She is available to seniors 60 or over who need assistance with Medicare and other insurance matters as well as help with energy assistance or other entitlement programs, home care referrals, housing assistance, and community resource information. Feel free to call her at 389-3429, Monday, Wednesday, & Friday, 9:00-2:30.

AUTISM

At our October meeting, Jo Page will talk about autism from her own personal and knowledgeable viewpoint. Member of our Circle or not, you're invited to join us for this very current and heartfelt subject. Bring your lunch and come to the Parish House Monday, October 19 at 12 Noon. We'll eat, we'll listen.

...CIRCLE 4 - THE STUDY/OUTREACH SUPPORT GROUP

Columbus House Outreach Cooking Schedule 2009-2010

Everyone who has had the opportunity to cook and/or serve has truly felt it to be a worthwhile experience – we hope you will help if and when called upon. Any questions about this mission opportunity, or to volunteer, please call Julie at 393-0796. Thank you!

Thanks to the many volunteers who have worked to bring a hot meal to the residents of Columbus House this year. You will be sent a reminder and instructions with a list of people who can assist you with any questions. The following committees/groups are scheduled:

Monday, October 19	Board of Christian Education
Monday, November 16	Confirmation Class
Monday, December 21	Robert/Glusac Family
Monday, January 18	Board of Christian Service
Monday, February 15	Board of Stewardship
Monday, March 15	Robert/Glusac Family
Monday, April 19	Youth Group
Monday, May 17	Boy Scout Troop 907
Monday, June 21	Board of Deacons
Monday, July 19	Altman Family & Friends
Monday, August 16	??? It could be your group here!



For \$130 you can sponsor a meal at Columbus House! Call Carole at the church office, 389-2119.

Church E-mail List

Want to be in the know? Want to get the latest news about your community of faith wherever you are? Subscribe to our church e-mail distribution list. To subscribe, go to: <http://www.firstchurchwoodbridge.org/News/index.htm>. Then click on "News – Subscribe."

Alternately, you can send an e-mail to the keeper of the list, Skip Borgerson, at borgerson@bethwood.com.

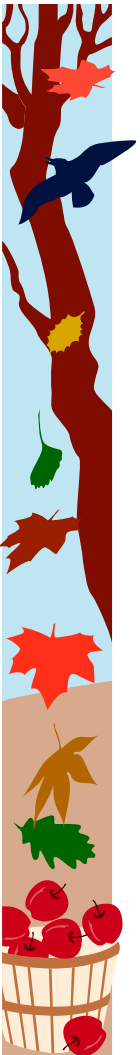
Want to Get Away From it All?

How about a mini vacation and leave the driving to someone else! Some other churches have taken a short tour trip together and reported having a really good time. Several packages are advertised and are offered at a reasonable price. The Women's Fellowship is willing to explore the issue if there is any interest. If this piques any interest at all, contact Jo Page 389-1656 or Jan Drummond (203) 375-4461. There is absolutely no commitment at this time!



Book Club

The Book Club has decided to read an exciting novel this month. We have chosen the thriller Palace Council by Stephen Carter from Cheshire CT. This is a murder mystery surrounding a conspiracy that effects the highest level of government. Denise Rock told the group that just when you think you have solved the crime, a twist in the plot leads you in another direction. We hope you will join us when we meet on October 28th at 7:30 PM. Louise Kolligian will host the meeting at her home; 27 Williamsburg Dr. in Orange.



Clothing Drive

A reminder that Lucas Morrissey, a member of Boy Scout Troop 907, is collecting articles to raise funds to attend the 100th Anniversary of Scouting at the 2010 National Scout Jamboree, Fort A.P. Hill, Virginia. He will take the articles to A & E Clothing Corporation who will collect, weigh, sort, and distribute these articles to less fortunate people worldwide. Items needed: men's, women's & children's clothing, coats, linens, belts, gloves, handbags, backpacks, briefcases, scarves, hats, ties, blankets, bedding, curtains, tablecloths, towels, pillows, small rugs, stuffed animals, shoes, sneakers, and boots. Place items in tightly sealed plastic garbage bags and drop them off at our back parking lot on Friday, October 16, 5:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m. or Saturday, October 17, 8:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m. You may also contact Lucas at 203-354-0815 if these times are not convenient. He thanks you for your support!



Cook & Care Walk-a-Thon

Interfaith Cooperative Ministries will have their 13th Annual Cook and Care Walk-a-thon on Sunday, October 18, at 1:00 p.m. The three mile walk will start at Edgerton Park in New Haven. Proceeds help the work of the Community Soup Kitchen, the Downtown Evening Soup Kitchen, FISH of Greater New Haven, and Interfaith Volunteer Caregivers. For more information visit their website at www.cookandcare.org or call 203-230-8994.



Car Needed

Do you have a road-worthy car that you are willing to donate to the church? Or do you know someone who might? (Tax deduction eligible.)

Or, do you have a good sound car that you are willing to sell at a very reasonable price?

The car will go to the Al-Dayrawi family as a step toward self-sufficiency and independence.

To donate or sell a car: Contact Garrett Stack, Refugee Resettlement Project Coordinator, 203-397-3382, or gstack@optonline.net.



Fall Leadership Retreat Notes

Eleven members of our Church Council / Deacons gathered at the Mercy Center in Madison on a sunny September Saturday for our annual leadership retreat. We worked to further discern who we are as a church and who we want to be in the future using music, paired and small group discussion, solitary thought, and worship. We spent time contemplating our own personal experiences of change and growth, each bringing a symbol that represents who we are as we've moved from one place to another in life. We asked ourselves how God is speaking to us individually and collectively, how much we trust what we are hearing, and how best to sustain ourselves and each other in the love, faith and courage all change and growth demands. It was a meaningful and thought-filled day, and we left thinking how truly blessed our congregation is.

Julie Altman



Beyond Civil Rights... Race in the 21st Century



W.E.B. Dubois wrote that “the problem of the Twentieth Century is the problem of the color line.” Dubois may never have guessed that the 21st Century would include the election of a Black President. Yet racism persists and some would suggest that the 21st Century color line rests at the border. The conversation on race, isn’t black or white, it is a multi-hued discourse that requires those who remember the Civil Rights Movement, and those who have only read about it. Please join us at the Fall Annual Meeting of the Connecticut Conference for Sacred Conversations on Race, lead by trained facilitators. Bring your hopes and fears and take back to your congregation the knowledge that this conversation will go on.

**142nd Fall Annual Meeting
October 23 & 24, 2009**

Middletown High School, Middletown, CT

For more information

www.ctucc.org
(860) 233-5564

Challenge Gifts Update:

Heartfelt thanks to those who have contributed an additional \$500 to help us reduce our expected deficit this year. Your generosity is an example for us all!

So far we have received gifts from the following:

Nancy Dickgiesser

Phyllis Hedberg

Mike Penn-Strah

Beverly Fries

Women’s Fellowship

Garrett Stack and John Anderson

Faye and Eaton Chen

George and Donna Taylor

Jim and Pat Gilbert

Henry Gates

Pravin Samuelpaulraj & Delisha David Suganthi

Richard Jeynes

Elizabeth Clark

One Anonymous Donor

Erica Gonzalez

Bob Gordon

Bill and Carol Flint

A Second Anonymous Donor



And a special thank-you to Diana Mott, who brought this challenge to us. How much difference the actions of one can make to the Body of Christ!

As we practice generosity, we become closer and closer to the example of Jesus!

Connecticut Conference (UCC) to Offer Workshop on Church Growth

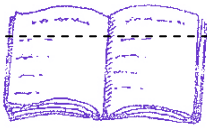
Can our church grow? Recent demographic studies indicate that 60-75% of the population in our Connecticut communities are “de-churched”—people who have grown up in the church but left it as adults. Even though they do not attend church regularly, the majority of these folks describe themselves as “spiritual,” meaning they believe in God, they pray regularly, and they read the Bible and participate in some kind of regular devotional experience. Many of them say they would probably attend a church if someone they know invited them!



How can we reach out to the de-churched people in our community? Come to the Church Growth Workshop on Saturday, October 17, from 8:45-11:00 at First Congregational Church in Branford and find out! The workshop will be led by the Reverend Dr. Michael Penn-Strah, our South Central Regional Minister. Bring a team of your members who are committed to helping your church grow.

Registration is only \$10 per church to cover cost of materials participants will receive. Please e-mail your response to ngcc@comcast.net or notify the North Guilford Congregational Church at 203-457-0581 or 159 Ledge Hill Road, Guilford CT 06437.

The Reverend Dr. Michael S. Penn-Strah has been our South Central Regional Minister of the Connecticut Conference since August 1, 2007. Dr. Penn-Strah received his M.Div from Chicago Theological Seminary and his Th.D. from Boston University. In more than 40 years as an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ he has served suburban and inner-city congregations from 120-1200 members, including a new church start he co-pastored with his wife, Reverend Dr. Sara Penn-Strah.



Marking Life's Passages

Baptism	August 30, 2009	Lily Camille Hubbard daughter of William and Lori Hubbard granddaughter of Paul and Cathy Hubbard great-granddaughter of Winchester and Katherine Hubbard and Robert and Rachel Conniff
Marriage	September 5, 2009	Diane Carvalho and Michael Tomlinson
	September 13, 2009	Darcy Jane Ramos and Russell Bradley Cook

Leave behind more than an empty pew. Remember the church in your will.

The Parishioner

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Pastor Emeritus The Rev. Boyd M. Johnson, Jr.

Compiled by Cathy Hubbard

NEXT PARISHIONER DEADLINE IS WEDNESDAY, OCT. 21, 2009 (a firm date)