



## Liturgical Dance - Praising God

We love praising God in all sorts of ways, including singing, learning, helping others, praying and dancing! We have two liturgical dance troupes – one for children in fourth grade up called “LaCHURCHical Dancers” and one for third graders and under called “God’s Girls!”



## Vacation Bible School (VBS) - Building Community

For one week in the summer, VBS is offered for 4-year-olds through 6<sup>th</sup> graders. Over 75 children participated this past summer and learned about the story of the Good Samaritan through mission, puppet skits, arts and crafts, games, music, dance and drama. Fun was had by all!

## Annual Events - Celebrating Together

During December, the Board invites families to enjoy our Advent Workshop. For two hours, happy chaos reigns while families make Christmas crafts, sing Christmas carols and hear Christmas stories and watch a puppet show. The Board invites children from a Hartford shelter to join the fun for this wonderful event.

The Easter Family Workshop is offered on Palm Sunday each year. During this event, children and adults learn about Holy Week in creative and engaging ways, including experiencing the Last Supper, walking the labyrinth, creating images that represent Jesus and witnessing the empty tomb.

The Board also sponsors an Advent calendar sale. Proceeds from the sale go towards the purchase of new additions to our library.



## Library - Learning Together

The Board of Christian Education is responsible for maintaining, updating and encouraging the use of our Church library. Our library contains videos and DVDs for children, adults and study groups, books on Church history, theology, family life, parenting, prayer, spiritual life, death and dying, social issues, as well as reference books. It also offers children’s Bible storybooks, activity books and books to help teach the Bible. New books and resources are continually being added. The library is open whenever the Church is open and the room is not in use for a meeting. Books can be checked out, using the checkout system to the left as you enter the library. Take advantage of our library - it is a great resource!



## 2009 - 2010 Board of Christian Education

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Rev. Kate VanDerzee-Glidden, Associate Pastor of Christian Education and Family Life Ministries

## Children’s Ministries 2009 - 2010

We love our children! We love our families! We love God! We’re thankful for all the many volunteers who make our Christian Education programs so wonderful. First Church is a fun, vibrant and engaging place to be, and hopefully this brochure will give you a snapshot of the many activities and events we offer. We welcome your ideas and thoughts so please feel free to share with us.

*Members of the Board of Christian Education*

*Rev. Kate VanDerzee-Glidden, Associate Pastor of Christian Education and Family Life Ministries*



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## Church School - Teaching our Children

The Church School runs September through June for over 200 children, three-year-olds through 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Over 50 caring volunteer teachers (both adults and teenagers) make our Church School a warm and happy place for children to learn about the Bible and God's love for them.



Children attend the beginning of worship in the Meetinghouse with their families unless there is a special program. After the passing of the peace, the children and teachers go to their classrooms. Within the classrooms, there are various types of worship and fellowship, including singing, making crafts, reading stories, discussing the Bible and other ideas, and enjoying each other's company.

**Gather Round** is the curriculum used for our kindergartners through sixth graders. **Gather Round** is a Bible-based curriculum which aims to nurture children and youth in their faith formation by helping them know, love, and follow God, by engaging them in the language and habits of worship, by respecting them as partners in ministry, and by encouraging them to engage directly with scripture and outreach. The children in the three and four-year-old classes use lessons from Bible Lessons for Toddlers.



Sixth, seventh and eighth graders have the option of participating in our puppet troupes or the Explore program. In the puppet troupe, skits and songs are written, rehearsed and performed in church, during the church school hour for the children, and at other events throughout the year. In the Explore program, the children experience a variety of units of study, including learning about world religions, prayer, music, mission and self-worth.

During the summer, the Board offers church school and child care for all children. A "rotational" model of curriculum is used during the summer.



## Childcare - Caring for Our Little Ones

Child care is provided in the crib and toddler rooms from 8:30 a.m. through noon every Sunday. Our hired child care provider works with a team of volunteers to ensure the youngest children in our church have a loving and safe environment to play in.

Please register your child for church school and crib/toddler care if he/she is going to participate.

## Mission & Outreach - Helping Our Neighbors

We believe it is important to teach our children to share God's love with our neighbors near and far. To that end, we are constantly engaging in mission work.

Annual projects include the Christmas Giving Tree, Christmas Eve gift giving and One Great Hour of Sharing collection banks. Each year the church school children also learn about and raise money for larger mission project. In the past, we have raised anywhere from \$5,500 to \$14,000 for Heifer Project, Church World Service, Haitian Health Foundation and Fred Wish Elementary School.

This year we will be collecting money for the backpack project. Many children in America that rely on resources such as free or reduced-priced school lunch during the school year. The backpack program is designed to meet the needs of hungry children at times when other resources are not available, such as weekends and school vacations. First Church will work with other churches to provide non-perishable food to fifty children in Bloomfield on a weekly basis. The backpacks will

be filled with child-friendly, non-perishable, easily consumed, and vitamin fortified food that children take home on weekends. The money raised by class sales, children's offerings and special gifts from congregation members will go towards this special backpack project.

Each church school class also participates in their own class mission project. In the past the projects have included:

- Collecting canned foods for the Horace Bushnell Food Pantry & Manchester;
- Sponsoring a toiletry drive for the South Park Inn homeless shelter;
- Collecting health kit materials for victims of natural disasters;
- Initiating letter writing to military personnel stationed abroad.
- Making blankets for children whose parents are in prison.
- Having a coat drive & giving the jackets to women, men & children who need them.

This year we look forward to many more inspiring class mission projects.

We also have mission opportunities where families - children and parents - can serve our neighbors together. Look out for information about our mission immersion days.

