

THE HERALD

Saugatuck Congregational Church, May 2016

Bless!

"All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit." - Acts 2:4

On May 15, we celebrate Pentecost, the birthday of the Christian Church, when the Holy Spirit descended on the disciples and inspired them to share God's Good News with every nation. That Spirit showed up like a gust of wind and like tongues of flame, and stirred up a holy love-God-and-love-each-other movement that spread like, well, wildfire!

This season, that same Holy Spirit is moving through Saugatuck Church:

On Pentecost we'll welcome six new members, baptizing one of them.

May 22 is Story Tent Sunday, when our young people will lead us in lively worship.

On June 5th, we'll confirm 15 eighth and ninth graders into the Christian faith.

On June 12th we'll honor our graduating high school seniors and baptize Charlie Hall, whose parents are visitors Erin and Pete Hall.

On June 19th, we'll baptize both Sam and brand new Benjamin Leeper (Benjamin was born on May 4th), children of Jennifer and Nick Leeper.

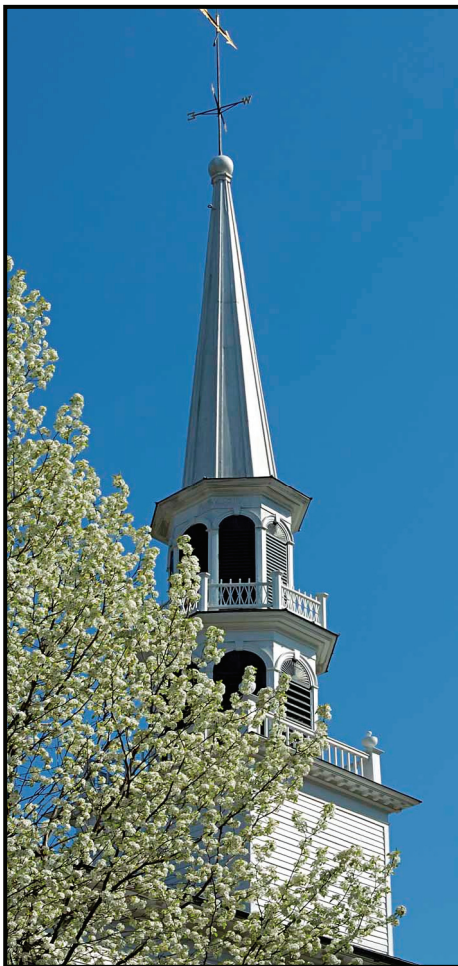
We'll also commission the 39 Saugatuck members (24 youth and 15 adults) who are heading to Cuba on our mission trip, June 25 – July 1.

Whew! On each of these occasions, we'll be asked to make promises: to raise children in faith, to follow Jesus and to "resist oppression and seek justice for all people," in the words of the baptismal vows. This means that every week, we'll get another chance to say, 'Yes!' to God, to renew our own commitment. Every week, we'll be invited to recall our own baptismal vows (or those made on our behalf), our own confirmation promises, or the steps we've taken on our own faith journey.

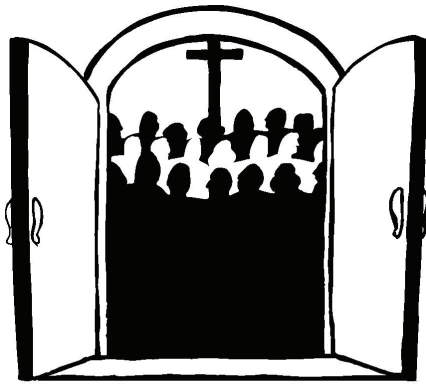
So this season is a great time for each of us to consider, "How am I living out my promises these days? How am I – and how are we, together, any different because we have committed to follow the Jesus Way? Daily, concretely, what are we doing to *practice* Christianity?"

My friend and colleague, the Rev. Rob Leveridge, suggests that the life of faith is about being *transformed*. How? From greed to generosity, from fear to faith, from isolation to neighborliness and from violence to peace-making. So maybe one way to gut-check how we're doing on our promises is to ask: "Am I trusting God a bit more, and fearing a bit less? Am I giving more than I am grasping, reaching out more than I am turning away from neighbors (and potential neighbors), tempering my own

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From Our Moderator John Walsh



Congregational MEETING

Following the 10:00 am service on May 8, a communications update was held to post the congregation on noteworthy activity since the February Annual Meeting. Key points are summarized below:

Financial Update: we began 2016 with a planned budget deficit of \$65,000, and a goal to reduce the deficit over the year. Through April, results are favorable largely due to higher maintenance contributions and lower operating expenses. Partially offsetting these positive items is lower pledge income. Our assumption is that the maintenance contributions will be favorable to the year, and that expense savings and pledge income shortfall are seasonal and will even out over the year.

As 2/3 of our income is derived from members' pledges, a request was made for those who haven't yet made a 2016 pledge to consider doing so to facilitate our planning and enable us to continue the many exciting activities happening at our church. Additionally a request was made to accelerate pledges if possible as we approach summer so as to balance our income with expenses over the summer.

Regarding the stronger maintenance contributions, our building continues to attract multiple user groups. People love our space,



as it provides an appealing, accessible venue for many local organizations. A resounding thank you was given to the 100 or so families who generously contributed \$1.5 million to the Capital Campaign for the rebuilding. The point was made that we would have eventually settled the fire loss with the insurance companies, but it was the Capital Campaign that enabled the special touches, e.g., the Welcome Center, the Chapel, the Youth Room, opening Hoskins Hall to the garden, the lighting, etc. that make our rebuilt space so attractive.

It was also mentioned that we continue to work on completing the punch list with the general contractor. Among items to be addressed shortly are touch-up painting and replacing the sound panels in Hoskins Hall. Additionally we want to pay all open expenses, repay the Endowment loan, and complete the Capital Campaign. \$70,000 in pledges remain outstanding, and a request was made to close out these open balances.

Abilis: beginning in June we will welcome Abilis, a not-for-profit organization dedicated to serving individuals with developmental disabilities to our church space. Founded in 1951, it is based in Greenwich. Our initial contact with Abilis began with a call from the Staples High Special Education department. Staples is seeking a community-based solution for their developmentally challenged students aging out of the Staples Special Education program. Staples was aware of the Abilis Transition Services program operating out of the Presbyterian Church in Greenwich and was interested in establishing a similar program in Westport to handle local need.

After a number of meetings with Abilis personnel and a visit to their Greenwich Life Skills program, we believe Saugatuck can provide a real community service by offering space to Abilis from which they can operate their transition program locally. We will provide the Green Room on the 2nd floor of the east wing Monday-Friday from 8:30-3:00 pm. The space will serve as a base from which the young adults integrate into the community either in jobs, volunteer work, or other supervised activities. It is anticipated that their active presence in the church centers on mornings 8:30-9:30 for organizing the day, lunch 12-1:00, and wrap up at 3:00. As with all our space, the room will be available for other users after they close their day.

The Abilis program is expected to begin in June and operate 5 days per week year round. We anticipate 4-6 individuals to start and this

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Congratulations to Linda Bruce for graduating from Yale Divinity School on May 22nd. Linda will be preaching at the 10:30 Worship Service on June 26th. A reception for Linda will be held in Hoskins Hall following the service.

(Continued from page 2) Congregational Meeting

could expand to 10-12. Each individual has a specially designed program with supervision based on specific need, and will be compliant with all applicable laws and safety practices. Based on our meetings and due diligence we are satisfied that Abilis is a well-managed professional organization staffed by dedicated, capable, and caring professional people. We welcome them to Saugatuck and are pleased that we can assist them in serving a real community need. Organ: it was reported that work quietly continues to bring a pipe organ back to Saugatuck. This is viewed by some as the " final piece of rebuilding." Heather Hamilton, our Music Director, and a small committee have been working on the specifications , and believe a Klais organ built by the multi-generation Klais family organ company in Germany is most appropriate. Estimated cost is approximately \$665,000. A generous lead challenge gift of \$300,000 has been made by one of our members and two other church members have offered a combined \$150,000 bringing our total to \$450,000. Buoyed by these generous gifts we are optimistic about raising the remaining required funds. Please speak with Heather, Sara or John Walsh if you would like to learn more about the organ and/or make a gift towards it.

Pastor Alison also announced that Saugatuck Church will welcome an intern from Yale Divinity School this coming fall. Thomas Burke, a second year Master of Divinity student, will be with us from September to June, for about 15 hours a week, to fulfill his supervised ministry requirement. We look forward to introducing him to the congregation as soon as this spring, when he comes to visit. (See Page 4 for more information on student interns)

John Walsh, Church Moderator

(Continued from page 1) Bless

violent impulses and practicing reconciliation?" None of this comes easily; in fact, I'd say we only manage this sacred work of transformation with the help of that Holy Spirit.

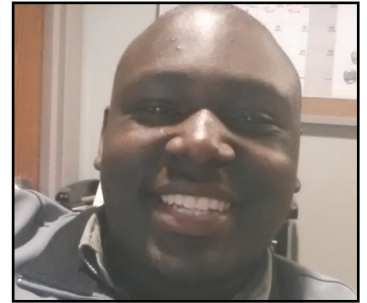
This season, we are asking God's Spirit to descend yet again. With water, oil and laying on of hands, with songs and prayers we'll ask God to bless – babies, a two year old, 8th and 9th graders, graduating seniors, adults – everyone! May those blessings renew our commitment and propel us out into the world to follow Jesus and to share our own version of God's Good News: to love and serve, defend and empower, forgive and inspire, transform and be transformed. Amen!

Pastor Alison

Interns Coming to Saugatuck Church

This spring, Saugatuck Church welcomes **Xavier Blyden** for a brief immersion in congregational life. He is participating in the Thinking About Working for God (TAWFG) Apprenticeship Program.*

Xavier just completed his first year of college at Defiance College (Ohio), where he is pursuing a double major in Global Studies and Religious Studies. Xavier is a member of United Congregational Church of Bridgeport. During May and June, Xavier will spend a total of about 40 hours with us, participating in worship, shadowing the Pastor, attending a Bible Study and learning about ministry in a local church. Please welcome him!



Yale Divinity School Intern

In September, we will welcome **Thomas Burke**, a second year Master of Divinity student at Yale Divinity School. Thomas will spend about 15 hours a week at Saugatuck Church, from September 2016 to June 2017. Designed to fulfill his Supervised Ministry requirement, this internship will expose Thomas to the full range of parish ministry experiences. Thomas is a veteran of the U.S. Marines, having served in both Afghanistan and Iraq. He speaks Arabic and Pashto. In 2015, he gave a TED Talk at the Shubert Theater in New Haven, titled, *PTSD and Returning to the Classroom*. He is a graduate of Sacred Heart University; he has coached youth sports and been an actor. Thomas is currently running for State Representative.



- Sponsored by the Leadership Development and Youth and Young Adult Ministry Teams of the Connecticut Conference, United Church of Christ.
-

Westport Garden Club Held Their Annual Plant Sale

Despite the rain The Garden Club had another successful sale!





TROOP 36

Westport, CT



Scoutmaster Craig Patton

BSA Troop 36: Tales from the Trail

Boy Scout Troop 36, chartered by Saugatuck Congregational Church, is nearing the end of another fun and successful program year. There are currently 14 scouts in the unit (the national average size for a troop) ranging from boys heading to college to boys moving up to middle school. Almost half of the boys attend our church, an increase in representation for the second straight year. Two scouts will receive their Eagle Scout award on Saturday, June 11: Michael Dodd and Saugatuck Church member Liam Borner.

After many years of service to the troop, Barbara King recently announced her resignation from the role of Troop Committee Chair. The search for a new Chair has begun under the leadership of Saugatuck Church member Bruce Borner, who is the Charter Organization Representative for Troop 36. Saugatuck Church member Craig Patton is completing his second year as Scoutmaster.

In addition to weekly meetings in Hoskins Hall, the troop holds monthly outings and conducts periodic service projects. Recent outings have included a trip to Sturbridge Village where some of the scouts toured the grounds while others spent the day in a forge completing requirements for Metalwork Merit Badge. In May, scouts participated in a full day of technical rock climbing at Deer Lake Scout Reservation in Killingworth, CT and then worked on their cooking and camping skills for the remainder of the weekend trip.



More information on our two scouts who will receive their Eagle Scout awards on Saturday, June 11th on page 6.

Boy Scout Troop 36 will hold an Eagle Scout Court of Honor on Saturday, June 11th, 2pm at Saugatuck. Don't miss seeing Liam Borner and Michael Dodd receive their Eagle Badges.



Bruce & Kerry Borner cordially invite you to attend an **Eagle Court of Honor** on June 11th, 2016 at 2:00pm at the Saugatuck Congregational Church in Westport, CT, where two scouts, Liam Borner and Michael Dodd, will be awarded the highest level of achievement in Boy Scouts, the Eagle Badge.



Our keynote speaker will be beloved and recently retired Staples High School principal, **Dr. John Dodig**.



There will be a special guest presentation by Westporter [David Pogue](#), the American technology writer and TV science presenter. David is taking time away from work on a TV special for the [Nova](#) series to be with us.

Light refreshments will be served immediately following the ceremony.

Please call the church regarding attendance at the ceremony.

Near-Sighted Spirited Wednesday by the Rev. Alison Buttrick J. Patton

February 24, 2016

Scripture: Luke 13:1-3 (NRSV)

At that very time there were some present who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. He asked them, 'Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way they were worse sinners than all other Galileans? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish as they did.'

REFLECTION:

Ever notice how we blame others for our failures and take credit for our successes? OK, maybe that's just me. From where I sit, I've got a clear view of everything I do to make good. I know all my best intentions; I see all the steps I've taken, so I can pat myself on the back, every step of the way. What's less clear (or what I'm less inclined to scrutinize) are the failures - failure to act, failure to notice, or to own the pain that I cause. "What, you think that was my doing? Don't be silly. That other guy got in the way... No one told me... I didn't mean to... I woulda done that really important thing, but the forces of the universe were stacked against me that day."

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Saugatuck and the United Church of Christ Happenings:



Saugatuck worshippers were treated to listening to the Chris Coogan (at the piano) Gospel Singers on April 10th. The Bruce family donated this service to Saugatuck. It was memorable. *The emotions came forward. . . I felt my problems would be solved and life was good. Their rendition of Amazing Grace was unforgettable. Thank you Bruce family. It was a wonderful gift.*



CLEVELAND (April 5, 2016) —The United Church of Christ, a mainline Protestant denomination of almost 1 million members, installed their ninth general minister and president, the Rev. John C. Dorhauer, in a three-city, progressive service April 15-17, with worship events in New York, Chicago and Seattle.

Tending to our grounds and gardens can be a sacred practice. Garden Committee looking for fellow practitioners for weeding, new plantings, and mulching. Matt Baldwin has completed building new flower boxes and they will be installed soon. Also in the works for the memorial garden is repair of the fountain (which is leaking through the wall), repair of the armillary sphere, new plantings of trees, shrubs and perennials, Contact Linda Bruce bruce.lindalewis@gmail.com for upcoming fellowship in the garden work dates. All ages welcome!



Saugatuck traveled to Greenwich to see the art exhibit: *A Man Called Jesus*. This collection of biblical mixed media collages by Robin Joyce Miller was on display at Round Hill Community Church. Miller is a visual artist specializing in African American Heritage themes.

Welcoming New Members: Six new members were welcomed into the Saugatuck Church family on May 15th. Photos and Bios will be in the next Herald. The new members are Rafael Chiu and David Skow, Lillian Goss, Douglas Wyse, Michelle and Matt D’Auria.

Schedule for the Popular Interfaith Beach Service



8:30 am, Compo Beach near the cannons

Here's the full summer beach schedule:

June 26 – Methodist Church

July 3 – Greens Farms – with communion

July 10 – Methodist Church

July 17 – Saugatuck Church - Pastor Alison Preaching

July 24 – Wilton

July 31 – Norfield

Aug 7 – Saugatuck Church – with communion;
Rev. Willie Salmond will be preaching

Aug 14 - Wilton

Aug 21 – Norfield

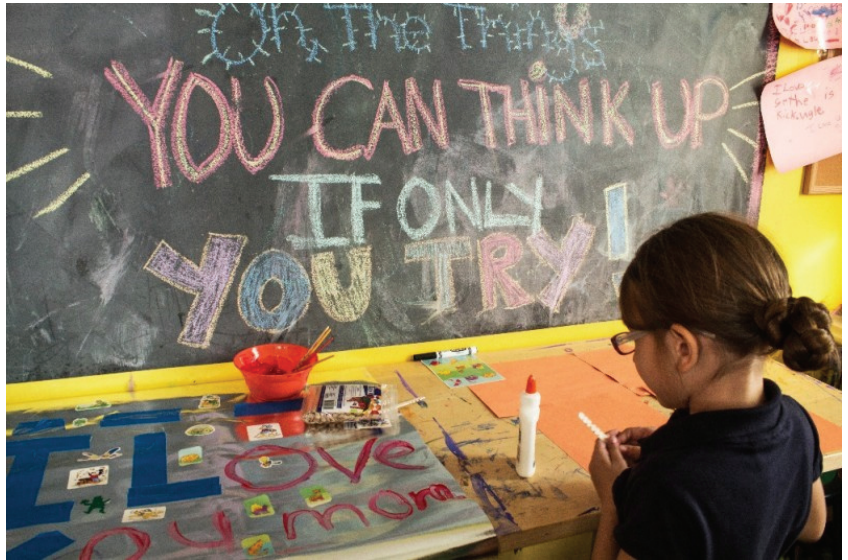
Aug 28 – Greens Farms



Campership Donations

The McGivney Community Center's Summer Camp is located on the East Side of Bridgeport in one of the most impoverished neighborhoods in the city. For families in the neighborhood, it is often a challenge to find safe, quality, out-of-school care that is affordable. In 2015, 85 campers between kindergarten and eighth grade attended Summer Camp each week. Because of supporters like Saugatuck, not a single camper or family was turned away due to cost. McGivney works hard to ensure that children are able to attend their camp regardless of family income.

Summer Camp begins on June 27, 2016 and runs for seven weeks through August 12th. The cost is \$75 per week. The Camp runs from 8:30 am to 3pm with an extended day option. The daily schedule operates like a school day, with eight 35 minute periods that include: outdoor time, game room, gym, performing arts/team building, arts & crafts, computers, and enrichment in math, reading and writing. Math and literacy are incredibly important for success in the next



grade. In order to prevent any summer learning loss, hands-on and age appropriate math and literacy activities are taught daily. The camp provides healthy food to the campers every day and helps make nutrition and wellness habits a daily practice.

Summer Camp donations are used to reduce the cost of field trips ensuring that each is able to attend field trips regardless of cost. For many campers, these field trips are the only extra activities they are able to do during the summer. The McGivney Summer Camp experience is a wonderful program that provides critical skill development, encourages the formation of meaningful relationships with others and teaches sportsmanship and team building in a healthy, fun and safe environment.

Your support will make a difference.

Make your check out to Saugatuck Congregational Church, write Campership on the memo line and send to the church office or leave it in the offering plate.

The Mission Board : Submitted by Sara Walsh

(Continued from page 6) (Nea4 Sighted—Spirited Wednesday) Alison Patton

This mental myopia often works in reverse when we're looking at others, especially when their failures affect us. "What were you thinking? It was your poor planning that got us into this mess. You brought it on yourself. How could you do that? Shame on you."

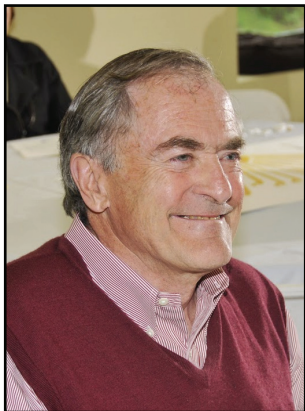
In fact, says Jesus, it's "Shame on us." ALL of us. Because we all screw up, all the time. We've got to spend less time pointing fingers and more time owning up. Take a good hard look at those blind spots and practice saying, "My bad. I'm sorry. I've made a mistake."

Actually, "shame" may be the wrong word. Brené Brown says 'guilt' is feeling bad about what we've done, and 'shame' is feeling bad about who we are. Jesus says do the former. Scrutinize your inaction, your wrong action, and then, make a change. Turn back towards wholeness. In other words: repent.

This takes courage. But here's the good news: someone is rooting for us. Christ loves us enough to keep at us, tenderly, persistently inviting us to bear fruit.

PRAYER

Dear God: When I take all the credit, forgive me. When I refuse the blame, forgive that, too. Give me eyes to see you at work in my life. Then give me the courage to grow. Amen.



Frank has come full circle since graduating
from seminary in the '60s.

Please come and be a part of his beloved circle of friends.

The Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ
& the Fairfield West Association

Cordially invite your presence

for the ordination to the Christian ministry of

Frank Basler

Sunday, June 12, at two o'clock in the afternoon at

Saugatuck Congregational Church

245 Post Road East

Westport, Connecticut

Clergy are invited to wear red stoles and join in a procession.

A reception will follow after the service in Hoskins Hall.

Please RSVP by June 7 to marcia@saugatuckchurch.org

IT WAS A CELEBRATION!

Submitted by Rose Jordan



The Westport Woman's Club recently held a "150th Birthday Bash for Bedford Hall," its meeting space at 44 Imperial Avenue that traces its origins back to the 1866 construction of our church's Sabbath Meeting Hall (Sunday School Building), which was subsequently purchased by the Woman's Club and moved to Imperial Avenue where it was annexed to the club's 1881 Sidney Watts House.

The meeting space underwent extensive renovations in 2015 and was named "Bedford Hall," in honor of the Edward and Frederick Bedford families who, in 1945, purchased the Sidney Watts house and grounds for the club at 44 Imperial Avenue and also funded the move to that location in 1950.



Above, Pastor Alison and her husband, Craig, were in attendance for this special evening and took part in blowing out the candles on the 150th Birthday Cake, along with other invited guests and members.

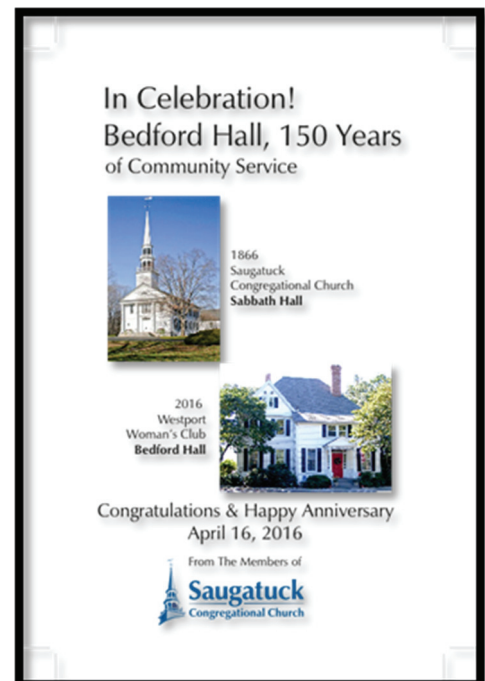
The commemorative plaque will be affixed to the outside of the building and reads as follows:

**Saugatuck Congregational Church
Sabbath Meeting Hall
1866
Moved and Annexed
September 1950**



Above, Bob Weingarten, Plaque Historian of the Westport Historical Society, presents Dorothy Curran, Westport Woman's Club President, with a plaque commemorating the building.

A commemorative program. Including a message from our church, has been published, copies of which are available in the church office.



Story Tent 2016: Join us on May 22nd for this worship led by our young people, featuring an original drama., Hold My Calls: A Play about Callings, written and performed by Wild Camel Productions.



2010



2006



2014



2015



2012



2013