



## NOVEMBER NEWSLETTER

### THE CORNERSTONE

Ridgebury Congregational Church  
605 Ridgebury Road  
Ridgefield, CT 06877

From the Pastor

Ave Ridgeburian

Well, here we are, about to make the final turn into home stretch of 2009, 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. Accordingly, I was sitting here at the old computer, preparing to bang out a stewardship piece for this month's Cornerstone. For a bit of inspiration, I took a look at what I wrote last year, and looking it over, said to myself, "Gee, self," I said, "last year's article about stewardship was really pretty good, I doubt you could do much better than that one." And, upon further review as they say in the NFL, I decided I really couldn't, so here, for the benefit of one and all, is last year's Cornerstone piece about stewardship, submitted once again to an eager and perhaps not quite so eager, public.

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 like 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. And 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 you get to offer your 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, we're all adults here, aren't we? We all know that the ultimate goal of the stewardship drive is raising money to fund our Congregations 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. 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



We received a great deal of information at the October Congregational meeting. Trustees presented the congregation with the architectural report concerning the Meeting House. The great news is that our building is structurally sound. BUT, there is also a great deal we need to do to improve energy efficiency and repair the ceiling and interior walls. The Trustees have already begun the work that falls under general maintenance. There are choices involving other recommendations that were made.

Some discussion came up at the meeting concerning additions to the Meeting House, i.e., changing the footprint of the building. Council will be sending out a survey in the next few weeks to assess how members of Ridgebury Church feel about any possible changes. Please send us back your thoughts either through your email, by delivering them to someone on Council or me. This process will give Council some guidance for the discussion at the January Congregational Meeting. We do want to emphasize that this is only a survey of the general sentiment, not a binding directive.

Thanks to Trustees for all their work thus far and for their presentation on the architectural report. Anyone who would like to read the report should see John or me. The report is available on loan as it is quite extensive. We, the congregation, have some decisions ahead and Council is encouraging everyone to become informed. Council would like to know that they are heading in the direction that the majority of the members envision for us all.

Christ's love be with you,  
Elizabeth Sganga



The month of November doesn't get its rightful time in the spotlight. The stores go from Halloween treats right into Christmas decorations. What happened to Thanksgiving and the bountiful harvest we celebrate with family and friends? This is the time to be thankful for all we have. I know I am thankful for the family and friends I have in my life. When I think of all the blessings God has given me, my heart bursts with joy.

During the month of November, take a moment and reflect on all the things you have. It could be the new pair of pants you bought or a kiss from a 3 year old that just makes your day. Be thankful for God's love and His many blessings in your life.

The two adult discussion groups have begun. There is a Tuesday afternoon discussion group at 1:30pm in Shields Hall. The other group gathers at 5pm on Saturday. If you have never been to one of these discussion groups, please attend and see what it is all about. You'll be glad you did!

The end of the month begins our Advent season at Ridgebury Church. The first Sunday in Advent is Nov. 29th. The Advent Saturday night services will begin on Saturday, December 5th and run through the Advent season. Please stay tuned for more information in the December Cornerstone.

As always, if you have any questions, comments or concerns, please don't hesitate to see any of the Deacons.

"O Lord, help us to see all of your goodness to us. May we remind others of your goodness and love.  
Amen"

In God's love,  
Carole Bishop  
Chairman of Deacons

## MISSIONS COMMITTEE

The Mission Committee wishes to thank all the children and adults who participated in the fall mission offering campaign this year in whatever way-- by designing and producing the cute decorated envelopes, helping with the Children's Sabbath worship service, donating money, etc. We will let you know the amount collected when the figure is available.

Since we now have many relatively new parishioners, we thought it would be helpful to enumerate ways other than all church offerings in which one can support the mission and outreach efforts of RCC. We do have several ongoing mission opportunities which have been in place for a number of years.

(1) **Interfaith Aids Ministry of Greater Danbury.** Most of you are probably aware of the red box in the northeast corner of Shields Hall. The items placed there are given to IAM food pantry. During the first four Sundays, culminating on November 22, we are asking parishioners to bring a Thanksgiving offering of canned goods to the Meeting House and, prior to the worship service, place them on the raised platform in the front of the altar. At Christmastime we seek donations of various food items to provide a dinner and/or gifts for a particular family. You can sign up at the Mission Fair.

(2) **Elon Homes.** This mission partner of our denomination, located in Elon, N.C., has for over 100 years offered one form or another of 'home' to children, beginning as an orphanage and eventually adding private and charter schools to its domain. There is a box in Shields Hall, on the shelf under the one housing the red IAM box, which is there to collect clipped *Box Tops for Education* labels from hundreds of products and clipped UPCs or caps from Campbell's eligible products. With the help of congregations such as ours, these labels enable Elon Homes to purchase much needed equipment.

(3) **Angel Tree** with Christmas wish list for families selected by the Danbury Women's Center, an agency providing crisis intervention and support. You will have an opportunity to take an angel and wrap a gift this month and return it to the church in time for the Mission Fair.

(4) **Christmas Fair for Missions,** an annual RCC event designed to offer an alternative way of shopping for Christmas—one in which the purchase offers support to people truly in need. This will be held on December 6 this year. The Mission Fair includes a white elephant table. So think about cleaning out those attics, basements, closets, etc. and bring those no longer needed "treasures" for others to purchase at bargain prices and enjoy. There will also be a bake sale, so next time you are making those homemade goodies, perhaps you could double the recipe and throw some in the freezer for Dec. 6.

The above are projects and events of long standing. From time to time there are other mission opportunities of local or global focus that arise. Recently the Mission Committee decided to investigate interest among church members in some additional possibilities. (1) Using carpentry and other skills to join *Americares* in building or remodeling a home. (2) Volunteering on Monday afternoons from 3:00- 5:00 or 1:00-5:00 at the *Dorothy Day* soup kitchen in Danbury. (3) Helping the homeless by spending three hours from 6:00-9:00 p.m. helping with the *In from the Cold* program at *Dorothy Day* in Danbury. The organizers require that there be two to three volunteers for this, so it is great activity for spouses or friends to do together. If you have an interest in any of the above suggestions, please contact Jean Early (730-8669) or a member of the Mission Committee. Thank you.

The Mission Committee

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### Stewardship Update

The 2009-2010 Stewardship campaign has begun. I will be mailing everyone a letter with a pledge card.

There will be a follow-up email/letter for the next three weeks in addition to inserts in the Sunday bulletins on November 1st, 8th, 15th and 21st.. This is all leading up to Stewardship Sunday on November 22nd. We will dedicate and celebrate our commitment to Ridgebury Church during the worship service and at a pot-luck brunch afterwards. All are invited to attend and encouraged to participate. Pledges are gratefully received at anytime!

If for some reason you have not received a letter, pledge card or email, please contact me. Your response is important.

"From Jesus' fullness we have all received, grace upon grace." John 1:16

Sincerely,  
Chris Miller  
(203) 744-5655  
[milleridge@sbcglobal.net](mailto:milleridge@sbcglobal.net)



*Christmas Dinner*

LADIES' ANNUAL CHRISTMAS DINNER

December 2, 2009  
Chuck's Steak House  
20 Segar Street, Danbury, CT

Won't you join us for fellowship, food and fun at the Annual Ridgebury Church Ladies' Christmas Dinner? All women (and friends) of the church are welcome.

WHEN: Wednesday, December 2, 2009

WHERE: Chuck's Steak House, 20 Segar Street, Danbury, CT

TIME: 6:00 PM—???

PRICE: \$31.00 per person

This includes a choice of six entrees, bread, salad bar, baked potato, dessert, tax and gratuity.

RSVP by Sunday, November 29th.

Please make payment for dinner(s) in advance. Checks should be made out to:  
RIDGEBURY CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

Reservations and checks may be given to me.

This year we are offering everyone the opportunity to contribute to a fund toward the 250th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION.

Further details will be following shortly in a letter. We're looking forward to an enjoyable evening where we all can share the joy of Christmas season.

Feel free to contact me with any questions.

Betty Miller

(203) 744-5655

[bettyboop4219@sbcglobal.net](mailto:bettyboop4219@sbcglobal.net)





## Help Decorate the Church with Poinsettias

Christmas poinsettias can be ordered until Sunday, December 6. Your plants will decorate the church from Sunday, December 20<sup>th</sup> through the Christmas holiday. Feel free to take them home and enjoy them either after the Christmas Eve service or Sunday, December 27<sup>th</sup>

Please place your orders with checks made to Ridgebury Congregational Church and note on the memo line "poinsettias". Orders can be mailed to the church ( 605 Ridgebury Rd. , Ridgefield , Ct 06877), placed in the collection plate, or put in the "flowers" mailbox in Shields Hall.

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 \_\_\_\_\_

Number of 8" poinsettias (@\$18) \_\_\_\_\_

Number of 6" poinsettias (@\$7) \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

Name:

\_\_\_\_\_

Address:

\_\_\_\_\_

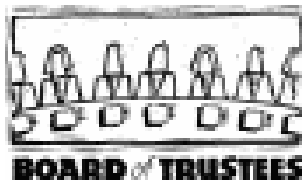
\_\_\_\_\_

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



We will be decorating the church on Saturday, December 19<sup>th</sup> starting at 10:00am. Anyone who would like to come is most welcome- no artistic skills are needed, although we certainly welcome any new ideas!! Of course, there is always the possibility of food and drink and fun!!

Hope to see you there!!



Paul Bailey, Preservation Architect, has completed the Existing Conditions Report of the Meeting House. A structural engineer, a mechanical/electrical engineer and a cost estimator were also involved in the preparation of the report. Thanks to the efforts of Bill and Alice Lucas, Rich Straiton and John, we were awarded a technical assistance grant in the amount of \$6,500 from the CT Trust for Preservation which will be applied to the cost of the Conditions Report which totaled \$13,175.

Overall the building is in excellent condition and is free of any noticeable structural deficiencies. The recommendations made in the Report have been prioritized so that we not only could have a road map to follow but also be aware of the cost involved as we went through each phase.

**1. First Priority - Moisture Penetration**

- a. Re-grading on west side to direct water away from the building
- b. Caulking of chimney and wall on west side
- c. Add a vapor barrier in the crawl space where the furnace is
- d. Repair of wall leak at southeast corner of building

The approximate cost of this priority is \$3,000 and will be covered under our maintenance budget. This work has been started.

The next three recommendations will need to be voted on by the congregation at our January 31<sup>st</sup> meeting as the report has offered alternative solutions to each priority. Depending on which one of the alternative solutions is chosen, there is a strong possibility that the exterior of the meeting house will need to be painted. The cost that is shown against each priority includes a 20% mark-up for when the work is actually started. It also includes the services of a general contractor that is recommended by Paul Bailey who would oversee and coordinate the insulation, window improvements, interior painting/wallpapering and exterior painting.

**2. Second Priority – Put in Insulation to address energy performance**

- a. Exterior walls – \$11,596 – \$26,260
- b. Attic - \$2,160
- c. Crawl space - \$3,384

**3. Third Priority - Window Improvements to address thermal leakage**

- a. Storm panels on outside of existing windows - \$10,050
- b. Shutters to be closed when the building is not in use - \$20,735
- c. Restructure the windows with a Bi-Glass system - \$63,360

**4. Fourth Priority - Wallpaper or Paint (walls and ceiling) - \$488-\$12,008**

The wallpaper has lifted because of moisture. When completed, the above priorities will eliminate the moisture allowing the decision to be made to either paint or re-glue the wallpaper.

A recommendation to add air conditioning has been tabled.

John has both copies of the report and the questions asked of and answered by Paul Bailey. Please take a moment to review the materials so that we can vote on the alternative solutions within each priority at our January 31, 2010 meeting. If you have questions, please email them to Sue Bankes. These will be sent to Paul Bailey and answers posted in the Cornerstone. Depending on the congregational vote, we will then be able to ascertain the total dollar cost and how the monies will be raised.

NOVEMBER Birthdays



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

## November 2009

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Family Sunday	2 7p Deacons Meet	3 1:30p Adult Bible Study	4	5 7:15p AA Meets	6	7 5p Adult Bible Study
10a Communion		<i>Election Day [USA]</i>				
<i>Daylight Savings Time Ends [USA] All Saints' Day [Christian]</i>						
8	9 7p Trustees	10 1:30p Adult Bible Study	11 <i>Veteran's Day [USA]</i>	12 7:15p AA Meets	13	14 5p Adult Bible Study
15	16	17 1:30p Adult Bible Study	18	19 7:15p AA Meets	20	21 5p Adult Bible Study
22 11:30a Stewardship Brunch	23 7p Council Meeting	24 1:30p Adult Bible Study	25	26 7:15p AA Meets	27	28 5p Adult Bible Study
				<i>Thanksgiving Day [USA]</i>		
29 <i>First Sunday of Advent [Christian]</i>	30	1 1:30p Adult Bible Study	2 6p Ladies Christmas Dinner	3 7:15p AA Meets	4	5 5p Adult Bible Study