

THE EPISTLE

Volume 23 Issue 5

May 24, 2018

Dear Members & Friends of First Church:

My ruminations on the edge of summer find me thinking of a conversation I once had with a thirty-two year-old mother with two children. She had been taking her children for a walk in the park, and they sat down beside me on the park bench. It was such a beautiful, warm sunny day. And this young mother and her delightful children were enjoying their dripping ice cream cones. I was reading a book and glanced sideways, smiling at the children. “Beautiful day, isn’t it?” I said, to which the mother replied, “It really is! What are you reading?” “Oh, it’s a book on religion.” When she heard my reply, I noticed her lips curve into a curious smile as she said, “I’m spiritual, not religious.



When I was growing up, I used to go to church with my grandmother. I guess that I’m just not into organized religion.” I responded, “I feel somewhat the same way that you do. I, too, am spiritual, not religious. I don’t go to church to belong to a club or organization. I go to church to pray with other people who are praying. As a seven-year-old child, I used to go to church with my grandmother too. Before the service, even before the organist started to play the pre-Service music, my grandma would fold her hands, bow her head, and close her eyes; I could see her lips moving ever so slightly, as if she were talking to someone. I couldn’t hear what she said, but I had the sense that someone was listening. My grandma was sixty-five years old when I was seven. She had been going to church and doing the same thing almost every Sunday for her whole life. I loved my grandma. So, I figured there must be something to it – this going to church and praying.”

The young mother’s curious smile became more pronounced. She now had a beaming smile as she said, “You know, I think over one of the next couple Sundays that I’m going to take my children to church.”

God is still speaking, and isn’t it interesting that God speaks when we share our life stories and our fond memories?



Abundant Blessings,

Pastor Greg Rupright

June Worship Schedule



SUNDAY SCRIPTURE READINGS & MESSAGES

(bold font indicates key scripture text(s) for the Message)

JUNE 3RD

Second Sunday after Pentecost

Intergenerational Service & Holy Communion

1 Samuel 3:1-10, (11-20); Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18;

2 Corinthians 4:5-12; **Mark 2:23-3:6**

Intergenerational Message: "It's A Miracle"

JUNE 10TH

Third Sunday after Pentecost – Graduation Sunday

1 Samuel 8:4-11, (12-15), 16-20; (11:14-15); Psalm 138;

2 Corinthians 4:13-5:1; **Mark 3:20-35**

Message: "Families and the Will of God"

JUNE 17TH

Fourth Sunday after Pentecost

Choir & Teacher Appreciation Sunday

1 Samuel 15:34-16:13; Psalm 20;

2 Corinthians 5:6-10, (11-13), 14-17; Mark 4:26-34

Message: "Faith Is Not Always Seeing"

JUNE 24TH

Fifth Sunday after Pentecost

1 Samuel 17:(1a, 4-11, 19-23), 32-49; Psalm 9:9-20;

2 Corinthians 6:1-13; **Mark 4:35-41**

Message: "God Cares"

CHURCH NEWS

NY CONFERENCE ANNUAL MEETING & PASTORAL COVERAGE

Pastor Greg will be attending the NY Conference of the UCC Annual Meeting in Syracuse, NY and will be out-of-town from Wednesday, June 6th through and including Saturday, June 9th. During this time, the Rev. Jim Latta of Perinton Presbyterian Church will be available for any immediate pastoral emergencies. Rev. Latta can be reached at 585-223-1203 or jim@perintonpres.org.



Happy Father's Day to all fathers and to those who fill guidance roles among family and friends!



GOOD BYE BEST WISHES & THANK YOU TO MS. JEN



There will be a Farewell Celebration for Jen Lessard on Sunday, June 17th during Coffee Hour. We will be celebrating her outstanding work as our Christian Education Teacher over the past year-and-a-half. We will send her off with our gratitude and God's richest blessings for continued growth in her ministry.

CHURCH SUMMER OFFICE HOURS

The Church office will be closed on Fridays from July 6th through August 24th.



Summer Hours

GRIEFSHARE SUPPORT GROUP

The GriefShare Support Group will meet on Tuesday, June 12th, and Tuesday, June 26th from 10:00 A.M. – 12 Noon in the Snow Room.

GriefShare is a network of thousands of grief recovery support groups meeting around the world. GriefShare is a faith-centered program with direction and purpose. With GriefShare you will learn how to walk the journey of grief and be supported on the way. It is a support group where people who have lost loved ones and friends can find healing and hope. GriefShare covers various aspects of going through the grieving process over a period of 13 sessions.



Pastor Greg & Diana Smith will be among some of the co-facilitators for this group. We are looking for other co-facilitators. If you wish to participate in the GriefShare Group either as a participant or a facilitator, please sign up on the GriefShare Participant or Facilitator's Sign-Up List posted on the Fellowship Hall Board. Thank you.



A SERVICE FOR HEALING & WHOLENESS

There will be a Service for Healing & Wholeness in the Snow Room on Sunday, June 24th at 10:45 A.M. All are welcome!

MORNING BIBLE STUDY GROUPS

The 11:00 A.M. Wednesday Morning and Sunday Morning Bible Study Groups are studying *Introducing the New Testament* by Rev. Anne Robertson. This book is the Vol. III of *Exploring the Bible: The Dickinson Series*. Both Bible Study Groups meet in the Snow Room.



Bible Study

MAY 30TH & JUNE 3RD

Read *Introducing the New Testament* by Rev. Anne Robertson, Chapter 6, "Experiencing Church," pp. 167-186. Please be sure to read the following scriptures: Ephesians 5:21-6:9; Colossians 3:18-4:1; 1 Timothy 2:1-6:2; Titus 2:1-10; Reread 1 Peter 2:13-21; 3:1-7.

JUNE 6TH & JUNE 10TH*

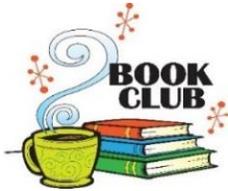
Read *Introducing the New Testament* by Rev. Anne Robertson, Chapter 6, "Experiencing Church," pp. 186-202. Please be sure to read the following scriptures: 1 John 2:18; 1 John 2:22; 1 John 4:3; 2 John 1:7; Revelation, Chapters 1-3.

ALL ARE WELCOME!

***Wednesday, June 6th, & Sunday, June 10th, are the last Morning Bible Study sessions until the fall. Have a great summer!**

ONE MORE USHER IS NEEDED

One more usher is still needed for the New Church Year starting in June 2018. The term is for three years. Each usher is responsible for four different months during the year. At the beginning of the church year a twelve month schedule is provided so each usher will know the months that they are scheduled to work. All interested members should call Ed Johnston at 585-703-7046 for more details.



BOOK CLUB

On Monday, June 25, we will hold a planning meeting for next year. Come prepared with your book selections.

LOOKING BACK: WORDS FOR TODAY, FROM 1968

For America, this marks the 50th anniversary of a turbulent year, which included high-profile assassinations, the Vietnam War and civil rights protests. Five decades on, turmoil still abounds.

May we take hope and inspiration from Robert Kennedy, who, on the night of Martin Luther King's death, replaced a presidential-campaign speech with these words:

“What we need in the United States is not division; ... not hatred; ... not violence and lawlessness, but ... love, and wisdom, and compassion toward one another; and a feeling of justice toward those who still suffer within our country, whether they be white or ... black.”

Kennedy added: “We will have difficult times in the future. ... But the vast majority of white people and ... black people in this country want to live together ... and want justice for all human beings. ... Let's dedicate ourselves ... to tame the savageness of man and make gentle the life of this world ... and say a prayer for our country and for our people.”



A MYSTERY...A MYSTERY CONCERNING A 150 YEAR-OLD CHURCH...

A goal of the research for the National Register of Historic Places for the First Congregational Church was to discover the architect who designed the building.

A history of the congregation and its connection to Fairport and Perinton will follow in July. In 2018 the First Congregational Church of Fairport will celebrate its bicentennial...150 years. But who designed the First Congregational Church??

The McIntosh book, *The History of Monroe County, 1788-1877*, lists Hiram Kingsley as the builder of the First Congregational Church of Fairport in 1868. Common internet search engines: fultonhistory.com, nyshistoricnewspapers.com, and ancestry.com have no information on Hiram Kingsley.

The Rochester Business Directory is on line on the Monroe County Library website. A page by page search of the 1868 directory, page 240 indicates:



If Hiram Kingsbury is entered into a search engine...EUREKA! The builder's name has been spelled incorrectly for 150 years! Hiram Kingsbury is known to have built at least three churches in the Rochester area: one is the First Congregational Church in Fairport:

That **John Rochester Thomas** designed the First Congregational Church in Fairport is better than EUREKA! This is GREAT NEWS. He is famous far beyond Fairport. Note how accurately the above article from the Rochester Express, January 24, 1868 describes the building as it exists today—same chestnut pews, white Medina stone exterior trim, brick and 100 foot tower.

According to his obituary (*Rochester Democrat and Chronicle*, August 29, 1901), John R. Thomas was born in Rochester in 1845. Following the failure of his father's business in 1862, Thomas needed employment and entered the practice of Merwin Austin, a prominent architect in Rochester, with the intent of entering the profession. He also enrolled in courses at the University of Rochester and continued his studies in Europe. After his return, he opened his own practice with one of his first commissions being the First Congregational Church in Fairport. He was made architect for NYS projects in 1874 by Governor Dix and continued in this role for Governor Tilden. His long career included the State Reformatory in Elmira (1874), Willard Asylum in Ovid in 1869 (NR listed 1975) and more than 150 churches. Thomas moved to New York City in 1882, where he continued his practice, which included designing a combined armory for the Seventy-First Regiment and Second New York Battery on Park Avenue (1893) and rebuilding the New York Stock Exchange. Two of his New York City churches were the Second Reformed Church on Lenox Avenue and Calvary Baptist Church on West 57th Street. He died of heart failure in 1901 and was buried in Section A in Mount Hope Cemetery in Rochester.

Some consider John Rochester Thomas the "Father of American Churches" because he designed at least 150 church buildings. He also designed the First Baptist Church and the Green Lantern Inn in Fairport, but after the First Congregational Church. The First Congregational Church in Fairport may be his first church. Every document about our church may now be corrected: the architect was John Rochester Thomas and the builder, Hiram Kingsbury. For 150 years this building has been preserved to commemorate not only the builder and architect but all the Sunday services, weddings, confirmation classes, funerals and even church suppers that have occurred since 1868.

Next month- how did the First Congregational Church end up in Fairport?

New Congregational Church in Fairport.—We learn that the contract for the erection of a new Congregational Church in Fairport has been awarded to Mr. Hiram Kingsbury, of this city. The edifice is to be built of brick, on the site of the present wooden structure, and will cost \$15,000. The main building will be 46 by 67 feet, and the walls 25 feet high, with the tower 100 feet in height. The lecture room will be 24 by 46 feet, with 16 feet walks. The trimmings will be of white Medina stone. There will be two front entrances, with vestibule and singers' gallery above. The inside walls are to be colored, and the seats will be of chestnut with black walnut trimmings. The plans were drawn by John R. Thomas, of this city, and the contract for the building of the church requires its completion by the 15th of November next.

~Submitted by Jeannie Whitney

INVITATION



JUDGE WAGNER'S BIRTHDAY

You are invited to Bob Wagner's birthday party. Bea Benedict is playing a Concert in celebration of Bob Wagner's 97th birthday, on Monday, June 11, at 2:00 PM at the Fairport Baptist Home. Bob's church family and friends are invited to attend. Cake and ice cream will be served following the recital

YOUTH NEWS



DO YOU HAVE A 2018 HIGH SCHOOL OR COLLEGE GRADUATE IN YOUR FAMILY?

On June 10 we will be celebrating "Graduation Sunday". We would like to include all of the graduates in our write-up. If you have a graduate in your family, please send us the name of your graduate (high school, college, or grad school), the school he or she is graduating from, and his/her future plans. Please submit these to the church office **by May 30th**.

REACH MISSION TRIP UPDATE

This year we will have 2 adults and 7 youth serving with REACH Mission Trips on July 15-21. They will be working in New Berlin, Chenango County, New York.

Why Does New Berlin, New York Need A Mission Trip? Over the years, the greater Chenango County area has lost a lot of businesses paying higher salaries, such as Proctor and Gamble Pharmaceuticals. As a result of these losses, smaller businesses were unable to attract enough customers to stay afloat and were forced to close. Many of the jobs currently available to those living in the area are at minimum wage or slightly above. Around 17.6% of the population of the Town of New Berlin is below the poverty level, and an unemployment rate is about 5.5% with a population of 990.



OUR CHURCH FAMILY

THANK YOU

We want to thank First Church for all of the prayers, cards, visits, and luscious food we received while we were confined. Also, we thank Pastor Greg for his visits. All were most appreciated by us and our family.

God bless you all.

Jerry and Lois Evans

LIGHT THE NIGHT



Thanks to Jackie Stivers for keeping the steeple lights burning bright in May in celebration of her children, Jill, Kelsey, and Brad.

Thank you to Jan Hecker for lighting the night during the month of June in memory of John Hecker.



REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS

Charlotte Jackson, Fairport Baptist Home

Robert Wagner, Fairport Baptist Home

Gerry Hammond

Mary Lou Woodhouse

Sue Boland



Next "Epistle" Deadline is
(The "Third Thursday")

June 21, 2018



Frequently our church will take photos or videos of members, including children and youth, involved in church related activities. These photos and videos may be used in church-produced publications, on our website or on social media including but not limited to Facebook. If you do not wish to have photos or videos of yourself or your child used, please see Vicki Sherry in the church office to sign an exclusion form.

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Church Service Sundays at 9:30 a.m.

Church Office Hours: 9:00-3:30
Monday through Friday (Monday-Thursday in July and August)

Rev. Gregory J. Rupright, Pastor
Rev. Dr. John N. Cedarleaf, Pastor Emeritus
Administrative Assistant: Vicki Sherry
Church Moderator: Steve Smith
Organist: Beatrice Benedict
Director of Music Ministries: Heather Watras
Business Administrator: Sue Brooks
Wedding Coordinator: Betty Shamblen
Christian Education Teacher: Jen Lessard



First Congregational United Church of Christ
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