



The First Parish Federated Church Triangle

First Parish Federated Church

United Church of Christ ~ United Methodist Church

The Reverend Donna Lee Muise - Pastor

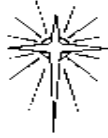
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2008

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Pastor's Message December 2008

Last Sunday night, I spotted it...on Route 4, on my way home: a stout, white-lighted Christmas tree in the middle of nowhere. I had forgotten about that little tree, illuminated in the underbrush, not far from railroad tracks and the only house to be seen was set far back from its resting place.

As I recall, that little tree glowed in the midst of darkness and brambles and underbrush and saplings for a few months last year. I see it every night on my way home from the church. It's a little light in a lot of darkness and it shined. It catches a driver's attention in either direction.

I always wonder, Who put that tree there? Who put the lights on the tree? Where is it plugged in? I just want to know, What is the story of this tree??!!! I'm waiting for the answer to my questions!

Advent is a season of waiting...waiting for answers: like the wise men from East, "Where is this child who has been born king of the Jews?" Like Zechariah, "How will I know that this is so?" Like Mary, "How can this be?" Like Elizabeth, "Why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? And like the Shepherds, "What is this thing that has been made known to us?"

So many questions! And perhaps the biggest question of all, "Why?" Why did the Word become flesh and dwell among us? Why did God send his only begotten Son into the world? Why did Jesus come? Why was the light born shining in the middle of nowhere, amid brush and bramble, manger and animal. Why did God put the light there? How does the nativity plug in to our lives today?

Those questions are the answers to why we mark our waiting season of Advent with music and light, prayer and anticipation. This season, let's all be the questioners, gathered around a lighted tree, and learn, What child *is* this, and what is *his* story?

And, if you're ever driving up (or down) Rte 4 at night, keep your eyes open for the little trees in the bushes and offer a prayer for the person who put it there and thank God for the Savior who comes.

Merry, Merry Christmas, my friends!
Reverend Donna



"Home for the Holidays"

The First Parish Federated Church will be open on Friday, December 5, 5-9 PM and Saturday, December 6 as part of the "Home for the Holidays" Affair in South Berwick. Friday's festivities include 1) a meal of soup and bread free of charge, 2) an invitation for one and all to assemble on the front lawn of the Church at 6 PM to stroll Main Street singing Christmas Carols, 3) the decorated Sanctuary will be open with the George Muller Woodwind Quintet playing from 6-7 PM and, 4) the Yankee Thrift Shop will also be open both on Friday evening and Saturday. Also on Saturday we will be holding our Annual Christmas Fair offering various craft items, gift baskets, food, and much more. Please join us for one or all of the festivities.

Blessings, Julia Ouellette



FPMC Annual Christmas Fair 2008 **Saturday, December 6, 9 AM - 2 PM**

Featuring Baked Goods/Food Table, Cookie Walk, Craft Table, White Elephant Table, Raffle Baskets, Gift Baskets, and Servv Table. The Thrift Shop will be open during the Fair. Also during the Fair we will be offering coffee, tea, and a luncheon. ***Please drop off all items by Friday, December 5 between 9 AM - 9 PM. Please mark your calendars now and plan to stop by with a friend and enjoy the fun!!!***



The S.A.M. Committee will be hosting this month's supper of a Traditional Turkey Dinner from 4:30 - 6 PM in the Vestry on Sat, December 13. All proceeds from this supper will benefit "My Friends Place" Family Shelter in Dover, NH. Please join us for a great meal benefiting a very worthy cause. (*The Yankee Thrift Shop will also be open from 4 PM - 6:30 PM for anyone who would like to take advantage of this opportunity to shop!*)



Christmas Sunday Flowers

This is a convenient way to make memorial donations. If you would like to donate a poinsettia in memory/honor/in celebration of a loved one, please fill out the form below and return it to the church office by Monday, December 15 or place it in the offering plate on Sunday. Make checks payable to: The First Parish Federated Church, in memo section, please write "Christmas Flowers" (minimum \$7/plant donation, please).

Name: _____ Phone Number: _____

Wording to be used in Christmas Sunday (December 21) bulletin:



Redefine Christmas

For many of us, the day after Thanksgiving marks the beginning of the Christmas season. At least the part when we turn our attention to giving. Last year, many of your peers and perhaps you yourself helped our foundation spread a simple idea to "Redefine Christmas." Not to reinvent it, or to change its true meaning, but rather to redefine how we share Christmas with those we care about. Particularly, how we give.

Redefine Christmas is a movement to make holiday gift giving more charitable. Instead of less-meaningful gifts, we can give others donations to their favorite charities in their names. And, we can ask that our friends and loved ones do the same for us.

Often, as we celebrate the joy of the season, our gift giving gives way to convention. Our generosity can lead to gifts with little meaning. Gifts soon forgotten. Gifts which actually lead us away from the true meaning of Christmas. But we believe this to be a meaningful approach to giving that can bring us back.

It's a simple idea, but one that can have a profound effect. Our gifts would be more meaningful to giver and receiver, while doing far more good in the community. We would spend more time at home with family and less time out shopping for each other. And our giving would be more in keeping with the true spirit of Christmas.

God Bless,
Devon Dalio,
The Dalio Family Foundation

We have established a website with simple, secure resources to help people give and request charitable gifts. The address is www.REDEFINECHRISTMAS.org. The sole purpose of the website and the overall message is to inspire and facilitate charitable giving. Our Foundation does not accept donations.



December 2008 Coffee Hour

The Coffee Hour Coordinators for the month of December are Sharon & Rich Nielsen.
The Coffee Hour Hosts/Hostesses for the month of December are as follows:

Dec 7	Mary Stansfield & JoAnn Beaudette	Dec 14	Christian Ed Committee
Dec 21	Linda Patschke & Dottie Bennett	Dec 28	Barbara Moore

"Mug 'N Muffin" Women's Gathering

The "Mug 'N Muffin" women's group will not be meeting again until January 2009.

Church Calendar ~ December 2008

- Fri, Dec 5** "Home for the Holidays," 5-9 PM; 1) a meal of soup and bread free of charge, 2) an invitation for one and all to assemble on the front lawn of the Church at 6 PM to stroll Main Street singing Christmas Carols, 3) the decorated Sanctuary will be open with the George Muller Woodwind Quintet playing from 6-7 PM and, 4) the Yankee Thrift Shop will also be open both on Friday evening and Saturday.
- Sat, Dec 6** **Christmas Fair, 9 AM - 2 PM; offering various craft items, gift baskets, food, and much more.** Please join us for one or all of the festivities.
- Sun, Dec 7** **Before Worship, Prayer, 9:30 AM** in the Shorey Room
Worship/Communion/Second Sunday of Advent, 10 AM; Sunday School
Youth Group activity, 11:45 AM - 1:30 PM. Christmas shopping for a homeless family. We will be traveling to Target. Bring a bag lunch or snack if you like. Don't forget your permission form (**required**)
- Mon, Dec 8** "Pre-School Adventure Program," 9:30 - 10:30 AM and 11:15 AM - 12:15 PM in the Vestry. The age group is for 3 - 5 year olds and the programs are Holiday Art, literacy and art, hands on science, and music and movement
- Tues, Dec 9** **No Bible Study** at Julia's this week
S.A.M. Committee Meeting, 5:30 PM in the Shorey Room
Deacons' Meeting, 7 PM in the Library
- Wed, Dec 10** **Simple Supper Series, "Advent Through the Eyes of Those Who Waited,"** 5:30 - 6:45 PM in the Vestry
- Thur, Dec 11** **Thrift Shop open, 5:30 - 8 PM**
South Berwick Community Food Pantry open, 6 - 7:30 PM
Cantata Rehearsal, 7 - 8 PM; Regular Choir Rehearsal, 8 - 8:30 PM
- Fri, Dec 12** **Church closed; Thrift Shop open, 10 AM - 5 PM**
South Berwick Community Pantry open, 10 - 11:30 AM
- Sat, Dec 13** **Traditional Turkey Supper** (hosted by the S.A.M. Committee to benefit "My Friend's Place" in Dover, NH), 4:30 - 6 PM in the Vestry
- Sun, Dec 14** **Before Worship, Prayer, 9:30 AM** in the Shorey Room
Worship/Christmas Pageant, 10 AM
No Confirmation Class, No Youth Group
- Tue, Dec 16** **Blue Christmas Service, 7 PM** in the Great Room
- Wed, Dec 17** **Simple Supper Series, "Advent Through the Eyes of Those Who Waited,"** 5:30 - 6:45 PM in the Vestry (**last session in the series**)
- Thur, Dec 18** **Thrift Shop open, 5:30 - 8 PM**
South Berwick Community Food Pantry open, 6 - 7:30 PM
Church Council, 6:30 PM
Cantata Rehearsal, 7 - 8 PM; Regular Choir Rehearsal, 8 - 8:30 PM
- Fri, Dec 19** **Church closed**
Thrift Shop open, 10 AM - 5 PM
South Berwick Community Pantry open, 10 - 11:30 AM
- Sun, Dec 21** **Before Worship, Prayer, 9:30 AM** in the Shorey Room
Worship, 10 AM
Christmas Cantata, 7 PM in the Sanctuary
No Youth Group after Worship, but join us to watch the Cantata that evening
- Wed, Dec 24** **Christmas Eve Services ~ 6:30 and 11:30 PM**
- Thur, Dec 25** **Merry Christmas! Office closed to observe the holiday; Thrift Shop Closed**
South Berwick Community Food Pantry closed
- Fri, Dec 26** **Church closed; Thrift Shop Closed**
- Sun, Dec 28** **Hymn Sing/Worship, 10 AM;** No Sunday School, No Youth Group