

The Window - May 2016



**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
An Open & Affirming Congregation of the
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
PARK RIDGE, NEW JERSEY 07656**

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Office Hours: M, T, Th, F: 8:30 am – 1:30 pm
W: 1:00 pm - 6:00 pm

COME TO WORSHIP, LEARN & WITNESS
Sundays at 10:00 A.M. Worship, Sunday School & Child Care
God is Still Speaking

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
131 PASCACK ROAD
PARK RIDGE, NJ 07656

Address Service Requested



*We hold it to be the
mission of the Church to
witness to the gospel of
Jesus Christ in all the
world, while worshipping
God, and striving for
truth, justice and peace.*

PASTOR'S PAGE

I have so much to be thankful for this month. Most especially for all of you and for this lively, dynamic, and caring place we call First Congregational UCC! The celebration of my installation on April 17 was a great example of the joy that is in this place and was for me a blessed reminder of why I think God has something great in store for us.

Relationships can be tricky, but when they are formed they are also perfect opportunities for renewal and grace. It is this way in our relationship with God, and is also very much present in our relationships with each other. In these days of new beginnings and new covenantal commitments, we are all invited to put aside the presumption that we know everything there is to know about each other and to step into the grace-filled mystery of discovering each other as if for the first time.

What do we value? What do we celebrate? What are our passions as we seek to follow Jesus? What can we let go of in order for a new and anticipated future to come about? Getting to know one another as *related in Christ* puts us on the holy ground where the Spirit will lead us into some wonderful places together. In this kind of conversation there is space for wonder and awe at what God is doing in each of us and among us as a church.

I am working with the Steering Team to create opportunities for us to dialogue together about our treasures and our hopes. As we live into the next few months we will be inviting each of you into a sacred and nurturing dialogue about our faith and our future, I hope you all will join in. These dialogues will transform us, no doubt, into an even more vibrant people of faith who will wade into the world as a transforming presence.

Thank you again, for the privilege of being with you and for the future we hold together. With God's help we will grow in worship, service, learning, and joy in all the days we are given.

Peace

Pastor Mark

Moderator's Page

As I write this, we're just a few days past the Installation Service for Pastor Mark and I'm still smiling. It was a beautiful service complete with boisterous applause upon hearing our area conference minister declare Mark duly installed as our Pastor! What a wonderful afternoon, right? Lots of friends, local clergy and a robust choir...how about that Hallelujah Chorus! And let's not forget the delicious spread provided by our Fellowship Team. I just love it when we all come together like that to make a special event so memorable!

And speaking of coming together, at this writing, we're knee-deep in rummage! Would it be sacrilege to say we're in communion with each other as we discern what to do with this teacup and that blender? Seriously though, thanks to all (especially the Kobbe's and the Pruett's) who put in the time and effort to make this fundraiser such a continuing and rousing success!

On a more serious note, I'd like to weigh in on the "visit" we received from the fundamentalist that Mark so graciously handled. It's hard to believe that someone would feel so justified and vehemently argue that our practice of Christianity is wrong. Thank God Mark was there to stand up for what we practice and believe. But what if he

hadn't been? What if a teen was there, perhaps waiting to talk to the Pastor because he or she is questioning their identity? Imagine how the teen would have felt hearing the hateful things he said to Pastor Mark.

I've been thinking about that ever since I heard what happened and it vaults me right back to my teen years when I was once on the receiving end of such a tirade from a "friend" who figured out that I might just be (gasp!) a lesbian. It was awful and I was absolutely unprepared for this rant that effectively slammed the door closed on the closet I was just beginning to peek out of. Even though now I fully accept myself as I am, I can't help but feel a little rocked back on my heels when people like him get in my field of vision. And so friends, this is why the affirming part of ONA is so important. We must be more than an open and welcoming congregation to the LGBTQ community, we must also affirm who they are to those that believe otherwise.

Sue Goll, Moderator



UCC – Delegates Report

Recently Pastor Mark, Tom Willingham and I attended the New Jersey Association's annual meeting held in Holmdel, NJ.

We had a lovely ride down the shore as the weather was warming up. The meeting was fairly well attended by other New Jersey UCC churches. Once member elections and budgets were passed we got down to the main event, which was a presentation and discussion around the UCC General Synod's resolution "Dismantling the New Jim Crow." The "New Jim Crow" is a term used "to describe the marginalization and re-subjugation of African Americans under the guise of the so-called War on Drugs, various get-tough-on-crime policies, and mass incarceration, which is causing horrific

pain, untold suffering, and irreparable damage to millions of African-Americans." The Criminal Justice Reform Network is the CAC'S grassroots advocacy network composed of individual members and churches. They seek to dismantle the New Jim Crow by advocating for a more just and humane criminal justice system free of racial bias and discrimination. Some of the statistics raised during the presentation were eye popping (to me anyway), for example the rate of incarceration per 100,000 by race for white men is 465 and for black men is 2,724. The lifetime likelihood of imprisonment of US residents born in 2001 for all men is 1 in 9 but for black men is 1 in 3! These are astounding differences don't you think?

Sue Goll, Association Representative

Worship Team

Assistance Appreciated!

The Worship Team needs people to help us with Sanctuary Preparation. This will involve arriving at church around 9:30 AM to open up and make sure the Sanctuary is ready for worship (instruction will be provided). This activity will take no longer than 15 minutes and will not require joining the team (although we'd love to have you!) Please see Doug Pruett, if interested or call [201-391-9344](tel:201-391-9344).

Faith Formation

Children

Thank you to all those who have helped our children in the ways of faith! Thanks to the Sunday School shepherds our children have explored parts of the bible and made them their own.

This month we will continue to explore *The Great Commission* that Jesus shared with his disciples in Matthew 28:16-20.

There will be no Sunday School on May 15 so that we can all celebrate Pentecost together. We will have special sheets available that day for children of all ages.

We need caring adults to staff the Nursery during worship! If you can gift your time even one or two Sunday's a year it is a great help and a true ministry to our families with little ones. You can sign up at <http://bit.ly/fccnurserysignup> or call the office.

Youth

We are in the planning stages of a camping trip for the youth and hope you will join in! Please contact Pastor Mark or Ann Angarola about dates and details.

Adults

The Centering Prayer group will have its first meeting May 3 at 7:30 p.m. in the Parlor. No experience required, only a desire to deepen your relationship with God. For more background on Centering Prayer please visit www.contemplativeoutreach.org/category/category/centering-prayer

Pastor Mark is interested in leading a book study this summer on the book *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. If you are interested please email Mark and let him know.

May Birthdays

- 1 Joseph Esposito
- 5 Andrew Pinkus
- 6 Mark Ledgerwood
- 9 Nicholas Lawler
- 11 Mike Angarola
- 17 Katie Black
- 19 David LaMere
- Bryson Turco



Sunday, May 1 @ 4:00 PM

The Omni Piano Quartet

Performing Mozart and Brahms



Quartet members are drawn from the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, New York Philharmonic, Composers String Quartet, and Arden Trio. Its members explore the wide variety of music in their medium with all its combinations and expressive possibilities.

Suggested \$20 donation gratefully accepted at the door. Please join us for a reception immediately following the concert to meet the artists!



"If there is one thing that is constant in this world, it is the power of music." Josh Groban

Installation Service

I invited singers from various local churches to join our choir in providing the special music for Pastor Mark's installation as our new pastor. Over twenty singers performed "With a Voice of Singing" and ending the service with Handel's "Hallelujah Chorus" from his oratorio, The Messiah. I could not have been more pleased with their performance. In addition to the many words of praise for our efforts, a long time member of our church confessed that this installation service was one of many that he witnessed, but this one was the most memorable. Our handbell choir, under the direction of Julie Luce, also performed beautifully. Thank you to our choir and singing guests, and the Valley Ringers.

Mother's Day

On Mother's Day, May 8, a special Men's Choir will provide the music, giving the women of our Chancel Choir an opportunity to worship in the pews with their friends and family. Thank you men, for your time and talents.

Earth Day

On April 24, we celebrated Earth Day with all the music selected to honor our good earth. The Prelude included the "Woodland Flute Call" by Frances Dillon, "The Sea Song" by Edward MacDowell. and Mendelssohn's "Spring Song." The Chancel Choir, with solos by Ray Bernroth, sang "Mountains of My Soul" and John Rutter's "For the Beauty of the Earth." Julie Luce performed Edward MacDowell's "To A Wild Rose" as a flute solo. It was a day to be reminded and celebrate our role as stewards of our earth.

Chancel Choir

As in every edition of The Window, it is my invitation to join our faithful and wonderful Chancel Choir. We are particularly in need of altos and men. The choir rehearses every Thursday evening at 8:30, following the Handbell Choir rehearsal. Come and join us and help us make a joyful noise to the Lord!

Ring in the Good News!

The handbell choir was happy to ring in the good news of Pastor Mark's installation by playing a Bell Jubilee prelude and a rendition of "Make Me an Instrument of Thy Peace" at the afternoon service.

On that Sunday morning, we also played "A Joyous Ring" at the 10 am service.

We will be playing through June, and then resume playing for services in the fall. Handbell rehearsals are on Thursday evenings from 7 pm to 8:15 pm, preceding the choir rehearsal.

For information or questions, call Julie Luce at 845-624-8544.

Mission Team

Thank you for your generous hearts and all your support for our church's missions!

Great news! To give you an idea of just how well we are doing in helping and giving to these wonderful missions, you can see below what we as a church have sent in the past and what we will be sending this year.

CWS Blankets		UCC, One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS)	
2013	\$488	2013	\$1342
2014	\$685	2014	\$1525
2016	\$1720	2015	\$1033
		2016	\$1030

Thank you again to Theresa Muti, Jeanne Sabatie and Barbara Hagen for helping spread the word about our mission offerings in February and March.

UCC, Strengthen The Church Offering

As God calls our congregations to be the "church" in new ways, your generosity will plant new churches, awaken new ideas in existing churches and develop the spiritual life in our youth and young adults. STC funds will also be used to award grants to help congregations communicate the "God is still speaking," message.

We will be taking this special offering on **May 15th**. If you would like to mail in your special offering beforehand you can, just make sure you make the check payable to First Congregational Church and write "Strengthen The Church" on the memo line.

Just like the UCC Grant our church applied for to help expand our community garden for the food pantry. This fund helps churches reach out and grow.

Pastor Mark's Installation – April 17th at 3pm

A special offering was taken to benefit "**Bergen County Campership.**" We raised **\$1,000** to help disadvantaged children go to camp this summer, when many of them would have been left home alone.

Family Promise

OLM Overnight Shelter

We were all saddened by the Englewood Presbyterian Church fire as it was a beautiful old church. This fire also created a problem for Family Promise as they are a host church for the overnight shelter a couple of times a year. FP asked OLM if they could take another week before their designated 2 weeks. Our church has been asked to take one more day this year out of the 7 extra days. ***We will be responsible for dinner on Sunday, June 26th through breakfast on Thursday, June 30th.***

Walk-in Dinner Program

We have taken another date for doing the dinner at the Hackensack Shelter.

Save the date - it is Friday, **September 2**. It is right before school starts and we are hoping this will give the young people more opportunity to get involved in preparing and serving at this one.

Bike or Hike for Family Promise – Fundraiser Sunday, May 1st

Sign in starts at 11:30am. The Bike starts at 1pm & the Walk/hike starts at 1:30pm. You can go to our team page at:

<https://www.firstgiving.com/team/324165>

to register or help support our team by making a secure donation on-line. Last year our church raised over \$800 for Family Promise through this fundraiser.

Family Center, Saturday, April 23rd

Thank you to Eddie Meyer, Veronica Jeremias and Debbie Terrace for being there for the families and giving of your time!

The next opportunity to give back and support the homeless families is on **Saturday, May 28th Memorial Weekend**. *I really need help on this date as I will be away. Thank you, Debbie*

Team members: Cate Hutchison, Debbie Terrace, Susanna Willingham and Pastor Mark

Fellowship Team

Thank you to all who so graciously helped or hosted a coffee hour during March & April; it was greatly appreciated by all!

Rob & Mercedes Nebeling
The Bell Choir and Prayer Shawl Ministry
Sue Goll, Theresa Muti, and Karen Stevenson
The Youth Group and their parents.

Easter Sunrise Breakfast

We had approx. 15 – 17 people attend the service. A couple from New England who were visiting relatives in Hillsdale attended our service and

joined us for breakfast. They were happy and thankful for a welcoming church!!! We all enjoyed a breakfast of mixed fruit, crumb cake, coffee cake and a breakfast casserole along with coffee, hot tea, orange juice.

Pastor Mark's Installation was on April 17th at 3pm

The installation service was up lifting and inspiring. Many ministers and the Rabbi Emeritus from Beth Shalom, all of whom are from the Pascack Valley Clergy came to congratulate Pastor Mark. They all got up and spoke of him in high regards and all were looking forward to working with him more. Several UCC ministers were in attendance, as well as our regional area UCC minister. After the wonderful service we all gathered in the parlor for some fellowship and a bit to eat of cheese and crackers, finger sandwiches, cake, lemon squares, brownies and other delicious treats along with coffee, wine, seltzer and soda. Yes, we are known for our food, which was attested to by a choir member who joined us from another church who remarked that she would just join our church for the homemade lemon squares!

Team members: Sue Bonvissuto, Gina Napolitano, Carol Kobbe, and Sheila Schneider
Co-Chairs: Barbara Pruettt and Debbie Terrace



The Acoustic Café Music Series will present a special Spring Concert May 7th at St John the Baptist Church in Hillsdale! Join us for an uplifting evening of Americana, folk, pop, and country flavored music with award winning performers **Arlon Bennett and the Healing Project** and the **Loretta Hagen Trio**. 8 PM showtime. Tickets \$20 advance online and \$23 at the door. www.cafeacoustic.org [201-573-0718](tel:201-573-0718), 69 Valley St, Hillsdale, NJ. Refreshments available. Proceeds will benefit the St John's Art and music Festival.



**May 4th - MILITARY BRIDGE – Fellowship Hall
Montvale Fire Department Ladies Auxiliary**

Come out for a fun night of Military Bridge. Beginners welcome-no experience necessary! Doors open at 6:30 pm, Cards at 7:00 pm. \$8 in advance, \$10 at the door. Reserve early as space is limited. Refreshments, snacks, prizes, tricky tray, and 50/50. For information/reservations, email annmarieruss0224@gmail.com or call 201-930-1866.



Dear Friends,
Your generous donation of \$230 to our County Campership Fund last year was deeply appreciated.

We are so encouraged to have your support...It's been 26 years since we volunteers first established this fund to enable young children of low income working families to attend summer camp while schools were closed and their parents had to work. We estimate we (and YOU) have supported a safe, happy summer for over 1, 000 Bergen County children since 1995! Please continue to stand with us as we carry on this much-needed service to our County's children and families. We will sincerely appreciate your support.

Yours truly, Marian Kugelmass, Chairperson
Bergen County Summer Campership Fund



Thank you to Shawl Ministry...

We want to thank the Prayer Shawl Ministry for the love shawls you knitted or crocheted to be used at our upcoming fund raising event for New Hope, Inc. Our fundraising event will be held at Seasons on April 27, and we appreciate the hard work that

your group does to help support first time single mothers and their babies.

Rosalie gave us a few items, and some of these blankets have been set aside for our clients for when they have their baby and will bring home from the hospital. Each with a little note that this blanket was made special for them and their little one with loving hands and promising prayers.

We appreciate all the prayers we can get for our mothers who choose life for their baby, and appreciate the beautiful work that each one of you has put into this ministry and now so generously donated to New Hope.

Sincerely, Marilyn Laquidara,
Executive Director, New Hope, Inc.



Another Way to Help Family Promise

For Mother's Day, win a deluxe relaxation basket for yourself or a special woman in your life.



Funds raised from this very special event will be donated to the Family Promise of Bergen County.

The basket valued at over \$650 includes: gift certificates for Chiropractic and Acupuncture care, a DoTERRA Introductory Essential Oil kit, a relaxing candle, and multiple do-it-yourself spa treatment supplies. Raffle tickets are \$3 per ticket or 4 tickets for \$10, and all proceeds will be matched by Miano Family Chiropractic Center, LLC of Montvale.

Drawing will take place on May 9th. For more information, or to purchase your raffle tickets, please call (201) 746-0640.

Community Garden

Keep your eyes and ears open for upcoming news about our Community Garden. We are in the early planning stages and hope to have our expansion plans in place soon. Many thanks to Ray Hutchison for taking the lead in requesting grants from both the UCC and Home Depot to assist us in this expansion. This initiative is an unbudgeted endeavor so here's hoping we get both those grants!



In our thoughts and prayers

Carol and Shelley Alexander (Barbara Inglese's cousins) Pete Bogulaski (friend of the Bigos family)

The Burnett family

Nancy Cochini (Mercedes Nebeling's sister)

Betty Egli

Healing prayers for Mary Lou Fasouletos

Kathy Franchina (friend of Pat Kerner)

Please pray for Nancy and Mike Hurlbut

to allow their love to overcome

any obstacles Alzheimer's may present.

Ashley & Anthony Kerner (Ryall's niece & nephew)

Helen Kovacic

Gim Fung Lee (Gean Chin's mother)

Helen Lenhart (mother-in-law of

Barbara Inglese's sister)

Roy Lorentsen (Sue Bonvissuto's father)

Denise Noble (Sheila Schneider's sister)

Maggie Francke Olano (Ruth Francke's daughter)

Jeremy O'Neal (Pastor Mark's nephew)

Jane Owen

Sally Pruett (Doug's mother)

Betty Rutishauser

Janice Socha (Helen Kovacic's daughter)

Harold Swiers (Ryall Kerner's brother-in-law)

Elizabeth Tapley (friend of Ann Angarola)

Jane Trojan

Lauretta Vogel (Pat Kerner's mother)

Peter vonBradsky ~ Ruth vonBradsky

Frank Zeoli

May 2016

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 10:00 am – Worship/Baptism 11:15 am - Fellowship Coffee	2 10:00 am – Mission Team 7:00 pm - Monday's at Momma's	3 7:30 pm – Centering Prayer (Parlor)	4 12:00 pm – Bible Study (Parlor) 7:00 pm - Military Bridge Montvale Fire Dept. Ladies' Auxiliary (Fellowship Hall)	5 Steering Team Reports/Minutes due to office 7:00 pm - Handbells 8:30 pm - Choir	6 3:30 pm - Brownies #5459 (FH Lounge)	7
8 10:00 am - Worship 11:15 am - Fellowship Coffee 7:30 pm - Girl Scouts #449 (FH Lounge)	9 7:00 pm - Monday's at Momma's	10	11 12:00 pm – Bible Study (Parlor) 6:30 pm - Wrestlers (FH) 7:00 pm – Steering Team (Parlor)	12 7:00 pm - Handbells 8:30 pm - Choir	13	14
15 10:00 am – Worship 11:15 am - Fellowship Coffee	16 7:00 pm - Monday's at Momma's	17 12 noon – Shawl Ministry (Parlor)	18 12:00 pm – Bible Study (Parlor) 6:30 pm - Wrestlers (FH)	19 7:00 pm - Handbells 8:30 pm - Choir	20 June Newsletter Articles Due	21 12 noon - Jersey Gamers (CE Wing)
22 10:00 am - Worship 11:15 am - Fellowship Coffee 6:30 pm - Youth Group	23 7:00 pm - Girl Scouts (Youth Room) Pastor Mark - Vacation 5/23-30	24	25 6:30 pm – Wrestlers (FH)	26 7:00 pm - Handbells 8:30 pm - Choir	27	28 Family Promise Day Center- Volunteers Needed!
29 10:00 am - Worship - Guest Preacher Sherry Taylor 11:15 am - Fellowship Coffee	30 Memorial Day (office closed)	31				