

**The First
Congregational
Church in
Stoneham**

The Meetinghouse Messenger

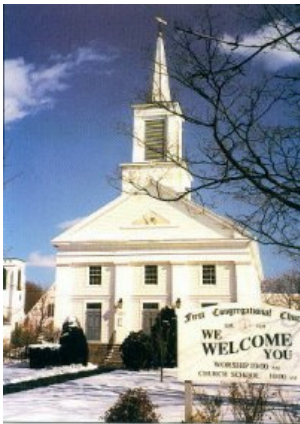
September 2011

**United Church of
Christ**

Pastor's Corner

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Coming Events:

September 11: Rally Sunday
September 11: Youth Group
Kickoff Meeting
September 17: Town Day

Hi, everyone!

What a difference a year makes! Last year at this time I knew barely a soul as I began my ministry with you. How good it feels to be *returning* for another year at First Church and to know that I belong to this branch of Christ's family. And how I look forward to seeing you all again!

While the summer provided a blessedly slower pace, I'm glad that church folks still connected in a variety of ways. Sunday morning worship continued to anchor our week in God's love. We heard some wonderful lay speakers! And coffee hour fed our bodies *and* our spirits as we enjoyed the chance to catch up with old friends and to meet some of the new folks who have visited us.

For me, a highlight of the summer was Vacation Bible Blast. I'd been hearing about VBB since my very first meeting with the Search Committee. Now I understand why: VBB week was *packed* with energy, song, laughter, and learning. It was a terrific team effort, ably led by Donna Wall. What a gift First Church gives the entire community in sharing this amazing intergenerational project!

On Sunday, September 11, we'll officially launch another program year. Sunday school, mission programs, music and much more will start up again as we joyfully welcome one another back. Please join us for worship at 10:00 a.m.; we feel complete when the family is together.

May we see God beckon us toward another year's journey into the Holy, and may we respond, "Here I am!"

With affection,

Merrie



The First Congregational Church in Stoneham

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COME WORSHIP WITH US!
Sundays, 10AM

Staff of the Church:
Rev. Meredith Allen, Pastor
Joyce Simpson, Music Director
Sara Thompson, Secretary
John Piskadlo, Sexton
Lorraine Savage, Sunday School Superintendent
Kevin O'Neil, Youth Group Director
Heather Oliver, Treasurer & Messenger Editor

We are on the Web!

www.firstchurchstoneham.org

Or

www.facebook.com

Let's Go Green!

We currently have **78** people
out of **219** on

the mailing list who have opted
to receive their

Messenger by email.

Let's help the planet

and the save the church

money by increasing that
number. If you are willing to
receive an e-messenger, please
send an email to the Editor

heatherwiw@rcn.com or
holiver@thecia.net. THANKS



Missions / Outreach

Missions Schedule

Tuesday, Sept. 13th 5:30 p.m. Hungry Helpers

Sunday, Sept. 18th, Missions' coffee hour

Sunday, Sept. 25th,
Missions Committee Meeting (tentative)

Volunteers and Financial Donations Needed for Hungry Helpers

On the second Tuesday of each month, our church,
through the Hungry Helpers, hosts the Community
Dinner.

After the August meal, the balance in our bank account
is about \$350 - enough to pay for 2 more meals, with 10
more meals left in the fiscal year. Any financial
donations would be greatly appreciated.

Volunteers are also needed to assist the meal. If you can
help out, arrive at 5:30 to serve or come a bit later to
assist with clearing tables and washing up. For more
information, contact Lynn Haddad.

Fair Trade Coffee, Tea, Chocolate

The Missions/Outreach Committee is pleased to once
again offer fair trade coffees, teas and chocolates for
purchase to support small farmer cooperatives in 19
countries around the world.

All items are produced using sustainable growing
methods and most, if not all, are organic.

The quality of these products is excellent and they are
offered at very reasonable prices. Check out the items
for sale during coffee hour while enjoying a cup of fair
trade coffee.

For more information about Equal Exchange, go to
<http://www.equalexchange.coop/ucc>

Vacation Bible Blast 2011: Shake It Up Café; Where Kids Carry Out God's Recipe

I am always amazed at how it does come together and we are able to present the message that we have chosen. Shake It Up Café shook us to the core and left us feeling happy to share what we learned with others. 43 Chefs-in-training (children from ages 2 - 11), 36 teen/tweens (6-12th graders) and 17 adults (includes 3-- 18yr old recent high school graduates) that is a total of 96 bodies to organize for crafts, music, games, snack, and science, daily. This is the largest registration for VBB we have had in our fifteen year history. It is well worth the many weeks of planning for a wonderful intergenerational multi-community event.

The four weeks previous to VBB a dozen teens and a handful of adults got together to create decorations, craft kits and set design. It is truly amazing what we get accomplished. Each and every item we create is another astonishing wonder for the chefs-in-training. They really are awestruck with the atmosphere we create and for them to participate in.

I would like to thank Kathy Bergstrom who was able to get donations from merchants in the area: Polcari's of Woburn, Farmland in Wakefield, J. Pace in Saugus, BJs, Stop & Shop, Fortune House, China Moon, Daily Scoop. These donations help tremendously to feed our large crew.

Rob Bardell took photographs of our chefs-in-training and staff and created a wonderful DVD. We were able to enjoy viewing at Fridays pizza party and August 14, after service.

It is hard to say individual thank yous because I know I will leave someone out, SO a BIG THANK YOU to everyone including each and everyone who donated a food container and cereal boxes. These items helped with several craft projects the chefs-in-training made; thank you. This help is how you have helped with VBB. I keep thinking of the phrase 'it takes a village to raise a child.' This is so very true and our church and church family are the village that helps get VBB to work. Thank you for your time and dedication to a very worthy community oriented program. We have so many returning campers and teens yearly who help with this program and it is because of the Church providing this opportunity, Thank you to everyone.

FYI: next year's program suggestion is Operation Overboard: Dare to Go Deep with God!

I haven't too many details beyond some hints of whales, dolphins, seahorses and a submarine to "go deep" into God's Word exploring the meaning and application of Bible stories about people who exhibited deep faith.

Donna Wall, VBB Director



Valentine Tea Party - Sunday, February 12, 2012



It is time to announce that we are having another biannual tea party since we have not had one since 2010. For those who are new to these productions here is a summary:

The most important component that makes the tea party work is to have 10 to 15 women volunteer to host a table, 2 women can share this duty if they like. The hostess duties are to find 8-10 women and /or girls to join you at your table, they can be church members or family and friends. The hostess provides a chocolate dessert for her table. Sandwiches, scones, condiments, and chocolate covered strawberries and shortbread will be prepared ahead of time. The hostess sets up and decorates her own table with her dishes and utensils, or she can use one of the two tea sets and the silverware we have at church. A complete list of what is needed will be provided to each hostess.

The cost of the tea party is \$15 per person and the profits go to the Steeple Fund.

This year we will have Michael Maloney, who substitutes in church for Joyce, play the piano and sing romantic tunes. We had him for entertainment last time and he was very well received. We will have a door prize and a number of raffles as well. We will be looking for several men to help serve the tea and sell the raffle tickets.

It may seem early to plan the tea party, but I wanted to let you all know about this so you can save the date, February 12, 2012. I would like to get our hostess volunteers enlisted early. If you would like to be a hostess, please speak to me at church or call at 781-944-7240 or e-mail at



Crafts

Crafts will meet September 6, 13, 20, 27. Young and old are welcome; Come and join us from 9:30-12:00 in the craft room.

Sunday School News

Greetings! We would like to welcome all our children back to Sunday School on Rally Day, September 11th. Our theme this year will be God's Recipe for Living. Parents will bring their children a little early to fill out registration forms. The registration table will be outside the chapel. Children will join their parents in worship for the first part of the service. Rally Sunday will be a continuation of this summer's wonderfully successful VBB cooking theme. This year the Sunday School lessons will be the same as what Pastor Merrie is preaching on each Sunday. We have a wonderful group of teachers and helpers to teach your children about the Bible. At coffee hour we will be celebrating the start of a new year with delicious food, including "make your own sundaes." Looking forward to seeing you for a wonderful year!

God's Blessings,
Lorraine Savage
Sunday School Superintendent



Stoneham Town Day is September 17 from 10am to 4pm. The Craft Group will have its usual table on Central Street right next to our Boy Scout troop and their refreshments. Be sure to drop by. Also, I am looking for people to man our table after 12 noon. One hour of your time would be very appreciated. Let me know if you can help out at Coffee hour, Judy Clark



September

- 1 Donald Wall
- 1 Jim Davis
- 2 AJ Catalano
- 3 Keith Nelson
- 3 Mary Bardell
- 4 Connie MacDonald
- 7 Molly Sawicki
- 21 Joseph Schwarz
- 25 Edna Dodge
- 26 Ryan Schwarz

If you would like to be added to the birthday list, please email holiver@thecia.net

Are you interested in learning to operate the video equipment we use each Sunday to record our worship service? Mark Paolini, who has a degree from Emerson College, would be glad to show you the ropes. Because the equipment belongs to Stoneham TV, you must also take a two-hour course there. Filming worship might serve as community service in school. Speak to Mark or Pastor Merrie about this cool opportunity!

SAVE THE DATES!!!!

Our annual church fair will be held November 4th and 5th. If you would like to help (and it takes a LOT of help to make the fair happen!), please contact Linda Mellow at 781-933-4014 or lindamerrow@yahoo.com

Please do not bring food & drinks into the Sanctuary.

To keep our Sanctuary beautiful, comfortable and focused on worship, please do not bring food or drinks (except bottled water) into the Sanctuary.

Thank You!



First Church is on TV!

Couldn't get to service this week? Loved the sermon so much you want to hear it again? First Church services are rebroadcast all week!



The schedule and channels are as follows:

- Comcast users: Channel 9
- Verizon users: Channel 34
- RCN users: Channel 3
- Mondays @ 6pm
- Tuesdays @ 10am
- Thursdays @ 2pm
- Sundays @ 11:30am



Bible Study!

The Bible Study will meet every other Wednesday, beginning on Sept. 21. We've been meeting from 7:00 to 8:00 in the pastor's office. *Everyone* is welcome! We've been reading *Grace In a Tree Stump*, a book of short chapters on various events in the Old Testament. The reading leads to lots of lively discussion about what God was doing in people's lives long ago and what God is doing in our lives right now. Please let Merrie know if you'd like her to order a book (\$15) for you. And please join us!

A new **Pastor Parish Relations Committee** has formed to serve as a support to Pastor Merrie and as a liaison between her and the congregation. Members are Kathy Bardell, Jan Droz, Ben Jacques and Joe Haddad. Stay tuned for more information on how this committee might serve you!

New Purpose School Sign!

"*Many hands make light work.*" Thank you to *all* the people who had a part in replacing the old Purpose School sign with a shiny new one! Rob Bardell, Fred Baumann, Jim Davis, Debbie Herook, John Piskadlo and Ed Sullivan all deserve a round of applause! Thank you!

Books & Chocolate

We are starting off the year by reading "The Reliable Wife" by Robert Goolrick. It is a real page turner. Judy Clark has extra copies if anyone needs one. She will have them at coffee hours. Our first meeting is September 26 for this book at the church at 7:30pm
 October 17 will be a movie night at Judy's home at 7pm.
 November 28 will be a book night at the church at 7:30pm.
 January 16 will be a movie night at Judy's home at 7pm.
 We will choose other books and the movies when we meet again.

Youth Group!

The Youth Group will kick off the 2011-2012 year on Sunday September 11th, after coffee hour (place to be determined). It will be similar to what we did last year, where we will all introduce ourselves and plan the year.

Please bring any ideas that you would like to do for the upcoming year. It is very easy to point out what we DON't want to do....but please also be prepared with some ideas of what you WOULD want to do.

Youth Group is open to grades 6 and up, and parents are welcome at the meeting as well. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Looking forward to another great year!
 Kevin and Kayla

SHARING THE GIFT OF LANGUAGE

Our church has been a key supporter of ESL programs for adults in Stoneham. We have hosted meetings and training classes, raised money, and several of our members have served as tutors and conversation group leaders.

Rosetta Stone at the Stoneham Library

This summer we held an orientation for the new Rosetta Stone/English learning station at the Stoneham Public Library, purchased with donations from First Church and others in the community. An interactive computer program accessible to anyone in our community, Rosetta Stone is acclaimed for its effective, intuitive approach to learning languages.

The Library also unveiled another language program, accessible online: Mango Languages. Anyone with a Stoneham Library card may access Mango Languages via the library's web site. It offers English lessons with orientation to the learner's home language. It also offers dozens of other language programs.

Fall Conversation Group begins Sept. 22

A conversation group for adult English learners will begin on Sept. 22 and continue through Dec. 15. The Thursday evening sessions will meet at 7 a.m. in the Stoneham Public Library. For more information, or to register, participants should call English At Large at [781-395-2374](tel:781-395-2374). Or visit www.englishatlarge.org.

For more information about any of programs--tutoring, conversation groups, library language services--please e-mail Ben Jacques at bjacq@juno.com.

Messenger Deadline

The deadline for the October Messenger is September 19th. Please leave all submissions in the Messenger box in the office or email to holiver@thecia.net

Thanks!



FOOD PANTRY NEWS

Here is our list of "Items of the Week" for the month of September. Please remember to pick up these items when you are grocery shopping. Please do your part to help stock our pantry for those in need in our church community and in Stoneham and the neighboring communities.

Aug. 28 – Sept. 3	Coffee
Sept. 4 – 10	Sugar
Sept. 11 – 17	Ready to Eat Soups (i.e. Progresso)
Sept. 18 – 24	Vegetable Oil
Sept. 25 – Oct. 1	Crackers, Cookies & Snacks

We have been fortunate to be able to buy quite a few items for the pantry with coupons at great discounts.

If you would like to help the food pantry in this way, please leave your coupons in the church office.

Thank you all for your continued help!

The "Food Pantry Crew"

(Lynn, Lorraine, Sara and Kim)

Daily Lectionary Scripture References September 2011 (Year A)

Thurs., Sept. 1
Psalm 149
Exodus 9: 1-7
2 Corinthians 12:11-21

Fri., Sept. 2
Psalm 149
Exodus 10:21-29
Romans 10:15b-21

Sat., Sept. 3
Psalm 149
Exodus 11:1-10
Matthew 23:29-36

Sun., Sept. 4
23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time
Exodus 12: 1-14
Psalm 149
Romans 13:8-14
Matthew 18:15-20

Mon., Sept. 5
Psalm 121
Exodus 12:14-28
1 Peter 2:11-17

Tues., Sept. 6
Psalm 121
Exodus 12:29-42
Romans 13:1-7

Wed., Sept. 7
Psalm 121
Exodus 13:1-10
Matthew 8:23-27

Thurs., Sept. 8
Psalm 114
Exodus 13:17-22
1 John 3:11-16

Fri., Sept. 9
Psalm 114
Exodus 14:1-18
Acts 7:9-15

Sat., Sept. 10
Psalm 114
Exodus 15:19-31
Matthew 6:7-15

Sun., Sept. 11
24th Sunday in Ordinary Time
Exodus 14:19-31
Psalm 114
Romans 14:1-12
Matthew 18:21-35

Mon., Sept. 12
Psalm 77
Joshua 3:1-17
Hebrews 11:23-29

Tues., Sept. 13
Psalm 77
Nehemiah 9:9-15
Romans 14:13-15:2

Wed., Sept. 14
Psalm 77
2 Kings 2:1-18
Mark 11:20-25

Thurs., Sept. 15
Psalm 105:1-6, 37-45
Exodus 15:22-27
2 Corinthians 13:1-4

Fri., Sept. 16
Psalm 105:1-6, 37-45
Exodus 16:1-21
2 Corinthians 13:5-10

Sat., Sept. 17
Psalm 105:1-6, 37-45
Exodus 16:22-30
Matthew 19:23-30

Sun., Sept. 18
25th Sunday in Ordinary Time
Exodus 16:2-15
Psalm 105:1-6, 37-45
Philippians 1:21-30
Matthew 20:1-16

Mon., Sept. 19
Psalm 119:97-104
Exodus 16:31-35
Romans 16:1-16

Tues., Sept. 20
Psalm 119:97-104
Numbers 11:1-9
Romans 16:17-20

Wed., Sept. 21
Psalm 119:97-104
Numbers 11:18-23, 31-32
Matthew 18:1-5

Thurs., Sept. 22
Psalm 78:1-4, 12-16
Isaiah 48:17-21
James 4:11-16

Fri., Sept. 23
Psalm 78:1-4, 12-16
Numbers 20:1-13
Acts 13:32-41

Sat., Sept. 24
Psalm 78:1-4, 12-16
Numbers 27:12-14
Mark 11:27-33

Sun., Sept. 25
26th Sunday in Ordinary Time
Exodus 17:1-7
Psalm 78:1-4, 12-16
Philippians 2:1-13
Matthew 21:23-32

Mon., Sept. 26
Psalm 42
Exodus 18:1-12
Philippians 1:3-14

Tues., Sept. 27
Psalm 42
Exodus 18:13-27
Philippians 1:15-21

Wed., Sept. 28
Psalm 42
Exodus 19:9b-25
Matthew 9:2-8

Thurs., Sept. 29
Psalm 19
Exodus 23:1-9
Colossians 2:16-23

Fri., Sept. 30
Psalm 19
Exodus 23:14-19
Philippians 2:14-18; 3:1-4a



Note: During the period of Ordinary Time, which comes after Trinity Sunday, the Revised Common Lectionary provides two parallel tracks: the complementary and the semicontinuous. The semicontinuous, which allows for a more sequential reading through the major themes of certain biblical books, is offered here. The other sequence can be found at commontexts.org

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“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give it to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid” - John 14:27

The Meetinghouse Messenger — September 2011

The First Congregational Church

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Office Hours: Mon-Fri. 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Sunday Worship: 10:00 AM

Staff of the Church

Rev. Meredith Allen, Pastor

Sara Thompson, Church Secretary

John Piskadlo, Sexton

Joyce Simpson, Music Director

Heather Oliver, Messenger Editor & Treasurer

Lorraine Savage, Sunday School Superintendent

Kevin O'Neil, Youth Group Director