



Steeplelight

First Presbyterian Church

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February 2009

Stephen Ministry Comes To FPC

First Presbyterian has taken the first steps in implementing Stephen Ministries in our church. In Stephen Ministry congregations, lay caregivers (called Stephen Ministers) provide one-to-one Christian and confidential care to the bereaved, hospitalized, terminally ill, separated, divorced, unemployed, relocated, and others facing a crisis or life challenge in and around our congregation. A Stephen Ministry program will not subtract from the existing ministries of our Board of Deacons and pastor. It will complement and enhance them.

Stephen Ministry helps pastors and congregations provide quality, caring ministry for as long as people need it. Stephen Ministries provide comprehensive training and support for congregations to implement this exciting and caring ministry.

First Presbyterian initi-

ated its relationship with Stephen Ministries last month by enrolling as a Stephen Ministry congregation. The next step was to send Jim Fedoryk to the week-long Leader's Training Course (LTC) to be our initial Stephen Leader. The LTC was attended by over 380 people from 250 congregations across the nation.

Following this, we will be making the congregation more aware of what Stephen Ministry is all about, how it will benefit our congregation (and beyond) and how others can become involved in this transformational ministry. Watch for more information in the coming weeks in the bulletin and the Steeplelight.

The next step is to recruit, select, and train people who feel a calling to serve as

Stephen Ministers. Then matching Stephen Ministers to care receivers will begin. Stephen Ministers typically meet with their care receiver once a week for about an hour. This caring relationship can last from weeks to months depending upon the care receiver's needs. Confidentiality is a cornerstone through this entire process; from the time referrals are made for those in need, through the relationship between the Stephen Minister and care receiver, guarding the privacy of those involved is of paramount importance.

The final step of this implementation is ongoing, with Stephen Ministers meeting regularly for continuing education and matching Stephen Ministers with those in

.. Cont. page 2



Inside this issue:

<i>Prayer Shawl</i>	2
<i>Alpha</i>	2
<i>Shrove Tuesday</i>	3
<i>Youth Speaker</i>	3
<i>Immigration</i>	3
<i>Soup, Sandwich & Study</i>	4
<i>Women's Assoc.</i>	4



Stephen Ministry continued ..

need. Throughout this time, additional prospective Stephen Leaders may also attend an LTC to strengthen the overall leadership – most congregations have a team of Stephen Leaders. We ask that you pray for this ministry and prayerfully consider how you might get involved. Please contact Jim Fedoryk, at Jamesfedoryk@optonline.net or 372-4482; for more information or if you have questions about this.

World Sewing Initiates New Project

The Ladies Sewing Group of our church has for many years met on a day each week for the purpose of converting gently used men's shirts into Johnny coats and distributing them for convalescent use. They have also sewn and provided many hand crafted items to be sold at the Strawberry Festival along with hand puppets for the pediatric ward of Bridgeport Hospital. Based on this success story and keeping up with needs, the group is initiating a **Prayer Shawl Ministry**. Anyone interested in becoming a part of this nationwide project is invited to meet at the church on Thursdays at 10:00 a.m. and bring lunch. An instructor will teach basic knitting or crocheting for anyone wanting to learn for the purpose of making a shawl. Learning yarn will be provided, shawl yarn to be furnished by the participant. The program is two-fold in its purpose. The known or unknown recipients feel blessed by the shawls made so prayerfully and lovingly, the providers enjoy fellowship in the making of shawls knowing someone will benefit from their time and talents. If you are interested or want more information, please call Jean Crozier at 377-0378. Weather permitting the program will start in March. Exact date will be announced later.

Alpha Class

The Alpha course at First Presby finished in December with a beautiful brunch courtesy of the First Presby Outreach angels. We are so very grateful to First Presby, Dr. Duffy and Outreach for the funding and support - including child care - for our exciting Alpha journey. The Holy Spirit was in amazing attendance building us up "like living stones" into "a spiritual house."(1Peter 2:5)

In fact we didn't want to leave the house and are sticking together in Christ on Monday mornings at 9:30 to study Ecclesiastes for 12 weeks. Please, join us and see where the Holy Spirit takes us next!



Our Fall Monday morning Alpha group in the flesh takes a break from spiritual matters during the November retreat at the Nazareth Spiritual Center in Monroe.



Shrove Tuesday Celebration

Shrove Tuesday is a day of celebration as well as penitence, because it's the last day before Lent. Lent is a time of abstinence, and of giving things up. So Shrove Tuesday is the last chance to indulge yourself. Pancakes became associated with Shrove Tuesday

as they were a dish that could use up all the eggs fats and milk in the house with just the addition of flour. Since pancakes are a standard way of using up fat, the day is also called Pancake Tuesday.

So come feast on pancakes and sausage, join

the merriment of Mardi Gras music, crafts, pancake races (aprons and all), parades (complete with our own king, queen, beads, coins etc) and more. Costumes are encouraged but not mandatory. Please call Kim-Louise Spinosa at 367-6488 if you are interested in helping.



Youth Group Speaker

All parents are invited to attend a seminar on Friday, March 6 from 7 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. by Walt Mueller. This program is being sponsored by the Northeast Youth Ministry Network and

will be held at the Saxe Middle School in New Canaan. Mr. Mueller is a world-renowned speaker and author on youth culture and media. He will be discussing cultural forces influencing teens, under-

standing popular music and media, children materialism and parental pressure and how to point kids to Christ in a postmodern world. See PJ Drost for more details and tickets.

All parents should attend this seminar! To learn more about Walt Mueller, go to www.cpyu.org

Immigration Task Force

The Immigration Task Force of the PSNE and the Bridgeport Council of Churches are co-sponsoring a program on Saturday, February 21 from 9:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. at First Presbyterian.

This event will include a panel, of immigrants, an immigration law speaker, Atty. Sherryl Pond, a small group discussion, a worship service and music by the Christ is Life Presbyterian Church

from Fall River, MA.

If you are interested in attending, please see Austin Harbinson who is a member of this task force of the Presbytery.

Ash Wednesday Service

A beautiful candlelight service of prayer and contemplation will take place on Ash Wednesday, Feb. 25 in our sanctuary at 7:30 p.m. - marking the beginning of the Lenten journey to Easter.



First Presbyterian Church

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Steeplelight deadline is the 13th of
each month.
www.firstpresby.net

What will you leave behind?

Please remember First
Presbyterian in your will.

Soup, Sandwich And Study

A once-a-month opportunity to share a light lunch of homemade soup and a sandwich, enjoy fellowship and learn something new and/or different for an affordable price.

Wednesday, February 11

12:00-1:30 In the Parlor

View the video of
"The Harvest"

An acclaimed film based on a true story
(discussion will follow, facilitated by Kim Hill)

\$5.00

Reservations are suggested. Call the church office, 374-6176, see Pat Piddington after church or sign the reservation form on the Outreach bulletin board next to the Parlor.

Women's Association

The Women's Association has one fundraiser a year, the Strawberry Festival. We use the money raised to meet our pledges to many missions and organizations. The following is a list of those we help:

**First Presbyterian Reading Room /Habitat for Humanity
Shriners / Salvation Army
Operation Hope/ Project Learn
Bridgeport Rescue Mission
American Bible Society FPC
Youth Mission Trip /Troops
Serving in Iraq**

So, every time you come to the Strawberry Festival and have strawberry shortcake, know you are helping others.