



First Parish Federated Church
United Church of Christ ~ United Methodist Church
The Reverend Donna Lee Muise - Pastor
Mr David Deardorff - Minister of Music

Triangle ~ January 2010

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Pastor's Message

Every January I have trouble changing the date of the year in my fingers. I know in my brain that the year has changed, but whenever I type or write (a check, for example) I revert to the previous year. I thoroughly expect to be thinking 2010 yet writing 2009 for the next several weeks. The scary thing is that every once in a while, I might revert to a previous decade rather than a previous year. Sooner or later, my fingers catch up with my brain and we are united into one happy person again.

At this time of year, many of us consider how to do "life" better so that we can be happier in the new year. A tweak here, 20 lbs less there; that will do it, won't it? It is entirely possible for any of us to have a happier year, a better life, a significant change for the better, but it very well could mean that we have to let go of some of the former imprints that have colored our approaches to how we live, especially when that "living" happens in community.

Our church is a community; some are new to it and others are seasoned members. We've been in ministry together for almost 12 $\frac{1}{2}$ years—plenty of time to have experienced bumps and bruises along with triumphs and celebrations on this journey we are taking. To live a better, happier life we know that it is wise to learn from our bumps and bruises and to understand how we triumphed and celebrated, so that we are able to avoid the injuries and affirm victories.

The Every Member Canvass conducted last spring was successful in so many ways. As you may recall, all the comments made during the home visits were recorded, charted and presented to the congregation. Then, each committee took on the responsibility of handling comments that connected with their particular ministries in the church. Over the last few months you have read responses to the EMC comments as reported by the related committees and team members.

Several comments fall within the purview of the pastor, and in this message I will answer a portion of the comments and answer the others in later issue of the Triangle. The comments and my responses (in no particular order; all comments are considered equally important) are as follows:

C: People should wear name tags to help with ID

R: Name tags are extremely helpful in helping people learn each others' names. Visitors and folks looking for a church home find name tags particularly help. The implementation of name tags has been tried several times over the years that I have served this church. During one attempt only a few folks remembered to wear theirs each week. Others were frustrated because they would forget to bring them back each Sunday; a few others did not like putting a pin through their clothing. We tried using the clip-on badges but also to only short-term success.

One of my frustrations is that there seems to be no convenient place to store the tags alphabetically so that people could find their own easily. The other issue is having a split staircase and so there is no central place in the Narthex to keep the all badges, which would allow all people to find their tags easily regardless of which staircase they use to go into the sanctuary. Overall, we seem to be name-tag challenged at FPFC! Yet, the addition of wearing name badges would be a wonderful gesture of hospitality, openness and friendliness. If someone (or two) would like to take on this project, it would be a great gift to our community.

C: Church should be a place of nourishment, not draining—the turmoil was not nourishing.

R: You can say that again! The "turmoil" of 2006-07 was extremely draining on all of us; it was a challenge to find sustenance in the church or in each other. Some were so troubled that they took a hiatus from church life for quite a while and some of those folks have never returned. Some folks let me know why they were taking a break; others preferred to keep their reasons private—even when invited to discuss them, and I respected their request to do so.

What is important to remember is that congregations are in constant flux—whether the church is experiencing turmoil or utopia. People come and people go for a myriad of reasons: job or family life changes, health situations, unmet expectations of the pastor and/or the congregation, theological differences and spiritual growth, and conflict. We must respect people's decision to move on and wish them well in the next phase of their journey.

It is in our DNA to want to know why some people leave a church, but the truth of the matter is, people make their own choices and the only ones who know the reasons behind the choices are the person and God. This statement do not mean that it is easy to let people go, for it definitely is not. All of us grieve the loss of friends and relationships. You can expect that someday, when I depart this church, people who have left will come back—just as when Jim Christensen departed FPFC some people came back to church. It happens. I believe it is best to wish folks who leave the best for their journey; we don't know but perhaps God has need of them somewhere else. And for those who desire to return, fling wide the doors, open our arms and welcome them home.

That's it for this issue. More later. In the meantime, I pray that God will bless you today and everyday in the new year...2009, I mean 2010.

Blessings,
Rev Donna

A Letter from the Moderator

Dear Friends,

As many of us have heard, January is a great month to garden. I share that view. Last year's mistakes are behind me. My greatest triumphs as a gardener are just a few short months away. Reality will no doubt have some lessons in store for me again this year, but for the next few weeks at least, I can browse seed catalogs and harvest the bounty of my "mental" garden.

The December meeting of the Church Council was a time to consider the state of our church's financial "garden" and continue the Council's collective work in our many mission "fields." We shared good news about the success of the Church Fair, considered reports from committees that were bursting with news of successful projects and planned worship experiences, many of which came to fruition in the last several weeks. The Council considered a variety of small administrative matters and larger questions related to planning for 2010's pledge drive and budget process that we will revisit together in January and with the Church Family in the months ahead. Though it is quite a challenge to envision how to best communicate about the financial questions we face, I feel blessed indeed to be working along with talented, dedicated people who care deeply about our Church. I also believe that we have remarkable assets and opportunities to go with the challenges we face in the year ahead.

I pray that 2010 brings rich harvests to our Church and to our world. It's not too soon to envision both the bounty and the wholesome toil needed to bring them to fruition.

Charlie Putnam

SAM Mission Supper Update

November brought another opportunity for mission work here at FPFC. With thanks to all the diners who attended the supper and the dedication of all who shopped, cooked, baked, served and cleaned; we were able to raise funds to support organizations helping those in need in our community.

Our funds were divided among the three organizations that follow and were received with much gratitude.

Malley Farm Boys Home is a home in Somersworth, NH which serves all different types of teenage boys from 12 to 18. The boys come from the Greater Seacoast Area and around the state. Each boy has a different set of circumstances and family situation. Their prior home life usually included some combination of abuse, parental drug/alcohol addiction, chronic unemployment problems, lack of coping skills, mental health problems, or general neglect. Malley Farm Boys Home mission is to:

1. restore safety, hope, trust, and self-worth in the lives of children in need
2. provide the support and opportunities they need to realize their fullest potential as individuals and as valued members of society
3. foster resiliency and respectful boundaries within families and our community

Fair Tide in Kittery, ME is an organization whose mission is to provide safe, dignified affordable housing and comprehensive support services to formerly homeless individuals and families.

Established in 1998 by a group of concerned southern Maine and Seacoast New Hampshire citizens, Fair Tide opened its Transitional Housing Program to participants in May 2000. Fair Tide guides its participants toward self-sufficiency through individualized support, community referrals, and advocacy. Fair Tide also operates a Thrift Store in Kittery, for the purpose of funding the Transitional Housing Program. This grassroots organization continues to rely on community support and involvement, and in turn provides the community with productive and active citizens.

York County Shelter located in Alfred, Me is committed to ending homelessness and assisting people to reach their fullest potential by providing access to various levels of housing, personal growth opportunities and community resources. They embrace diversity and economic security for all.

New Address

Marilyn Whitaker has recently moved out of the area to an assisted living facility. This is her new information. Betty Syvinski and Marion Grant have gone to see her since she's moved and report that she seems to be adjusting very nicely to her new surroundings. Marilyn would like to thank the congregation for the beautiful poinsettia she received and also the floral arrangement the following Sunday. I'm sure she'd love to get a phone call or card from some more of her old friends, especially during this transition time.

Marilyn Whitaker
The Lodges Care Center
51 Main Street - PO Box 355
Springvale, ME 04083
Office Phone 207-324-4757

Thank You

Thank you so much for your generosity and hospitality! We weren't very successful, financially speaking, but it was a wonderful experience nonetheless! Your church is beautiful and everyone was so kind and welcoming! Again, thank you so much!

Sincerely,
South Berwick Emergency Rescue

The SAM committee extends it's gratitude to all those who purchased items from our Giving Trees both for Church supplies and Holiday gifts for area families in need.

Dear First Parish Federated Church,

Thank you so much for donating the S.A.M. Supper Proceeds (\$200) to the Malley Farm Boys Home. This is a timely donation, as the needs of our boys and their families are greater at this time of year. Your support is appreciated and your Christian Spirit has crossed the bridge and warmed our hearts here in Somersworth, NH.

Merry Christmas!
From the staff and boys at the Malley Farm Boys Home

To the Congregation:

I want to express my sincere appreciation and gratitude to all of you for your generosity at Christmas. I feel blessed to work with and for so many wonderful people. A healthy and Happy New Year to all!

Thank you,
Joan Doherty

To the Congregation:

Your generosity this Christmas is greatly appreciated.

Larry Fahy

To the First Parish Federated Church,

My heartfelt thanks for the lovely poinsettia delivered to my door on Christmas Sunday. It is lovely and greatly appreciated as it brightens the area where I usually have my Christmas tree, but I didn't put it up this year. More importantly, it is a reminder of all of the people at FPFC. Happy New Year!

Joyce Borkowski

SAM NOTES - Jan 2010

***** Angel Food Ministries - Food Co op**

Jan order deadline- 1/12 for delivery on 1/23/10. To order contact angelfoodministries.com or St. George's Episcopal Church, 207-363-7376.

***** January Mission Supper**

Proceeds from this month's supper will go into the SAM Scholarship Fund, providing financial assistance to those pursuing Christian Education opportunities.

Adult Bible Study

Adult Bible Study will resume meeting on Monday evening, January 11, 2010 from 7 - 8:30 PM at the Ouellettes' home, 1 Brattle Street, South Berwick. We will focus on Jesus, a study of the person Jesus, as your best friend, as fully God and fully human, and how deeply he loves you. All adults, all levels, all seekers are welcome to this four-week study. Any questions, call Julia at 384-0084.

Lectionary Readings for January

January 3	Eph 3:1-12, Mt 2:1-12
January 10	Isa 43:1-7, Ps 29, Acts 8:14-17, Luke 3:15-17, 21-22
January 17	Isa 62:1-5, Ps 36:5-10, 1 Cor 12:1-11, John 2:1-11
January 24	Neh 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10, Ps 19, Cor 12:12-31a, Luke 4:14-21
January 31	Jer 1:4-10, Ps 71:1-6, 1 Cor 13:1-13, Luke 4:21-30

Hospice of York

Hospice of York is offering a Bereavement Support Group this winter. The "Living with Loss Group" will be held on Wednesday evenings from 6:30 - 8 PM beginning January 13, 2010 and will last for 10 weeks. Space is limited and pre-registration is required. For more information, please call Nikki at 207-475-7308.

A New Year Prayer

Dear Lord, please give me...

A few friends who understand me and remain my friends;

A work to do that has real value, without which the world would be the poorer;

A mind unafraid to travel, even though the trail be not blazed;

An understanding heart;

A sense of humor;

Time for quiet, silent meditation;

A feeling of the presence of God;

The patience to wait for the coming of these things, with the wisdom to recognize them when they come. Amen.

- Anonymous

"Footprints in the Snow"

Submitted by Mary Stansfield

One white and wintry Christmas Eve
in a village long ago,
A young child took a journey
leaving footprints in the snow.
Clutched within her tiny hand
she carried a small tattered heart,
Fashioned from some scraps of cloth,
wrapped in the charm of childlike art.

A manger scene of wood and straw
was the child's destination.
Her only Christmas wish,
to join Christ's birthday celebration.
She placed her precious handmade gift
upon the straw with care,
And before she turned to leave,
whispered a simple prayer.

The villagers who stood nearby
recall that night with awe,
Retelling every detail
of the miracle they saw...
A second set of footprints
appeared next to the girl's own.
They seemed to walk right by her side,
to see her safely home.

But there's no mystery in the presence
of this unseen Friend--
For once God's touched your heart,
you'll never walk alone again.

The Four Stages of Life

You believe in Santa Claus.
You don't believe in Santa Claus.
You are Santa Claus.
You look like Santa Claus.

Take the Poinsettia Re-Flowering Challenge

The re-flowering process requires dedication and effort. You can be successful if you follow these steps.

February: The colors may begin to fade. Keep near a sunny window and water as needed.

April: Cut the stems back to about 3 to 4 inches above the soil. Repot your poinsettia if it appears root bound or dries out frequently. Water thoroughly.

May: Fertilize after every third watering. Transplant to a larger pot if necessary.

June: The plant can go outside in light shade. After 3 weeks, move to full sun. Start fertilizing every second watering. Pinch the plant back 2 to 3 leaves per shoot if it becomes too large. Prune out extra shoots if the canopy is too crowded.

September: Move the plant indoors, if it was summered outside.

Late September/October:

Give the plant at least 14 hours of uninterrupted darkness each night. Even a small amount of light can interrupt the re-flowering process. During the day, place it in a sunny location at temperatures between 64 and 75F. Fertilize every other week and water as needed. This regimen must be followed for at least 8 weeks. This stimulates the short day/long night cycle which induces poinsettias to set bud and bloom.

Courtesy of Studley's Flower Gardens

Church Calendar - January 2010

- Fri, Jan 1** Office, Thrift Shop, and Community Food Pantry closed
- Sun, Jan 3** Before Worship, Prayer, 9:30 AM in the Shorey Room
Worship/Epiphany/Communion Sunday, 10 AM; Sunday School
- Mon, Jan 4** PPRT, 7 PM in Rev Donna's office
- Tue, Jan 5** SAM Committee meeting, 7 PM
- Wed, Jan 6** Candlemas/Twelve Days of Christmas Celebration, 5:30 - 6:45 PM
Board of Trustees meeting, 6:30 PM in Room 101
Choir practice, 7 PM in the Great Room
- Thur, Jan 7** Thrift Shop open, 5:30 - 8 PM; Community Food Pantry open, 6 - 7:30 PM
- Fri, Jan 8** Church Office closed; Thrift Shop open, 10 AM - 5 PM
- Sun, Jan 10** Before Worship, Prayer, 9:30 AM in the Shorey Room
Worship, 10 AM; Sunday School classes
CGTF (Church Growth Task Force), after Worship
- Mon, Jan 11** Adult Bible Study, 7 PM at Julia's
- Tue, Jan 12** Church Council, 7 PM
- Wed, Jan 13** Board of Deacons meeting, 7 PM; Choir practice, 7 PM in the Great Room
- Thur, Jan 14** Thrift Shop open, 5:30 - 8 PM; Community Food Pantry open, 6 - 7:30 PM
- Fri, Jan 15** Church Office closed; Thrift Shop open, 10 AM - 5 PM
Community Food Pantry open, 10 - 11:30 AM
- Sat, Jan 16** Church Supper, 4 - 6 PM in the Vestry
- Sun, Jan 17** Before Worship, Prayer, 9:30 AM in the Shorey Room
Worship, 10 AM; *No Sunday School classes today*
- Mon, Jan 18** Christian Ed Committee meeting, 6:30 PM; Adult Bible Study, 7 PM at Julia's
- Wed, Jan 20** Choir practice, 7 PM in the Great Room
- Thur, Jan 21** Thrift Shop open, 5:30 - 8 PM; Community Food Pantry open, 6 - 7:30 PM
- Fri, Jan 22** Church Office closed; Thrift Shop open, 10 AM - 5 PM
- Sun, Jan 24** Before Worship, Prayer, 9:30 AM in the Shorey Room
Worship, 10 AM; Sunday School classes
- Mon, Jan 25** Adult Bible Study, 7 PM at Julia's
- Wed, Jan 27** Choir practice, 7 PM in the Great Room
- Thur, Jan 28** Thrift Shop open, 5:30 - 8 PM; Community Food Pantry open, 6 - 7:30 PM
- Fri, Jan 29** Church Office closed; Thrift Shop open, 10 AM - 5 PM
- Sun, Jan 31** Before Worship, Prayer, 9:30 AM in the Shorey Room
Worship, 10 AM; Sunday School classes

Outside Groups Calendar - January 2010

- Fri, Jan 1** AA, 7 PM in Room 101
- Sun, Jan 3** South Berwick Youth Soccer League, 7 PM
- Mon, Jan 4** Al-Anon, 10 - 11:30 AM in Room 101
Community Chorus practice resumes, 6 - 10 PM in the Great Room
AA, 7 PM in the Vestry
- Tue, Jan 5** "Gospel Music Project," 7-9 PM in the Great Room
- Fri, Jan 8** W.I.C. Program, 8 AM - 4 PM in Room 101
AA, 7 PM in Room 101
- Mon, Jan 11** Al-Anon, 10 - 11:30 AM in Room 101
Community Chorus practice, 6 - 10 PM in the Great Room
AA, 7 PM in the Vestry
- Tue, Jan 12** "Gospel Music Project," 7-9 PM in the Great Room
- Wed, Jan 13** Fuel Assistance, 9 AM - 3 PM in Room 101
- Thur, Jan 14** Daisy Girl Scouts, 11:15 AM - 12:15 PM
- Fri, Jan 15** W.I.C. Program, 8 AM - 4 PM in Room 101
AA, 7 PM in Room 101
- Mon, Jan 18** Al-Anon, 10 - 11:30 AM in Room 101
Community Chorus practice, 6 - 10 PM in the Great Room
AA, 7 PM in the Vestry
- Tue, Jan 19** "Gospel Music Project," 7-9 PM in the Great Room
- Fri, Jan 22** W.I.C. Program, 8 AM - 4 PM in Room 101
AA, 7 PM in Room 101
- Mon, Jan 25** Al-Anon, 10 - 11:30 AM in Room 101
Community Chorus practice, 6 - 10 PM in the Great Room
AA, 7 PM in the Vestry
- Tue, Jan 26** "Gospel Music Project," 7-9 PM in the Great Room
- Wed, Jan 27** Fuel Assistance, 9 AM - 3 PM in Room 101
- Thur, Jan 28** Daisy Girl Scouts, 11:15 AM - 12:15 PM
St George's Berwick Group, 5:30 - 7:30 PM in the Vestry
- Fri, Jan 29** W.I.C. Program, 8 AM - 4 PM in Room 101
AA, 7 PM in Room 101