



MAY NEWSLETTER

THE CORNERSTONE

Ridgebury Congregational Church
605 Ridgebury Road
Ridgefield, CT 06877

From the Pastor

Ave Ridgeburians!

So finally, Spring is here, the Easter season is coming to a close, the May annual meeting is history, our congregation's boards and committees are fully staffed (and with a number of new faces), so I think it's a good time to look back a little bit, and say thanks to some two of the people who have played very big roles in the life of our church over the past year.

The first person I want to thank is Alice Kenny Lucas, our outgoing Moderator. As many of you know, Alice has faithfully served our congregation as Moderator for three years, which is no small achievement even during the easiest of times, but Alice's tenure has been an unusually busy one. A new minister was called on her watch, a capital campaign was completed, and the congregation has been set on a new and exciting path. She's also been a tremendous help to me personally in figuring out just what the heck it is I'm supposed to be doing here!

In much the same way, I also want to take a moment to thank RoseMary Frederick, who has completed her term as Clerk. But those of you who know her know RoseMary has been a vital part of our congregation for much more than her ability to keep our records straight. As Clerk, as a Deacon, as a Sunday School teacher, as a member of the Search Committee, as preparer of church dinners, and probably in a dozen ways of which I have absolutely no idea, RoseMary has been an integral part of our congregation, and will be as long as the housing market stays soft!

You know, one of the things that makes a congregational church different from most other churches is that it relies more than others on the talents and efforts of its members. Since every congregational church operates independently, every congregational church rises and falls on the support of its members, at least as much, if not even more so, than the efforts of its minister. (Not that ministers aren't important, of course, don't get the wrong idea!) So if our congregation is facing a bright future, and I think we would all agree that it is, it's because of people like Alice and RoseMary, and so many more of you, that we are.

So thanks, Alice, and thanks, RoseMary! And thanks to the rest of you who attend worship faithfully, support the congregation financially, and serve on the various boards and committees that make the church work. It's because of your support and efforts that our congregation is moving forward into the future, and it's what makes my job as minister such a joy in so many ways.

Cheers,

John



As summer is approaching and everyone is beginning to think about vacations, no more school and being able to sleep late each morning, let us not forget that the "little white church on the corner" is still filled with activity.

These special dates are:

May 25th we will celebrate Memorial Day with a special service at 4 PM and procession to the Ridgebury cemetery for the laying of a memorial wreath to honor all the veterans known and unknown. This is one of our contributions to the 300th Celebration of Ridgefield.

June 1st will be Communion and Family Sunday. Special recognition will be given to our dedicated teachers and to all the special young people who have attended our Church School during the year.

June 15th – Father's Day

June 22nd - "Hymn Sing" and special acknowledgements to our Director of Music and our Choir for all they have given to us.

The Saturday Vesper Services will continue through the end of May. If you have never attended a Saturday service, please try to attend. I think you will be pleasantly surprised with the type of service you will experience.

We want to thank all of you who have so generously offered to read scripture lessons during the past year. You will notice the sign up sheet is a little different than before. When you sign up now, the scripture lessons you are to read are right next to the date. If you would like a print out of the lessons, please e-mail Rev. Heeckt at pastor@ridgeburychurch.org and he will e-mail them to you.

The Deacons would especially like to welcome Carole Bishop and Matt Orr who will be joining us. We look forward to working with them.

We hope that you will find time to celebrate God with us.

God Bless,

Sharon Straiton

Chairman of Deacons



We had another great congregational meeting on May 4! Over 40% of our membership attended to vote on next year's leadership team and discuss important church issues. The Nominating Committee's hard work was appreciated; its proposed slate of 2008 – 2009 Officers, Boards, and Committees was unanimously approved. Our sincere thanks go to Elizabeth Sganga and the Committee. They diligently considered the talents of all members and included friends who volunteered. Also, we thank everyone who offered suggestions on individuals and the nominating process itself to keep it balanced, thorough, and thoughtful. It was.

Some of the other meeting highlights were:

- Treasurer, Vince Sganga, tells us we have a positive cash flow
- Trustees have a work party set to spruce us up for the Memorial Day Weekend
- Communications Committee has upgraded the website-please take a look
- Pastoral Relations is working on congregation goals; you'll hear more about these in upcoming months
- 300th Anniversary of Ridgefield group is involved in the town celebration
- Rev. Heeckt updated us on the thinking about the Meeting house and most importantly, started us thinking about who and what we want to be as a congregation going forward

Last month Rev. Heeckt and Council discussed the characteristics of membership in Ridgebury Congregation Church, these characteristics are: worshipping, working, contributing, and praying. On behalf of our congregation, let me acknowledge RoseMary Frederick. RoseMary is the quintessential member. Her belief shines through her dedication to worship; her work is seen in her many commitments, for example, to Sunday School; her contribution is demonstrated in the great "Spaghetti + Suppers"; and we all benefit from her prayers. As RoseMary begins her next chapter, whether she is physically here or elsewhere, she will always be a presence at Ridgebury Congregational Church. Ro- we salute you (and we love you)!

This is my last Cornerstone article as your Moderator. My best wishes to Elizabeth Sganga and the new Council. They lead us in exciting times and I pledge them my complete support.

All, please accept my heartfelt thanks for your commitment to Ridgebury, support of our efforts, and your tolerance of my mistakes. It's been an honor to serve as your Moderator for the last three years and I look forward to continuing to contribute any way I can. Again, thank you.

Respectfully submitted,

Alice Kenny Lucas

Moderator

Let me introduce you to . . .

By Liz Rowe

Jean Stouter has been coming to Ridgebury Congregational Church since the early 60's, and you'll find her sitting in the front of the church on the right side. She has two daughters and two sons. One of her daughters, Pam Rittenhouse, and her granddaughter, Jessica Parrot, are both members of Ridgebury. She has 2 other granddaughters and 2 grandsons. She is very talented at drawing and has painted several patterns for greeting cards which have been sold at our Missions Fair.

Jean was born in Stamford, Connecticut in 1927. Weighing only 3 lbs. (and using the first incubator delivered to that hospital), she was given a 50/50 chance of survival. She grew up in Darien, Connecticut and was the oldest child of two girls. Her father was a "celebrity cop" known as the Lone Wolf of the Boston Post Road, a nemesis of bootleggers during Prohibition. Jean recalls her childhood as "unusual". She had mild cerebral palsy which affected her hearing and gait, and dealt with speech therapists during her youth. In senior year, she was voted to have the best figure in her class and was voted as their poet. She was accepted to the Traphagen School of Design, but her father became ill and she could not attend. After graduating, she worked at the Metropolitan Museum in NYC, and became a model on Saturdays for Vogue's pattern sewers in Greenwich.

At 17, she was a member of the USO and wrote letters to servicemen stationed in Japan. She was impressed with letters she received from a sailor named Bill, and they wrote to each other for a year and a half. He came to Connecticut, they married in 1947 and moved to the San Diego Naval Base. In 1950, Bill applied to the FAA school in Oklahoma City. His on-the-job training took them and their two small children to a government station named Summit on the Alaskan Railroad (midway between Anchorage and Fairbanks). This settlement of 35 people only had seven houses and they were quite isolated. After living in Alaska for a few years, they moved back to Connecticut. They bought a house in Ridgebury and had two more children.

During her children's school years, Jean drove students in a Volkswagon bus to a private school in Green Farms and was hired to draw weather charts and other teaching tools, as well as work in their library. She worked in the Danbury School's Media department and their Personnel office for the next twenty five years. Later, she attended Wesconn as an Arts major. After divorcing her husband, she moved to a trailer park in Danbury and met her second husband, George Stouter. They were married by Rev. William Webb at RCC, and it was one of the happiest times of her life.

Jean attends our Bible Study classes on Tuesdays, and takes art classes. She has two cats who are always keeping her on her toes.



The Spring Work Day will be held on Saturday, May 24th from 9am to ?? and lunch will be provided.

This will get the church ready for the special Memorial Day service which will be the next day, May 25th at 4pm. There are more details about this service in the Deacon's report.

Successful 5th Annual BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS

On Sunday afternoon, May 4, some 39 pets and 60 people gathered for the 5th Annual Blessing ceremony. It was the largest attendance to date. Although weather forecasters predicted otherwise, skies over Ridgebury were bright and sunny. The Danbury News Times sent a photo journalist to cover the event.

Most of the pets were dogs, and a happy and well behaved group they were. Several cats, a rabbit and a snake attended as well. It was as if the animals understood the opening remarks about treats to be distributed after their blessings, and they eagerly but patiently awaited that moment.

The event raised \$300, which has been donated to R.O.A.R. (Ridgefield Operation Animal Rescue) to further its work of rescue, care and adoption of dogs and cats.

If you took digital photos and would like to share them, you may E-mail them to Comm@ridgeburychurch.org or EdwardsKR@aol.com.

With grateful appreciation to everyone who made this a success,

Jim and Karen Edwards

Office Telephone: 203-748-2806
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E-mail Us: Office@Ridgeburychurch.org

MAY Birthdays



5 Corrine LoValvo
 8 Taylor Wray
 10 Lori-Ann Stroili
 Joshua Hibbard
 12 Michael Prange
 Susan Hibbard
 15 Ginger Drews
 19 Michaela Trolle
 21 Jordan Marker
 23 David Wray
 30 Wynd Harris
 31 Chris Phelps

May 2008

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
27	28 5p Pastoral Relations Meeting	29 12:30p Adult Discussion Group	30 7:30p Choir Practice	1 7:15p AA Meets <i>Ascension Day [Christian]</i>	2	3 5p Church Service 6:30p Adult Discussion Group
4 10a Service with Communion 11:30a Annual Meeting 3p Blessing of the Animals	5 7p Deacons Meet	6 12:30p Adult Discussion Group 6:30p Mission and Social Justice Committee	7 7:30p Choir Practice	8 7:15p AA Meets	9	10 5p Church Service 6:30p Adult Discussion Group
11 <i>Mother's Day [USA]</i> <i>Whitsunday [Christian]</i>	12 7p Trustee Meeting <i>Whitmonday [Christian]</i>	13 12:30p Adult Discussion Group 7p Trustees	14 7:30p Choir Practice	15 7:15p AA Meets	16	17 5p Church Service 6:30p Adult Discussion Group
18 <i>Trinity Sunday [Christian]</i>	19 7p Council Meeting	20 12:30p Adult Discussion Group	21 7:30p Choir Practice	22 7:15p AA Meets <i>Corpus Christi Day [Christian]</i>	23	24 9a Spring Clean Up Day - Lunch Provided 5p Church Service 6:30p Adult Discussion Group
25	26 <i>Memorial Day [USA]</i>	27 12:30p Adult Discussion Group	28 7:30p Choir Practice	29 7:15p AA Meets	30	31 5p Church Service 6:30p Adult Discussion Group

