



## NOVEMBER NEWSLETTER

### THE CORNERSTONE

Ridgebury Congregational Church  
605 Ridgebury Road  
Ridgefield, CT 06877

From the Pastor

Ave Ridgeburians!

Well, here we are, about to make the final turn into the home stretch of 2008, about to face the coming of November and December and another holiday season, and among other things, that means it time for our Congregation's annual stewardship drive.

The stewardship drive is a time of year that many ministers face with absolute dread, and it's easy to understand why. Nobody likes having to ask other people for help—particularly financial help—and if it's true that nobody likes having to ask for money it may be even more true that nobody likes being asked to give their hard earned dough to somebody else. That being the case, lots of ministers go to a lot of trouble to act as if the stewardship drive is about anything *but* trying to raise money. In fact, there's a very influential school of thought in the non-profit fundraising world that suggests that actually coming out and asking one's congregation for money is the kiss of death for a successful stewardship campaign. If that's the case in good economic times, the argument goes, it's all the more true in uncertain economic times like the ones we live in right now.

But if you ask me, (and I know, none of you actually did, but one of the nice things about being a minister is that I get to offer my opinion even when no one actually asked for it) trying to pretend that a stewardship drive isn't about raising money is more than a little disingenuous. I mean, were all adults here, aren't we? We all know that the ultimate goal of the stewardship drive is raising money to fund our Congregation's activities for the coming year, so, since we all know that's what we're up to with the stewardship drive, we might at least be honest about it. So here's the bottom line: Ridgebury Congregational Church needs money to keep it going for another year, and for the most part, you folks are where most of that money has to come from.

Yes, I know, economic times are troubling, and I also know that some of that economic trouble has touched the lives of people in our congregation. And for what it's worth, it's touched my life as well. As many of you know, I work part time in retail, and over the past month I've had my hours cut pretty much in half. My life probably hasn't been touched as seriously as some of your lives have, but my point is, if you're feeling a little pinched right at the moment, I get it, I really do.

But one of the things about being part of a church that's been around since 1760 is that it can give one a sense of perspective. Over our Congregation's nearly 250-year history we've seen tough economic times before. Our Congregation weathered the big recession of the early 1980s, the inflation crisis of the 1970s, the Great Depression of the 1930s, and who knows how many economic busts before that, and we were able to do so because people were always faithful in giving what they could at the time—and there's really nothing more we can ask for than that.

So my point, I suppose, is this: If, as you consider your stewardship pledge for the coming year, you feel that you can increase your pledge, great—we look forward to seeing those larger checks in the coming year, and I thank you up front for your generosity. On the other hand, if money is a little tight, and you don't think you can increase your pledge, that's understandable too. The important thing is to give what you can, and then to trust that God will be faithful to you in the same way that you've been faithful to Him. It's that spirit that has made our congregation's stewardship drives successful in the past, and it's the same spirit that will doubtless make this year's drive a success as well.

Cheers,

John



Two little boys, age 8 and 10, were excessively mischievous. They were always getting into trouble and their parents knew all about it. If any mischief occurred in their town, the two boys were probably involved. The boy's mother heard that a preacher in town had been successful in disciplining children, so she asked if he would speak with her boys. The preacher agreed, but asked to see them individually, so the mother sent the 8 year old first, in the morning, with the older boy to see the preacher in the afternoon. The preacher, a huge man with a booming voice, sat the younger boy down and asked him sternly, "Do you know where God is, son?" The boy's mouth dropped open, but he made no response, sitting there wide eyed with his mouth hanging open. The preacher repeated the question in an even sterner tone, "Where is God?" Again the boy made no attempt to answer. The preacher raised his voice even more, shook his finger in the boy's face and bellowed, "Where is God?" The boy screamed and bolted from the room, ran directly home and dove into the closet, slamming the door behind him. When his older brother found him in the closet, he asked, "What happened?" The younger brother, gasping for breath, replied, "We are in BIG trouble this time. GOD is missing and they think we did it!"

Recently I purchased a book called "Where to find it in the Bible", I looked up "old age" and "age" and found there are over 89 references in the Bible. But when I looked up children, I found there were over 245 references to children in the Bible. That really told me something. Our children are really important and we need to nurture them, comfort them and make them feel the presence of God and not be afraid as the little boy in my previous story.

I have become most interested in what we teach our youth by being a mentor for one of our youth in the Confirmation class. In looking over their book and study guide, I was amazed at how much I had forgotten, taken for granted and how wonderful it will be to share our faith with these young people. The book explains to them that they will be taking a journey of faith. When is the last time you took a journey of faith?

Their journey will discuss the creation story, not as a history lesson, but as a creative story about the powers of God and the Holy Spirit. This discussion may even follow along to "the earth doesn't belong to us, we belong to the earth" and it is our responsibility to take care of the earth and protect it.

Our youth will be asked to discuss their relationship between Jesus Christ and themselves. Could you do this? This is going to be difficult for them to express, just as it would be for us. We need to remind them there are no right answers and that everyday, we, as adults, question our relationship with Jesus Christ. And, even, we as adults can learn from them.

They will discuss the history of Christianity, the history of our church, the statement of faith and how God seeks and loves us all. They will learn about our worship services, the sacraments, forgiveness and justice.

It is my hope that through the confirmation classes, we will be able to introduce our confirmands to the many different ministries of Ridgebury Church. We need to make each one of them feel welcome in our Christian community and ask them to join with us in worship, teaching and service and help them discover their lives will be better and happier from what they will experience sitting side by side with us as we take this journey of faith with each other.

I ask that each of you support the education of our youth and remember that there are so many issues that they will have to face in the years to come. Not only are there educational issues, but there are social issues of poverty, health and violence with which they will be confronted. They are all so vulnerable.

As always, with everything going on in our world today, I remind you that it is up to us to set the standard and the example for our youth. The responsibility begins right here in our church family. So I ask each of you to think about how you as an individual can further the lives of our youth. Each of us took on the responsibility to play a part in their development when we shared in the covenant at their baptism.

Finally, I ask that you seek out our confirmands, encourage them as they enter the journey of faith, make them feel a part of our church community and if they were to be asked, "Where is God?" they would not run away, but answer, "Here at Ridgebury Church".

God Bless,  
Sharon Straiton  
Chairman of Deacons

LADIES' ANNUAL CHRISTMAS DINNER

December 3, 2008

Chuck's Steak House

20 Segar Street, Danbury, CT

Please reserve December 3rd on your calendar and plan to attend our annual Ladies' Christmas dinner. We will gather at Chuck's Steak House at 6:00 PM. The cost will be \$30.00 per person. (This includes salad bar, entrée, dessert, tax and gratuity.)

It's always a great time to get together and enjoy good food and the company of one another.

Everyone will be receiving a personal invitation with more details.

Questions? Contact Betty Miller, Liz Sganga or Sharon Straiton.



Our Fall Work Day was a great success in that so much was accomplished. Just pulling in the parking lot, you notice how neat and tidy the grounds look. Neat and tidy even extends into Shields Hall with the drawers and cabinets completely organized. The steps entering the parsonage are now secure and even. Sincerest thanks to all the "worker bees" who helped on all these projects.

Our workday was topped off with a terrific spaghetti supper, which was enjoyed by many. We owe our thanks for this wonderful evening to RoseMary Frederick, Joy Manger and Sharon and Rich Straiton.

As we head into one of our busiest times of the year, please stay tuned for the many ways we can all work together, supporting the Stewardship Drive and helping Missions with the Christmas Mission Fair and the Thanksgiving time food collection. These are only a few of the examples of how we can support the workings of Ridgebury Church and our community at large. My Grandmother always said, "Many hands make light work". How true, how true!!!!!!!!!!

Christ's love be with you,

Elizabeth Sganga



By now everyone should have received the initial letter from the Stewardship Committee, plus a followup message. The theme for this year is "THE WORLD OF THE GENEROUS GETS LARGER AND LARGER".

For the next 3 weeks in November you will be receiving messages (electronically or via the USPS) as a reminder of our Stewardship Campaign for 2009.

Mark your calendars for Sunday, November 16 when we will have our traditional brunch (following the worship service) to celebrate the results. More information will follow.

Keep in mind there are many ways in which we can all show our support for Ridgebury Church.

Chris Miller For the Committee

## FROM THE MISSIONS COMMITTEE

Many thanks to all those who donated to the Neighbors in Need offering last month. The latest count brings the total collected to \$615. Yea!

There is another opportunity to give coming up on the weekend of November 22/23 when we are asking parishioners to bring a non-perishable food item to the church service they attend. These items will go to the IAM of Greater Danbury's food pantry. Our contributions will go a long way toward making Thanksgiving brighter for those less fortunate than ourselves.

Also, many of you are aware of our Angel Tree tradition here at RCC. This project involves buying and wrapping a gift from a wish list for a needy child or adult who has been selected by the Women's Center of Greater Danbury. The wish lists with appropriate information about each individual are hung on the Christmas Angel Tree in Shield's Hall. We will try to get this available as soon as possible so that you will have plenty of time to shop and get your gift wrapped and to the church by December 7<sup>th</sup>.

Committee members along with several other very supportive persons are working hard on planning the December 7<sup>th</sup> Fair for Missions. Be sure to read both the more detailed article about the Fair in this issue and the item with specific information about the Bake and White Elephant tables.

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### Baked Goods Requested for December 7 Missions Fair

The CHURCH TABLE will feature a Gourmet Baked Goods table and a White Elephant table. We would like to have these at Shields on Saturday afternoon, December 6, so that they can be priced.

**Holiday cookies** and **confections** are very popular. Suggestion: Send along some broken pieces for people to sample, and the items sell quickly! Please label if nuts are an ingredient. Include the recipe if you like.

**Fruit Pies** and **Fancy Breads** are popular, too. If you made something very special for past fairs, don't be surprised if you hear from us hinting for more of the same this year!

**White Elephant items** should be holiday or winter related, clean, and small in size. Table display space is limited.

Please contact Jim or Karen Edwards, 203-730-2688, for more information.

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Mark your calendars for December 7 when our annual Missions Fair will be held after church, in Shields Hall.

Unusual gifts will be offered by Church World Service, Ten Thousand Villages, Heifer Project and the church's own White Elephant Table. You can also indulge your sweet tooth with purchases at the bake table. If hunger calls, our kitchen crew will have coffee and other yummy food. There is also an activity table for the kids.

This will also be your opportunity to sign up to help supply Christmas dinner for a family chosen by Interfaith Aids.

So grab your list and shop to support our Missions, local and far away.

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Please update the following address in the Membership Directory given out at the Budget meeting on Oct. 26<sup>th</sup>:

Dottie and Bob Dever  
24 Deans Corner Rd.  
Brewster, NY 10509

## CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS

I wish to contribute chancel poinsettias for December services at Ridgebury Congregational Church.

Please note in the bulletin that the flowers honor:

- The memory of \_\_\_\_\_
- The birth of \_\_\_\_\_
- The marriage/anniversary of \_\_\_\_\_
- The birthday of \_\_\_\_\_
- The glory of God \_\_\_\_\_
- With thanks for \_\_\_\_\_

The plants will decorate the church from Dec. 20<sup>th</sup> through Christmas, after which they may be taken home.

Number of 8" poinsettias (@\$15) \_\_\_\_\_

Number of 6" poinsettias (@\$8.00) \_\_\_\_\_

Optional donation for church decorations \_\_\_\_\_

Please send acknowledgement card \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks out to Ridgebury Congregational Church (noting "Flowers"), on or BEFORE Dec. 1st.

Drop this form and your check in the collection plate, place in the "flowers" mailbox in Shields Hall, or mail to:

Flower Committee  
Ridgebury Congregational Church, UCC  
605 Ridgebury Road  
Ridgefield, CT 06877

An acknowledgement card will be sent to the honoree upon request.

### NOVEMBER Birthdays



- 2 Mary Phelps
- 5 Michael Trolle
- 7 Linda Cochrane
- 14 Bob Bishop
- 16 Lindsey Burke
- 17 Naomi Emmons
- 18 Stephanie Trolle
- 22 Irene Stebbins
- 28 Caitlin Keeler
- 30 Liz Rowe

Office Telephone: 203-748-2806  
Visit our Web Site: [www.ridgeburychurch.org](http://www.ridgeburychurch.org)  
E-mail Us: [Office@Ridgeburychu](mailto:Office@Ridgeburychu)

## November 2008

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
26 11a Missions  6p Confirmation Class	27 7p Deacons Meeting	28 6p Pastoral Relations	29 7:30p Choir Practice	30 7:15p AA Meets	31 <i>Halloween [USA]</i>	1 5p All Saint's service  6p Pot Luck dinner  <i>All Saints' Day [Christian]</i>
2 Family Sunday  10a Service with Communion  <i>Daylight Savings Time Ends [USA]</i>	3 7p New member Class	4 7p Adult Discussion  <i>Election Day [USA]</i>	5 1:30p Adult Discussion Group  7:30p Choir Practice	6 7:15p AA Meets	7	8 5p Vespers Service
9 11:30a New member class	10 7p Trustees	11 7p Adult Discussion  <i>Veteran's Day [USA]</i>	12 1:30p Adult Discussion Group	13 7p New member class  7:15p AA Meets	14	15 5p Vespers Service
16 11a Stewardship Pot Luck Brunch  12p New member Class  5:30p Pastoral Relations	17 7p Council Meeting	18 7p Adult Discussion	19 1:30p Adult Discussion Group  7:30p Choir Practice	20 7p New member class  7:15p AA Meets	21	22 5p Vespers Service
23 11a Missions  11:30a New member class	24	25 7p Adult Discussion	26 1:30p Adult Discussion Group	27 7:15p AA Meets  <i>Thanksgiving Day [USA]</i>	28	29 5p Vespers Service
30 <i>First Sunday of Advent [Christian]</i>	1 7p Deacons	2 7p Adult Discussion	3 1:30p Adult Discussion Group	4 7:15p AA Meets	5	6 5p Vespers Service

