

Mark Your Calendars!

December

Dec.31: Holiday Open House 2-6pm at the homes of Ann & John Ralosky and Nancy & Luis Pi-Sunyer (see page 4 for details).

January

Jan.21: FCC Men's Breakfast Group meets 8:30-10a.m. in the Guild Room.

Jan.18: Wednesday Eve Adult Study Series through Feb 15, 8:15- 9:45pm in the library.

Jan.22: Congregational Meeting after worship.

Jan.28-29: Jesus Has Left the Building ... And we followed Service Weekend – see pg. 9 for schedule of volunteer opportunities.

MMO registration for 2012/2013 school year begins January 9.

Recurring events

- **Wednesdays 6-8pm:** Labyrinth Walk
- **Sunday mornings:** Bible Study 9:30-10:40 in the library (except Jan.1st).

For more details check our website calendar



40 South Fullerton Avenue
Montclair, New Jersey 07042
(973)744-4856; admin@fccmtc.com

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visit our website...and tell a friend

JOIN US! Sunday mornings at 10:30 for worship

first NEWS



a newsletter of First Congregational Church of Montclair, New Jersey
an Open & Affirming congregation of the
UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST
"Never place a period where God has put a comma." -Gracie Allen

January, 2012

From the Moderator

In the closing days of 2011, as I write my final column as Moderator, I have taken some time to look back over the newsletters from the last couple of years. We have truly come a long way since January 2010. In my first column I outlined goals for my service as Moderator: completing and implementing Challenge FCC; undertaking a targeted growth initiative; building our institutional infrastructure; and developing a plan for long-term building maintenance. I am happy to report that we have completed or made very significant progress in all of these areas!

"Challenge FCC" has been successfully implemented through the expansion of MMO. The unused space in our lower level was remodeled in record time and is now beautiful, light-filled classrooms full of energetic children all day. We have all seen and enjoyed the fruits of the growth initiative of the last 18 months, culminating in an attendance of 200 folks at the Christmas Eve family service this year. And the move from several committees to six Ministries has been particularly meaningful to me. In my heart I saw committee work as ministry, but didn't know how to articulate it. Our ministries have taken hold and are doing wonderful work – I hope you have all found a place in a ministry where your talents and skills can be put to work in service of the community, both inside and outside of the church.

There are many other ways things have changed: the structure of the service, the way we use the sanctuary, the music, the labyrinth, the Sunday School (58 children on Christmas Eve!!)... there are too many to name. Suffice it to say, as I pass the baton on to new leadership I feel proud of what we have already accomplished and excited to see how we will continue to grow and flourish in 2012! I hope that growth will include a more intentional and visible Open

Inside

- **"Safe Church" Update**
- **"Progressive Christianity" series**
- **New 2012 Council Slate**
- **"Going Deeper" spiritual offerings**
- **JHLTB service weekend project**

& Affirming outreach program, even more ways for individuals to develop and grow in their spiritual practices, and a strong youth & young adult program, among others.

And speaking of new leadership, I hope you will all support Elaine Wells as she takes on the role of Moderator. Elaine has been a member for 5+ years, singing in the choir and actively participating in the music and worship life of the church. She has served ably as chair of the Ministry of Spirituality and Worship (and its predecessor, the Worship & Music Committee), and it's a particular delight to welcome her into this new leadership role. The congregation will be voting to elect our new slate of leaders at our January congregational meeting, scheduled for Sunday, Jan. 22nd after church. See the full slate of candidates on page 7.

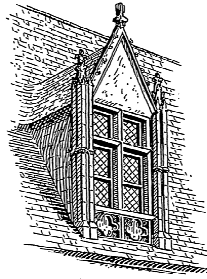
In closing, I hope you will accept my deep thanks for giving me the opportunity to serve in this way. Church leadership has been in my blood since I was a teenager, and it gives me such joy to have the opportunity to work and worship with you all, and to see a struggling congregation blossom into a vibrant, growing and exciting community dedicated to service, justice and spiritual growth. Many blessings to all of

you in 2012! Peace, *Vivianne*

Congregational Meeting Jan. 22

All members and friends of FCC are encouraged to attend our annual meeting immediately after worship in the Guild Room. We will approve the 2012 budget and Council slate as well as discuss our "Safe Church" policy and other developments at FCC.

Please join us!



From My Study Window

What Kind of Christian Are You?

That's a question I've been asked many times. Often it's prompted by a question (or criticism) about our rainbow flag or our "Jesus Has Left the Building... And We Followed" program. It's often asked in the spirit of true curiosity, but sometimes I can't help but feel a little defensive, largely because I struggle with coming up with a concise answer to the question. I often wish that the term "Christian" was enough, but as we know that word means many different things to many different people. And so I find myself asking the same question: What kind of Christian am I?

Like many of you, I was raised in a rather conservative faith (Catholic, in my case) and found the United Church of Christ after years of searching for a faith that felt more open, inclusive and authentic to my experience of God in the world; a faith that encouraged my questions and challenged my complacency. I longed for a place where God was reflected in both genders and in all kinds of human diversity. I wanted to find a church that understood that faith was a verb and not just a noun. I wanted to find a place where a good question was more important than a pat answer. Perhaps that is your story too and you have found FCC to be a transformative place for you. You may find that your spiritual life is richer and more complex than before, but you may not be comfortable putting a label on it. Many people find FCC because they are moving beyond the faith they grew up in — they know what they are leaving, but they might not be able to clearly articulate what they have found. If that's you, you are not alone!

This winter we will continue to explore our spiritual and religious identity as members and friends of FCC. In particular we will unpack the term "progressive Christianity" as it applies to us. For some of us that term comes as a liberating "aha!" moment and we proudly adopt that label. For others it may have uncomfortable political baggage, go too far, or not far enough. But the beauty of "progressive" Christianity is that it makes room for all those experiences. I look forward to exploring this in our sermon series and adult study group called "Progressive Christianity: Transforming Labels Into Living." What kind of Christians are we? Let's answer the question together!

Ann

Thank you! Thank you!

This past Christmas season was a joyous one made possible by the many helping hands and hearts in the congregation. Special thanks goes to:

Fair Trade Sale

Stephanie Sheerin whose passion and energy continues to make the sale possible with help from: **Kayla and Corrine Harney, Sarah Ralosky, Missy Pentecost, John Sampson, and Brendan Bevensee.**

Broadway House Giving Tree

Brendan Bevensee and Stella Wilkins for coordinating the Giving Tree and the **many generous members of the congregation** who supplied the gifts to the residents of Broadway House.

Christmas Caroling at Broadway House

John Leatherman, Liz Honer, Dale Livingston, Liz Donald, Elaine Wells, Heather Cherrey, Bob Sillery, Billy Tsang, Brendan Bevensee, Anne Garty, Dick Thomas, Mark Jackson who lent their voices and friendship to make the holiday brighter for our friends at Broadway House.

Children's Christmas Pageant

Lynley Jones, Rachael and Mark Egan, Phyllis Stone, Amy Aiello, Ali Campbell, Susan Hunt and all the other parents who helped make it such a joyous event!

Holiday Kids Camp

Melissa, Sam and Alex Ragan, Angela, Mark and Simona Graceffo for coordinating the staff & the Holiday Kids Camp on Friday, December 9. And to **Dan Wall, Maureen Connolly and Kayla Harney** who offered to staff the remaining Fridays.

Longest Night Service

Julie Morgan, Dale Livingston, Joyce Mauer, and Vivianne Potter for their beautiful music, **Barb Prince** for her worship leadership, and **Stella Wilkins** for serving as usher.

Christmas Sanctuary Decorating

Nancy & Luis Pi-Sunyer, Gregg Monsees, Dick Thomas, Anne Garty, and John Sampson for making our Christmas sanctuary truly stunning (inside and out!)

Special Thanks!

To Nancy and Luis Pi-Sunyer for cleaning and organizing the Chancel Rooms! What a difference it makes!



We may see them or we may avert our eyes so we don't. There is population of homeless people living right in our midst in Montclair. They are our neighbors and they live on the streets. Now think back to winter 2010/11 - the weather was extremely harsh and cold. We were warm and safe. For ten years, MESH (Montclair Emergency Services for the Homeless) has been helping to ease the burdens of the most vulnerable people who live among us during the cold winter months.

Beginning in 2005 when MESH was started by Reverend Canon Wade Renn, our most needy neighbors were given sleeping bags to help protect them from winter's cold nights. Over the last few years, as awareness of the need grew, people began to contribute time and money. With these additional resources, the outreach of MESH has grown as well. With your support, the ministry of the organization has expanded to provide:

- temporary warm and safe haven from harsh winter elements
- meals
- showers
- free laundry cards
- bins for the storage of personal items
- sleeping bags

Last winter, MESH served 15-20 guests daily. Several of the guests we served have found homes.

This year, MESH is moving to solidify its mission by becoming a non-profit organization devoted to continuing this work. Planning for the Winter 2011/12 program is underway. The

program will run from December 1, 2011 through March 31, 2012.

Right now, we are looking for a place to shelter our homeless neighbors on cold winter nights. We are also creating a partnership with Montclair State University to provide internships with hands-on experience for a few students through the Department of Family and Child Studies, raising awareness of this community issue in the process. But to make all of this possible, we need the support of your congregation.

We have an urgent need for the following commitments from you and your congregations:

- Money to pay for heat, supplies, services and salaries for 3 paid staff members and our Montclair State University interns
- Volunteers to provide meals and additional staffing for weeknights and weekends

Please let us know how you can help by contacting Gwen Parker Ames, at drgpaisin@yahoo.com or (917) 751-2176.

When we all work together, we can make a positive impact on the life of our community.



MESH • c/o Union Congregational Church • 176 Cooper Avenue • Montclair, NJ 07043

MINISTRY OF CHILDREN & YOUTH

Safe Church Update

In order to become a safe community for all, FCC is beginning the process of developing a safe church policy. What is a safe church policy? A safe church policy is a commitment to create a church environment free from all forms of discrimination, harassment, exploitation or intimidation, particularly sexual exploitation. It is a set of guidelines and response tools to ensure that everyone, including our most vulnerable members, our children, can feel at home at FCC and not experience any injustice.

There are some valuable ways that setting up a safe church policy will change FCC. For one, it will set up some behavior guidelines, particularly in environments with children, so respect is always a priority when interacting with others at church. Secondly, it will set up clear ground rules about what types of harmful behavior are not accepted at FCC. Thirdly, if someone were ever to have a hurtful experience at church, FCC will have a clear means of responding to ensure we support her/him through that troubling time.

However, we want to be clear about the ways a safe church policy will not change FCC. The safe church policy is not intended to police all of our actions and extinguish warmth from FCC. The safe church policy would not change FCC's goals of providing a vibrant church community and place for spiritual renewal in each of our lives. Rather, the safe church policy will be one tool that reaffirms our dedication to facilitating caring and supportive relationships.

We will be developing the safe church policy over the next five months or so. Our process includes working with established UCC national guidelines as well as the safe church policies of local UCC churches. We will look at the type of ministry programming that we run at FCC to make sure that any suggestions we have for FCC work for us as a community. We will review our suggested safe church policy with the church council for their endorsement. Finally, we will provide an open forum for any FCC members and visitors to find out more about the suggested safe church policy before presenting it at a congregational meeting for the community's approval.

If you have any questions or concerns about the policy or this process, please feel free to be in contact with us. We look forward to working with you more in the future on this important step for FCC.

Angela Graceffo, Madeline Johnson, Lynley Jones, Rev. Ann Ralosky and Wendy Westock

MINISTRY OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Church School News



Hello FCC!

Welcome to a new year! I hope that the change in calendar year brings you and your family rest from the excitement of the holiday season and energy to enjoy the new year.

Through the celebration of Advent, this past December was an exciting opportunity to go deeper into God's love through the Christmas story. In the FCC Children's Education Program, celebrating Christmas was an interactive experience. Between singing Christmas carols, watching a star in the Sunday School Creation Room grow bigger as it traveled west and immersing themselves in the telling of the Christmas story through the Christmas Concert, the children participated in God's promise of love. These interactive experiences help the Christmas story come alive for the children.

I especially want to congratulate the children on their beautiful performance in the Christmas Concert. They did a fantastic job and really had the entire congregation enjoying each aspect. I want to send a special thank you out to the soloists, singing ensembles and actors as well as to the many dedicated parent volunteers who worked hard to make the Christmas Concert a success. The Christmas Concert was a home run and was an exciting way for the children and the congregation to celebrate Christmas!

As we enter into the new year, our next step in the church calendar is the celebration of Epiphany. Epiphany is the celebration of the three Magi who come bearing gold, frankincense and myrrh to honor the birth of Jesus. Their story is a learning experience. As we are on our own journeys to celebrate God's love, what gifts will we bring to lay at Jesus' feet? To celebrate Epiphany in early January, the children will get some exciting surprise visitors to teach them more about their own journeys with God.

The beginning of the new year brings us fresh opportunities to enter into God's love. In the FCC Children's Education Program, through our interactive worship, art projects and drama activities, the children will launch in to the new year taking next steps on their journeys with God.

Peace, *Mattie*

Needed - Sunday School Teachers!

We are in need of Sunday School teachers for Sessions 3 and 4.

If you are interested, please see Lynley Jones (lynleyj@comcast.net or 973-746-1216) or Mattie Johnson for more details.

Childcare Announcement

Dear Parents,

We are excited to see all the new faces at childcare! Please remember to bring a diaper bag, diapers and any snack or bottle for your child each Sunday.

Thank you,
Thora Jurlina, Childcare Coordinator



Registration for 2012/2013 school year begins Jan. 9

*Quality child care for infants between 6 weeks and 17 months of age.
My Morning Out for 18 months through 30 months.
Nursery years, Pre K and Summer Programs for 2 through 6 years olds.*

Hours:
7:30 A.M. to 6:30 P.M. Monday through Friday.
Calendar available upon request.

Scheduling Options are full and part time with part time/drop off available.

If you would like more information and/or a tour please call: 973-744-6521 or email: info@mmoprograms.org
www.mmoprograms.org



January Birthdays!

- Donna Daly Jan. 4*
- Jocelyn Emerson Jan. 9*
- Wendy McNeil Jan. 12*
- Amanda Gamsby Jan. 19*
- Sam Ralosky Jan. 20*
- John Leatherman Jan. 22*
- Steve Cutaia Jan. 25*
- Kate Chardavoyne Jan. 28*
- Angelina Egan Jan. 29*

We're collecting birthdates to publish in each upcoming newsletter! These are the ones we have on file. Please make sure to email yours to Rena at admin@fccmtc.com.

Winter New Member Inquiry Class February 5, 12, 19 after worship

Interested in membership at FCC? Want to know more about the United Church of Christ? This class is for you! Join us for a series of informal (and informational!) conversations about who we are, what we believe and what membership means in this community. Classes are one hour immediately after worship and new members are received during worship on February 26. See Rev. Ann for details!

MINISTRY OF HOSPITALITY

Men's Group – January Breakfast

Saturday **January 21, 2012** – Men of FCC are encouraged to attend the FCC Men's Breakfast group to be held in the Guild Room from 8:30 to 10:00 a.m. on Saturday 1-21-12. All you need to do is bring yourself. Breakfast food, coffee and juices will be provided.

Please email John Ralosky at JohnRalosky@msn.com if you plan to attend so we can provide enough for everyone.

We need Ushers



Would you like to Usher? It's actually very simple. If you can smile and count, this would be the perfect job for you. Please contact Del Pentecost at D_MPentecost@msn.com for details or sign up in the Guild Room.

Coffee Hour – Keep this Important Part of FCC



The Coffee Hour after service on Sunday is a great way to connect with other members of the church in a relaxed manner. We need families or individuals to volunteer their time and food contributions to continue this tradition.

Coffee Hour hosts (a) set up the Guild Room tables with table cloths (b) display their food contribution and (c) clean up dishes after Coffee Hour. It is a nice way to give back to other members of the church and entice visitors to return so they can learn about the wonderful opportunities at FCC.

Please volunteer for a Sunday (or two) today. Place your name on a Sign-up sheet in the Guild Room, or you can contact Del Pentecost at D_MPentecost@msn.com or Jeanne LoCicero at Jeanne.Locicero@gmail.com

Coffee Hour Host Families & Ushering

The Hospitality Committee recently instituted an assigned Coffee Hour Hosting and Ushering list in 2011. For the most part this new way of looking at service has worked well. Our upcoming schedule gets us from January 8, 2012 through May 27, 2012.

I have emailed the schedule to the people on the list. However, I have only received a few responses. Out of the 21 weeks and 42 slots (2 per week) I have received a positive response on Coffee Hour for fourteen slots. Out of the 21 weeks and 42 slots for Ushering I have received a positive response for twelve slots.

Please look at the list and respond to me if you are able to fill the slot assigned, or reach out to one of the other participants (keeping me in the loop) if you have a conflict. This applies to both the Coffee Hour and Ushering List. If you absolutely do not want to participate, please let Del Pentecost know A.S.A.P via email - D_MPentecost@msn.com

Holiday Open House December 31, 2-6pm

You are cordially invited to celebrate the holidays at the homes of Ann & John Ralosky and Nancy & Luis Pi-Sunyer (145 & 149 Watchung Ave, Montclair).

Join your friends for food, wine & festivities to ring in the new year. Bring a dish to share, or just yourselves!



ALL ARE
WELCOME!

MINISTRY OF PEACE & JUSTICE

"Domestic Violence A Dangerous Epidemic"

By Jacqueline Stearns

Saturday, October 22, 2011, found three members of First Congregational Church of Montclair at a domestic violence conference at Union Baptist Church, also in Montclair. The keynote speaker was Mrs. Joanne Paul, mother of Monica Paul, who was killed by her abusive boyfriend.

Paul said that after a tragedy people come together, then they are gone. She lost her faith, and was angry at God. In 2010, Paul found Union Baptist Church. "Now I turn to God. Everyone has a storm in their life." She said that tragedy makes you or breaks you. "In the beginning, I wanted to commit suicide." She talked about Monica's law. Paul doesn't want her daughter's death to have been for nothing.

Paul talked about going to schools and educating male and female students. "Many times in single parent homes, there is anger. Kids are left behind. They have one parent or none."

The next speaker was the head of Domestic violence for the Montclair Police Department. She said that domestic violence takes place three hundred and sixty-five days a year. "We need to respond to all calls and to bullying. Laws protect the criminals, and not the victim! People need retraining. Restraining orders do not provide enough protection."

She described abusers as not mentally stable and filled with anger. "They often have narcissistic personalities. They're lacking in self confidence. They perpetrate intimate terrorism. She said that judges are now more aware. "Visitation needs to change. Punishment needs to be tougher. There is a program - NJ First Family Justice System. Services will be available in one place. It is one stop shopping."

Deacon Laverne Williams spoke about the warning signs of abuse. They include:

1. Jealousy
2. Controlling personality
3. Isolation of victims
4. Blame others for their own actions

5. Hypersensitivity
6. Cruel to children and animals
7. Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde personality
8. Use of force during arguments
9. Abuse isn't just physical, it is emotional and verbal as well.

"Jesus Has Left the Building...And We Followed:" Service Weekend January 28-29

Food, shelter and companionship. These are the basics that allow human beings to thrive. But for many in our community, these basics are lacking. On Saturday January 28 and Sunday January 29 we will reach out into the community to help meet the needs of our neighbors as part of our "JHLTB...AWF" service project. We have three venues available and sign-up sheets are in the Guild Room.

Saturday, January 28

Community Food Bank of New Jersey 8:15am-11:30am

We'll gather at FCC at 8:15 on Saturday morning and carpool to Hillside, NJ to work at the central food bank in New Jersey which supplies shelters, soup kitchens and food pantries all over the state. This venue is for adults and children age 12 and older.

Habitat for Humanity, Newark 8:00am—4:00pm

We'll help build a home for a local family in need in Newark. This project is for adults and kids aged 16 or older. You will need to wear appropriate work clothes and shoes (no sneakers!). All tools and instructions will be provided at the site.

Sunday, January 29

Worship at Broadway House for Continuing Care 1:30pm– 2:30pm

We will bring our FCC worship to our friends at Broadway House, NJ's largest HIV/AIDS nursing home. Rev. Ann will lead an inclusive, worship experience with communion. We'll need readers, singers and attendees!

MINISTRY OF SPIRITUALITY & WORSHIP

Resolutions

If you have journeyed with us through the sacred season of Advent and the joyful arrival of Christmas, you have seen first-hand what a special place FCC is. As we began our wait by preparing our sanctuary during the Hanging of the Greens, took away our own candle to guide us through the dark season, and celebrated by sharing the joy of Christmas with the entire church family, you know the creativity conceived by the Ministry of Spirituality and Worship and carried out by the dedication, energy, and commitment of so many volunteers who made these ideas come to life in so many deeply spiritual ways.

It has been my pleasure and privilege to facilitate the meetings of this amazing Ministry for the past two years. And while my involvement is far from over, the leadership of the Ministry will change hands. Rest assured that the new leaders will bring great commitment, energy, and organizational skills to the work at hand. But it will always be the members of the Congregation who use their very special talents to bring these concepts to fruition.

January is upon us, and if we have learned anything it is the value of planning ahead! So look for the Ministry of Spirituality and Worship to ask for your participation and energy in planning the Lenten season and Easter, which will be upon us before we know it!

Thanks to all who have made my time with the Ministry so fulfilling and rewarding. As someone who knows what talents lie within our Church family, I can't wait to see what's next.

Peace,

Elaine

2012 is here and never has the changing of the calendar been greeted with more predictions, assumptions, confusion and fear. From the end of the Mayan calendar to Nostradamus' prescient notations to Wall Street stock watchers, it would seem that there would be nothing to do this year but crawl into bed and stay there until 2013.

But I am at heart a process theologian. The future is created in the moments we live, in the choices we make. If 2012 is to be extra-ordinary, it is up to us to make it so by living it to the fullest, attending to all that requires our energies and focus and spreading as much compassion and care as we can. By defaulting to a fear-based position because of dire predictions, the predictions come true – WE become a self-fulfilling prophecy by believing there is little choice. The greatest, and oft-times most frustrating gift we have been blessed with by God is free-will. Now, more than ever, we are being called into recognizing our free will and using it for good.

So, what are the deepest, most profound resolutions each of us can make for the new year? How can we best take care of our bodies, minds, souls, the planet and each and every living thing? What is our mission statement for 2012? We each must answer these questions for ourselves. What are your New Year's resolutions?

Rev. Barbara Prince

Minister of Spiritual Direction



*Our new labyrinth in the FCC Sanctuary
Photo by Sarah Day-Boothoo*

Open Labyrinth Walks
Every Wednesday
from 6:00-8:00pm in the Sanctuary.

Going Deeper:

Winter Spiritual, Educational, & Small Group Offerings at FCC

What does being a Christian mean to you? How would you define the term? How does that identity affect your life? For many progressive 21st century Christians, claiming an authentic faith is a challenging act. We seek to move beyond the rigid and exclusive message of previous generations to reclaim our faith in fresh and liberating ways. But how to begin? This winter we continue to offer a series of events to help us go deeper into our Christian identity, language and practice and restore its meaning in our everyday lives.

Spiritual Offerings:

Sunday Sermon Series: "Progressive Christianity: Transforming Labels into Living" (Sunday Worship January 15 – February 19). If someone asked you, "What kind of Christian are you?" what would you say? As members of FCC we might use words like "inclusive", "peace and justice oriented", "spiritually seeking" or "Jesus-following." When trying to describe all of those things we often use the term "progressive," but what does that really mean? Does it truly capture who we are? Does it go too far or not far enough? Labels are loaded things – and labels about faith identity are no exception. And yet they can also help us identify and embrace our values and live them out more authentically. This sermon series will explore what it might mean to call ourselves "progressive Christians." Each Sunday we will unpack a different characteristic of progressive Christianity and explore how it can transform and deepen our faith as Christians.

Wednesday Evening Labyrinth Walks (January 4- May 23, 6:00-8:00pm.) Each Wednesday evening our Sanctuary labyrinth will be open for walking. Walking the labyrinth is an ancient spiritual practice which combines body and soul and serves as a metaphor for our own spiritual journeys. Take a deep breath in the middle of your week to silence your mind and refresh your spirit. No experience necessary!

Soul Circle (Second Saturday mornings 9-11 a.m., Jan. 14 through June 9). Inspired by a longing for an undivided life, this pilot group is exploring a new kind of spiritual experience. Modeled on the "Circle of Trust" retreats designed by Parker Palmer, we meet on the second Saturday of the month to connect the inner life of mind and spirit with the outer life of work and service, to re-connect soul and role, to heal our own hearts. *This group is complete at this time, but we hope to offer additional groups next fall.*

Educational Offerings:

Wednesday Eve Adult Study Series: "Progressive Christianity: Transforming Labels into Living." (January 18- February 15, 8:15-9:45pm). This study series will correspond to the sermon series and invite us to discuss in depth the characteristics of progressive Christianity that will be explored in the previous Sunday. This is a wonderful opportunity to have a robust and challenging dialogue about the faith we share at FCC. Long-timers and newcomers are welcome to join the conversation!

Sunday Morning Bible Study Class (9:30-10:20am). This informal discussion group is held each Sunday morning prior to worship in the library and focuses on the central worship text for that Sunday. *(No class on Jan. 1st).*

Winter New Members' Class (February 5, 12, 19 for one hour after worship). For all interested in learning more about the United Church of Christ and membership at First Congregational Church. **Membership Sunday is Feb 26.**

Small Group Offerings:

Men's Fellowship Breakfast (Third Saturday mornings, year round, 8:30-10am). All men of the church are invited to gather in the Guild Room and share in food and friendship on Saturday morning. *(Please RSVP).*

Feminist Fridays. Presented in sessions, this gathering focuses on spiritual and social justice exploration from a feminist perspective. We are currently considering what topics we will focus on this season as we continue to engage in specific projects while sharing in solidarity with women around the world who are trying to make a difference. Days and times to be announced.

MINISTRY OF CHURCH RESOURCES

2012 Stewardship Campaign Transformative Generosity

The Bible starts out with a liturgy of abundance – a song of praise for God’s generosity. It keeps saying, “It is good, it is good, it is good, it is very good.”

Filled with God’s generosity, Jesus went around to people suffering from scarcity – of health, of acceptance, of power, of understanding – and replaced it with a gift of abundance.

Jesus is well-schooled in the transformative generosity of God and in the conviction that if you share your bread with the neighbor, the world will be made new.

He knows that generosity isn’t something you just think about, it’s something you do.

Stewardship presumes blessing and abundance. Jesus sums up the purpose of his ministry this way: that we “may have life, and have it abundantly.”

The real work of stewardship is the work of generosity in the spirit of Jesus. Our job is discernment of the ways in which all of us, including the church, already have “far more than all we can ask or imagine.”

What is Stewardship at First Congregational Church?

Like all churches in the United Church of Christ, our church is a “congregational” church, which means that we alone are responsible for sustaining ourselves as a congregation. We do not receive income from any other source beyond what we generate ourselves. Our primary sources of income are pledges, rent from our tenants, and the income from our preschool, MMO programs. During the course of the year there are many opportunities to support the programs and services that make FCC thrive, but once a year we engage in an annual fundraising drive called a “Stewardship Campaign” which we kicked off on November 20th with our Covenant Sunday celebration. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Angel Soto or Aran Roche.

Make giving easy — use Vanco!

Consider having your pledge deducted directly from your bank account by signing up with Vanco. See FCC office for details.

2012 Pledge Update

As our pledge drives continues here are our latest stats as of December 31:

- **\$89,014 from 35 donors**
- **20% of pledges via Vanco**
- **5 gifts over \$5,000**
- **Average pledge \$2,543**
- **High gift: \$15,000**
- **Low gift: \$50**
- **11 new pledges**
- **25 2011 pledgers not yet pledged for 2012.**

On behalf of Reverend Ann, everyone on the Leadership Council and the Ministry of Stewardship we thank you for participating in FCC’s 2012 **Transformative Generosity** campaign.

If you haven’t yet committed, please take a moment to consider how you can help us reach our goal. Gifts both large and small help FCC to achieve organizational and financial stability. Thank you for your continued support!

It’s not too late!!

There is still time to get your pledge in!

If you would like to pledge and were not here on Covenant Sunday, or did not get a pledge form, no problem! We’ll have extra forms in the Narthex on Sundays (ask the ushers) or just call the office and we’ll get one right out to you.

Contact Rena at 973-744-4856 or admin@fccmtc.com

MINISTRY OF CONGREGATIONAL CARE



The Swap Shop Board is Ready For You! The Swap Shop Board provides an opportunity to communicate with the FCC community for different types of casual needs, and/or to identify a resource or service you may have to offer. Postings can include a desired exchange of services, free or low cost items you have available, and resources you want to share with others. Examples of postings for the board can include things like:

- “Looking for an apartment...”
- “House sitter needed...”
- “Coffee table available...”

“Wanting to swap computer repair for housecleaning...”

We hope the board will foster helpful connections, meet needs for items and services,

and promote the creative use of resources. The board is located outside the Guild Room, and ready for use. If you are having a more serious and/or personal need, please continue to bring to Reverend Ann. Please remember the Swap Shop Board as you clean out those closets for the New Year! Any questions or concerns can be directed to Angela Graceffo, agraceffo@afhsnj.org. Thanks.

Council Leadership Slate 2012

Our church leadership comes from within the congregation. Officers serve for two years, Trustees serve for three years and Ministry chairs currently serve for one year. Here is the slate of individuals who will be leading FCC Montclair in 2012:

ROLE	NAME	TERM
Moderator	Elaine Wells	2013
Vice Moderator	Dick Thomas	2012
Secretary	Liz Donald	2012
Treasurer	Angel Soto	2012
Trustee	Karen Marden	2012
Trustee	Jeanne LoCicero	2012
Trustee	Anne Garty	2013

MINISTRY CHAIRS:

Spirituality & Worship	Vivianne Potter	2012
Peace & Justice	Brendan Bevenssee	2012
Children & Youth	Lynley Jones	2012
Hospitality	Del Pentecost	2012
Congregational Care	Angela Graceffo	2012
Church Resources	Angel Soto	2012