



Congratulations
to All the
Graduates!

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



2009

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Letter from the Moderator

Dear Friends,

Gardening is a "glass half full" sort of thing for me. On the one hand, it gets me out in the fresh spring air to enjoy the blooms, the greenery and a meditative pace of work. On the other hand, it gives me plenty to worry about: pests, water (too much? too little?), keeping up with the work and the occasional woodchuck.

This is a "glass half full" kind of moderator's letter as well. On the one hand, we have much to celebrate - new faces in church, confirmands joining the church as new members, impressive service to the church family and the community by our "dinner crew" and the "Thrift Shop Ladies" and a very positive response to the Every Member Canvass. On the other hand, the Church Council has worked hard this month on a proposed budget. As a member of our financial team characterized it, our church hit a "perfect storm" this year with rising fuel costs, members facing difficult financial times, declining endowment income and the death of several faithful supporters of the church. As a result, we lost some financial ground in the early months of 2009. The Every Member Canvass has generated some new promises of support for our church, but as we have during many of my nearly 25 years as a member of our church, we face a shortfall between projected revenues and expenses again for the 2009-10 fiscal year.

The Council and financial team met to consider the budget and went through the draft budget line by line, questioning each projected revenue and expense. We considered making cuts to personnel expenses by reducing our pastor and support personnel's time, we considered redirecting revenues from church suppers away from missions and support for the larger church (currently the proceeds from four suppers go to uphold our obligations to the wider church and the proceeds from another four suppers go to missions) to support the FPFC's financial needs, we considered additional fundraising approaches and we considered asking the Thrift Shop members and the Congregational Trustees for additional support.

In the end, after prayerful deliberation and much debate the Council and financial team found that we believe the Church should honor the commitment we made last year to the "Dare to Dream" program. As a consequence the proposed budget proposes that we continue to devote the proceeds of the majority of the monthly suppers to support our mission work and the wider church, maintains a full time pastorate and keeps our support staff at their current levels. The Council is recommending a combination of approaches to get to a balanced budget: we have asked the Congregational Trustees and the Thrift Shop for additional short term support and the proposed budget recommends some additional fundraising projects.

The financial news for our church is not all on the "half empty" side. The Congregational Trustees have voted to challenge us to be creative in finding new fundraising programs by promising to match the proceeds of new fundraising programs up to a generous "cap." The Fourth Century Fund Trustees have learned that starting in September the Church will benefit from a generous bequest that will allow us to undertake some badly needed repairs, including the likely purchase of new, more fuel-efficient heating plant.

These positive developments suggest that we can safely stay on our present course, at least for the near term. I encourage everyone, even those with math phobias like me, to take a careful look at the proposed budget. I am proud of the Council's hard work to arrive at a "balanced" budget, but I know that every member of the Council and financial team is committed to making the budget - and the choices we made to arrive at these proposals - as clear as we can before asking our church family to consider adopting that budget at the annual meeting in June. If you have questions, concerns or comments about the budget, our process or the choices we are recommending, please call, email or see me.

Budgeting, like gardening, is more than a bit anxious at times. I believe, however, that our collective "glass" at the FPFC well more than half full, even as God challenges us to sustain the commitments we have made to answer the call to service in South Berwick.

Peace,
Charlie Putnam



God's Lighthouse!
A Vacation Bible School Experience
For the Whole Family!

The Christian Education Committee met on May 7, 2009 and discussed and planned many wonderful things. We are so happy we will have three new committee members starting in September. We discussed and planned the need for help in the "toddler's" room during worship over the summer-anyone interested? And of course we discussed and planned Children's Sunday which is June 7, 2009 during worship. The Christian Education Committee is also excited to announce this summer's Vacation Bible School theme: *God's Lighthouse!* Details will follow soon but please join us for three or four evenings of fun in August while we explore God's light through songs, crafts, games and church and family fellowship! God's Light shines in us all and together we can have fun exploring this light. Each evening will include four or five intergenerational centers such as a Bible Story, crafts, recreation and snacks, music and/or worship. Please "save the date" for this wonderful program published by Abingdon Press and based on the program *Lighthouse Kids: Shining God's Light, 2002*.



The FPFC and the Southern Maine Agency on Aging (SMAA) Partnership

The partnership between FPFC and the Southern Maine Agency on Aging (SMAA) accomplished several milestones. Two training sessions (April 29th & May 6th) were held. AnneMarie Catanzano, Caregiver Advocate with SMAA, conducted these sessions teaching the volunteers how to interact with the elderly, especially those with dementia. On Wednesday, May 13th, we held our first worship service, with caregiver support, a light lunch and fellowship. Reverend Donna conducted a short service consisting of hymns, the Good Samaritan story, and a reading of the 150th Psalm, followed by a group reading of the 23rd Psalm. Betty Syvinski played the Clavinova during the service and the piano during fellowship in the Vestry. Betty contributed a lot to the fellowship of our group and we look forward to her playing for the next three services. Thank you very much, Betty. AnneMarie and her husband, John Broida, were on hand to counsel any caregivers and help with the care receivers. There were 10 people in attendance. There were no caregivers and therefore no caregiver support group, so we went early to a nice lunch put together by Clayton Estabrooke. The fellowship was superb. There are three more services planned for May 27th, June 10th and June 24th. Susan White was instrumental in distributing publicity, and Fosters Daily Democrat ran a wonderful press release sent to them by Reverend Donna. Information was also sent to local radio stations. As time goes on and more publicity is dispersed, we hope to reach people who can benefit from this program.

Also on May 13th I was interviewed by Eileen Whynot, Director of Community Relations at SMAA. Eileen writes for "Senior News", a newspaper published 6 times a year with information of interest to older adults and their families. She had information about how our program of Worship, Caregiver Support and Fellowship came to be; but also wanted to include the personal view of a former caregiver. The article will be published on Thursday, May 21st and mailed to 18,500 people. Emily Beaudette continues to work on our logo. We look forward to using it to identify our team, in our display in the Vestry.

Lorraine Thomas and Mary Stansfield continue with their ministries through parish nursing and hospice, respectively, as well as the visits they make and cards they send to provide comfort to those in need.

Team members whose ministry is sending cards have been busy. Thank you for all you do. Reverend Donna and I will be meeting soon to discuss what the VCT is doing now and in what direction we should be going.

Cheryl Estabrooke



A Former Caregiver Gives Back
New Faith-Based Support for Family Caregivers
By Eileen Whynot, Director, Community Relations
Southern Maine Agency on Aging

Cheryl Estabrooke had no warning. "It was heartbreaking. My mother was such a strong woman and then she didn't know who I was. I was my mother's caregiver, and she was my best friend. I had her at home, and I didn't even dare leave her to go to the clothesline. So I know how hard it can be." This time of care giving, now 13 years ago, gave Cheryl an idea of what she'd like to do when she'd eventually retire.

Active in her church, Cheryl had a vision that she wanted to reach out to older people by visiting them in nursing homes or sending cards to people she knew would benefit from caring contact. She helped start a group now named, Visitation & Care Team, along with other women in the First Parish Federated Church in South Berwick.

After a summer of traveling, Cheryl returned home last fall and was excited to get involved in her church again. Knowing that family caregivers need knowledge and resources and remembering that being together with other caregivers helped her, Cheryl wondered how she could bring support to family caregivers in her community.

Then, her minister the Rev. Donna Lee Muise got an e-mail from AnneMarie Catanzano of the Family Caregiver Support Program at the Southern Maine Agency on Aging. Reverend Donna, as she is affectionately called, has been the minister of the South Berwick church for 12 years, arriving when Cheryl needed a lot of help with the loss of her mother. When Rev. Muise saw the e-mail about setting up support for family caregivers around a faith-based community, she asked Cheryl if she'd like to spearhead the effort.

On May 13 the first worship service was held for family caregivers and elders. Reverend Donna wore her robe and told the story of the Good Samaritan. Hymns were sung and everyone enjoyed lunch and fellowship. Cheryl emphasizes that supporting each other is the main focus and that there won't be sermons as in a traditional church service but enough of the surroundings and cultural cues to be of comfort. AnneMarie from the Family Caregiver Support Program will facilitate a support group for those who would like to participate. Cheryl's goal is to have this support for the greater Berwick area, not just for church members she says.

Cheryl has been there and she's ready to help others who are facing some of the same challenges she experienced caring for her aging mother. Anyone in the caregiving role and their elder is invited to join the group on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month at the First Parish Federated Church in South Berwick. See page 4 of this newspaper for the definition of caregiver.

To get involved or to help start faith-based support activities for family caregivers, contact AnneMarie Catanzano at the Southern Maine Agency on Aging at 1-800-427-7411 x545 or 396-6545.



Gospel Music Project News

I know many of you have been waiting for this, and I'm thrilled to announce that we'll launch the new Rock My Soul CD "Let Your Light Shine: Rock My Soul LIVE," locally at The Pearl in Portsmouth on Sunday evening, June 7, 5:00 PM. Many of the songs on this new CD were recorded at a live concert here at FPFC last May. Additional songs were recorded later last year at the Rochester Opera House and the Community Church in Durham. We'll offer special CD discounts at the shows, and we'll also be performing some brand new material.

This show will be held at The Pearl, a building full of rich history and significance. The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. gave a speech there, and it was the first African American church in New Hampshire. It's now a beautifully renovated building that is home to North Star AME Zion Church, as well as a function hall with great acoustics.

Time: 5 PM (doors open at 4:30)

Location: The Pearl, 45 Pearl St, Portsmouth NH

Tickets: \$12 advance; \$15 at the door (children 12 and under free)

How to Purchase: Visit the website, www.dfgp.org or call Dawn Boyer at 207.450.8016 or see/call Dave Stansfield, 384-2193

Cards for Doris & Marj

For anyone wishing to send a card to Doris Rolle, she is now at Clipper Harbor Rehab Center, 188 Jones Avenue, Portsmouth, NH 03801.

For anyone wishing to send a card to Marj Hastings, she is now at New England Rehab, Room 110 A, 335 Brighton Avenue, Portland, ME 04102.

FPFC Annual Women's Spiritual Retreat: "Is That You God?"

Join us on Friday, September 11th - Sunday, September 13th for a weekend of quiet reflection, Bible readings, spiritual exercises, and fellowship at the Living Waters Spiritual Center in Winslow, ME. This beautiful retreat center offers single rooms with individualized themes, peaceful grounds, and a labyrinth for walking meditation. Cost is \$175 per person, scholarships available. More details and invitations will be forthcoming. For questions and more information, contact Diane Money (384-4465) or Mary Melanson (205-201-2492).





Thank You

Dear Church Family,

The several plants/flowers we have received have brought us lasting joy. Our warmest thanks for your many kindnesses.

Harley and Carolyn Remick



Please join us for a great meal and great fellowship (*and bring all your friends!!!*) to our Saturday, June 20 Turkey Dinner!! Dine from 4:30 - 6 PM on turkey and all the fixins'. Adult tickets are \$8, \$5 for children through age 12, under 2 are free. Hope to see you all there! The Yankee Thrift Shop will be open from 4 - 6 PM for anyone who would like to take advantage of this opportunity to shop!

Strawberry Festival Roast Beef Supper

The night before the Annual Strawberry Festival, we will be hosting a hearty meal featuring roast beef with gravy, mashed potatoes, veggies, salads, rolls, beverages, and desserts on ***Friday evening, June 26 from 4:30 - 6 PM in the Church Vestry***. Please come and enjoy the fellowship and bring a friend. Adults are \$8, Children \$5, under 2 are free. *The more the merrier!!!*

"Mug 'N Muffin "

Our June "Mug 'n Muffin" gathering will be later in the month at Lois Miller's house.





Save the Date!!!!!! Don't Forget!!!!!!

The FPFC Annual Yard Sale will be on **Saturday, August 1**. Many hands will be needed the week before to prepare as well as to work on August 1. Don't forget "Dot's Diner" for delicious food. Ouellette barn will be open April 1 for collections, so start your spring cleaning now! Call Julia or Mike at 384-0084 for drop offs. No electronics, please.



AMIGOS Update

A huge thank you to all who helped make the AMIGOS Program such a success again this year. Thanks to the support of so many from our Church or associated with those from our church we accomplished the following:

- We collected food to fill 117 Buckets. This means 117 children in Honduras will be able receive school lunch this summer
- We filled almost 20% more buckets this year than last in spite of the economic recession
- We recruited other churches, coworker, schools, friends, classmates and civic groups to help fill buckets
- We held a very well attended Church Supper in April that enabled us to fill 15 buckets of food
- We labeled, loaded and transported the buckets to Kennebunkport
- We have a great crew of volunteers who are eager to help load the buckets onto the container for shipment to Honduras later this week
- Thanks each and every one of you who helped in the many different ways to make this happen. The team work and volunteerism that is possible in our church is a powerful force that can accomplish so many great things in the name of Jesus Christ.

Lucy Putnam

Emergency Food & Shelter Board
of York County
36 Water St., PO Box 727, Kennebunk, ME 04043-0727

May 27, 2009

Dear Reverend Muisse,

The York County Board for the Emergency Food and Shelter Program (EFSP) met today to review requests for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Funds. The Board, consisting of local representatives of the organizations represented on the National Emergency Food and Shelter Program Board, is charged with making final funding decisions for these funds.

Requests for funds exceeded the amount available. The Board struggled to maintain its support of previously funded programs as it attempted to recognize the needs of those organizations making first time requests. In addition, recognizing the unprecedented demand for assistance with the cost of shelter, rent/mortgage, utilities, and food the Board chose to direct most of the EFSP funds to these funding categories. **Your organization has been awarded \$3,500.00.** These funds are to be used as described in your funding request for Rent/Mortgage, \$2,000.00 and Utility Assistance, \$1,500.00. If you would like to change the allocation among the categories, please make this request to me in writing as soon as possible. If, for any reason, you do not think you will be able to utilize this money, please notify me immediately.

We want to remind you that these funds are to be used *"...to supplement and extend existing resources and not to substitute or reimburse ongoing programs and services."* ***In addition, the board requests that these funds be used only I the areas in which they are awarded.*** Shortly, you will receive the first half of the award from the National Board. Expenses incurred from 04/01/09 through 12/31/09 qualify under this allocation. Also, please check your records to see if you authorized EFSP to electronically deposit these checks. If not, EFSP may be sending you a form to enable this process. The second half of the award will only be released via an EFT deposit.

When you receive your award from EFSP, please carefully review the federal regulations and reporting requirements that pertain to your award category or categories. As always, good records and appropriate receipts are the key to easy final processing. Remember that you will be required to return funds for any expenditures which do not pass the compliance audit. It is best to know and abide by the rules from the start.

As a Local Recipient Organization for this award, your attendance may be requested at the next meeting of the local Emergency Food and Shelter Program Board. The date and time for that meeting has not been determined. If you are invited to the meeting, please be prepared to share with the Board how these funds were used and what services were made possible that would not have occurred otherwise.

We thank you for your work to make these EFSP funds help those who need it most in our York County community. Please feel free to call me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Doug Ellis, United Way of York County EFSP Staff Representative



Save the date for New England Women's Celebration VIII "Together Building Bridges!" United Church of Christ women from all over New England will gather in Burlington, Vermont March 12 -14. In 1980, during the Annual Meeting of the New England Women's Fellowship Presidents, five women had a dream to reach out to women in the pews to involve them in learning and sharing about their faith. The dream was realized in 1982 when the first celebration took place in Portland, Maine. Over 1,000 women participated in that event, and celebrations have taken place every four years since. This is an exciting intergenerational event! Celebration VIII will offer opportunities for discovering and understanding differences through topics such as race, immigration, sexuality, economics, generational differences, and Worship choices. Plan now to join a group of women from FPFC as we travel to Burlington, Vermont to attend this gathering. We will make new friends and re-establish old ties. We will celebrate our faith, our heritage, and our womanhood as we pray, laugh, sing, and learn. More information will follow in next month's Triangle.

