

JANUARY 2009

Congregation, Ministers to all

Rev. Donald Remick, Pastor

Rev. Meg Clapp,
Associate Pastor

Rev. W. Roscoe Riley,
Pastor Emeritus

Chad Weirick, Minister of
Music

Deborah Bowen, Director of
Christian Education

Ed Melchin, Sextant

Stacey Stahl,
Office Administrator



A monthly publication of First Congregational Church of Hanover, UCC

The Mission of the First Congregational Church of Hanover, United Church of Christ, is to make the love of God and the God of love known as both continue to be revealed to us. We welcome all people into the full life and ministry of our church regardless of their age, gender, race, sexual orientation, ethnicity, class or economic standing, because we believe that no matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here. We gather people together in God's love that grounds us in a caring community and transforms our lives of faith. We send people out to make a difference in the world through compassion and justice.

CONTENTS

FOCUS ON COMMUNITY	2
MEANINGFUL WORSHIP	3-4
EMPOWERING LEADERSHIP	5
CARING FOR CHILDREN	6
CALENDAR	7
MISC	8

HOW DO YOU FIND THE WILL OF GOD IN THIS NEW YEAR?

We talk often of the importance of discernment in the decisions we face as a person, a family or a congregation...it is what separates us as a community from either a dictatorship or a democracy. As a people of faith it is our responsibility to figure out what God wants us to do and to become. Beginning a new year is always a time to reflect on the past and plan for the future, even as we live with God in the present moment. This season lends itself to a time of discernment. But discernment is a great word that is very challenging to accomplish. How do you know the Will of God?

As Emily Dickinson reminds us:

*Tell all the truth but tell it slant –
Success in Circuit lies
Too bright for our infirm Delight
The Truth's superb surprise
As Lightning to the Children eased
With Explanation kind
The Truth must dazzle gradually
Or every one be blind.*

The art of discernment is first and foremost the art of listening; heart-listening and soul-listening. That begins with a prayer asking the Holy Spirit to speak to us and through us.

Then we listen to ourselves before we speak and ask if the feelings and thoughts within us will truly bring forth the Fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5: Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Gentleness, Kindness, Faithfulness, Generosity and Self-Control). You could also read 1 Corinthians 13. We speak God's truth in love.

And then there is silence to listen to ponder where we sense the Holy Spirit speaking.

And as others speak we don't formulate our response or reaction...instead we listen and keep asking the Holy Spirit to Speak in our gathering and through our gathering...and we LISTEN for the Truth of God and the Voice of the Holy Spirit in the words others are speaking.

And then there is silence to listen to ponder where we sense the Holy Spirit speaking

And if things get tense or we can't come to consensus we take time apart for prayer, to reaffirm our surrender to God's will, scripture reading, song, and reflection and fellowship that Blesses the tie that binds until we are ready to return again with souls listening for the voice of God.

And when that moment comes when the Will of God becomes clear to the faithful gathering and the Fruits of the Spirit begin to emerge... we give thanks and celebrate.

As we seek to improve our ability to discern as a congregation, I also encourage you to consider this approach as you listen to family and friends. It may offer insights into a different way of relating to each other.

Rev. Don



HABITAT

- Community meetings continue the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month at 7:00 at Riley Hall. To donate services or materials, contact Paul Vlassakis at vlass273@aol.com or 617-347-1206.
- For all those who like to hammer, saw, dig, install insulation, etc., we have been invited to a Work Date on Saturday, March 7, at the Hingham house. Sign up in the vestry.

HEIFER PROJECT

The final figures are not in on for our mission budget to purchase an Ark for Heifer International. Due to the storm the weekend of December 21, the response to our Alternative Gift Giving was much lower than the last few years. We have earned approximately \$4,100 and wish to thank everyone who has participated in anyway during the year to making Heifer Project an important aspect of their giving.

Cans and bottles can be left at Riley Hall on Sundays or any day that the building is open. Thanks again and hope you had a Merry Christmas. Ruth Hall

THANK YOU

Many thanks for your White Gifts to our Hanover families in need. The VNA is extremely grateful for such a wonderful outpouring of gifts! Thank you for your Christmas Spirit of caring, sharing and giving!

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Cradles to Crayons is a nonprofit organization that provides children living in low income and homeless situations with basic essentials. In 2007 they received 5,000 orders for winter coats and warm clothing! We are collecting children's used winter outer wear, sizes 0-16. Boots and coats are most needed, also clothing for older boys (sizes 7/8 - 14/16).

To donate please bring your old coats and boots to Church School or put them in the collection box in the church office through the end of January.

No stained or torn clothing or winter coats missing a working zipper are accepted.

MainSpring House needs: Towels, Full-size shampoo and conditioner, Toothbrushes and tooth paste, Razors, Band-Aids, Non-Aerosol Deodorant, Twin blankets and sheets, and Socks

- MainSpring does not need donations of clothing at this time.
- Thank you to Rev. Meg and Youth Fellowship for preparing and serving a meal at MainSpring on December 7.

CWS BLANKETS: BLANKET THE WORLD WITH LOVE!

When disaster strikes, the first thing Church World Service provides in an emergency is a blanket for warmth and comfort. But, as needs change, other things are required - tents, food, water, and the tools and materials and training to rebuild their lives. Blankets+ means that CWS is there for the long haul as families recover from disaster!

In the Dominican Republic, Hurricane Noel destroyed 737 homes and over 66,000 people were displaced. CWS blankets were distributed through their partner, Social Services of the Dominican Republic. Now they continue to help rebuild by providing more than 1,000 families with food rations, Hygiene Kits, School Kits, clothes,

medical care, and drinking water. Through CWS Blankets+ our contributions enable CWS to respond effectively when people need help the most!

In January Outreach and Service will give all a chance to help supply CWS Blankets to those in need...for only \$5 you can give a gift of comfort. Stop by our table in the vestry to see these blankets and view a short video about this program and the people who are helped.

Each year through your contributions we make this ministry of hope a reality for people in need the world over. Please be generous in your support of Blankets+. Cindy Shaw

OLDIES BUT GOODIES NIGHT

Relive the *Pink and Black Days*! For those of you too young to remember the 50s and 60s era, come to the **Oldies but Goodies Night** and discover what fun the music was back then. There will be plenty of jitterbugging - or swing dancing as it's called now - and romantic slow dancing too.

South Shore Habitat for Humanity is sponsoring a benefit for the Hanover house with South Shore's legendary Little Paul, featuring the Fabulous Katy. They will sing the best dance tunes of the 50s, 60s and 70s on Saturday,

January 31 from 8-12 pm at the Knights of Columbus Hall, 48 Schoosett St. (Rte 139) in Pembroke.

It's sure to be a fun night with table of ten gathered around a large dance floor. Tickets are \$25 per person and may be ordered by calling South Shore Habitat at 781-843-9080, ext 18.

Please help us raise the \$70,000 needed to break ground for the Hanover house at the corner of Walnut and Main Streets. Let's make a dream come true for a deserving family.

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

Meaningful Worship

EVENING WORSHIP

One way to look at worship is to say that it is about reinstating our proper place in relation to God, ourselves, and other people when we have had difficulty maintaining these relationships through the week. It is like being lost in the woods and then stopping to orientate ourselves to the directions by means of a compass and our nearness to the edge of the forest—and then finding our way home. It is like being lost at sea and then stopping to locate ourselves from the stars in the sky so that we know where we really are—and then returning to solid ground. It is like using a global positioning locator to know just where we are in relation to everything else—and then being moved into the right position. Worship is a matter of getting/keeping our bearings and being situated in our rightful place in the universe. In this process, it is important to emphasize that it is not we ourselves who get our bearings. Rather, we put ourselves into a position to allow God to give us our bearings, to restore us to our rightful relationships.

Through the rituals and events of worship, we find ourselves restored to right relationships. Through worship we are oriented to wholeness and our true purpose in life by being brought back into proper relationship with God, ourselves, and others. For example, by praise of God, we restore God to God's rightful place in our lives as the one who created and sustains us.

Join us for evening worship to restore yourself to right relationships with God, others and yourself. Our next evening worship is January 18 at 7:30 pm.

FAITH CONVERSATIONS

Join Rev. Don on Monday evenings for conversations in faith. We will use stories and teachings from the Gospels to launch conversations. It is a wonderful time to share stories, questions, concerns and confusions, then delight in the insights that come as we reflect together. We'll be looking at passages from The Gospels of Mark and Matthew. If you can't make every week you are still welcome as each Monday takes on a life of its own. We meet in the Vestry from 7:30 till around

SNOW POLICY

Normally the church will be open for worship, but use your best judgment on the driving conditions in your area. Check www.fcchanoverucc.org for up-to-date announcements.

NEW YEARS DAY LABYRINTH

Walking the path is an appropriate metaphor for the beginning of a New Year. You can bring that metaphor into reality by stopping by the Parish Hall on January 1st for a Labryinth Walk at the indoor Labyrinth. It will be available from 6-8 pm.

MLK ECUMENICAL BREAKFAST

Mark your calendars for Monday, January 19th and come as a family to honor Martin Luther King, Jr. at the second annual MLK Breakfast. Once again St. Andrew's will host this event. They will provide the space, the coffee, tea and juice and the other churches in town will provide the fixings for pancakes, sausage and fruit cup.

The breakfast will commence at 9:00 a.m. followed by a program for kids and a guest speaker for adults. The children's program will include storyteller Andrea Lovett.

Ticket costs are \$5.00/person with a \$15.00 max for families. Contact St. Andrew's office @ 781-826-2062 for tickets.

ECUMENICAL SPIRITUALITY RETREAT

Join us for an opportunity to gather with friends in faith from the churches of Hanover for an overnight away. It will be a time of fellowship, reflection, prayer, meditation, laughter and learning. Throughout the time away the clergy from the Hanover churches will be presenting lessons, insights and spiritual exercises drawn from the stories of Biblical characters. We will 'retreat' to the Sacred Heart Retreat Center in Wareham. It is a lovely setting near the ocean with cozy fires, quiet places for prayer and extensive grounds for walking. The retreat will be held the weekend before Lent from Friday evening, February 27th, till Saturday evening February 28th. More details will be available on our website and in future editions of the *Spire* and *InSpire*. Or call the church office for more details.

BOOK CONVERSATIONS

Join Rev. Meg on Sunday, January 4, after church for a conversation on the book, *Halftime*, by Bob Buford.

Bob Buford believes the second half of your life can be better than the first. Much better. But first, you need time to figure out what you want to do with the rest of your life. So he recommends that a reader call "halftime" to reflect not only on where he's going, but why.

Amazon.com Review

According to Bob Buford, broaching midlife doesn't have to be a crisis. In fact, in *Half Time*, Buford insists that it is actually an opportunity to begin the better half of life. The first half is busy with "getting and gaining, earning and learning," doing what you can to survive, while clawing your way up the ladder of success. The second half of life should be about regaining control, calling your own shots, and enjoying "God's desire ... for you to serve him just by being who you are, by using what he gave you to work with." What lies between the two is

STEEPLE FINIAL

This past summer a renovation project began on our steeple. It grew from minor repair to major renovation. One of the things we discovered was the need to replace the rounded hand carved finial that capped the steeple and held the weathervane.

The old finial is on display in the vestry. It has an interesting history. The current church building was built following a fire in 1860. The work was completed circa 1863. In 2008, one hundred and forty five years later, the finial came down. What's interesting is the finial has rested on top of our Spire overlooking the church, community and country during the heart of the Civil War, in the year when the final Emancipation Proclamation was declared bringing an end to

CHURCH RECORDS

By a vote of the congregation at our last annual meeting, church records from the 1700's have been placed on permanent loan to the Congregational Library, 14 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass., where they will be maintained under archival conditions. The records will be microfilmed at the Northeast Document Conservation Center, Andover, MA, and a copy of the microfilm will be provided to the church. The records will also be digitized as part of a project between the Congregational Library and the Jonathan Edwards Center at Yale Divinity School. The digitized records will ultimately be available through the Congregational Library website, www.congregationallibrary.org.

"halftime." Buford argues that whether you are a millionaire, a manager, or a teacher, you will one day have to transition from the struggle for success to the quest for significance. Halftime, then, is a quiet time of deliberate decision-making, restructuring, and passionate contemplation of your heart's deepest desires. Buford's writing is grounded in the real-life experience of success and failure, and most poignantly, the death of his son. While he has led a very successful life in the eyes of the world, Buford's personal stories reveal that his faith in Christ is his central priority. Instead of a transition to be feared, Buford makes midlife an introspective journey of abundance that will unleash God's best for you. --*Jill Heatherly*

UPCOMING BOOKS

FEBRUARY: *A New Earth* by Eckhart Tolle

MARCH: *Traveling Light* by Max Lucado

MAY: *The World is Flat* by Thomas Friedman

slavery until the year that the first African American was elected to the highest office of our country. That's quite a stretch of history beginning and ending with two monumental and related events.

We are considering ways to honor this finial's history, perhaps converting the finial (once called 'The Lighted Torch') into a lamp that would find a new resting place over a timeline history of the events in the life of our church, community and world during its tenure perched at the top of our church. We are looking for a group of people who could help envision and carry out this project. Let the church office know if you are interested.

WALKING THE JOURNEY OF GRIEF

Bob Biggins of Magoun-Biggins Funeral Home, will engage us in a conversation about the experience of grief and loss. Bob is the former President of the National Funeral Home Directors Association. He and his staff are trained in grief care at the time of death and in the months beyond. He will share in a dialogue around the rituals of saying goodbye and the long path of finding your way in life without your loved one.

Join us at 10 am on January 10, 2009. The indoor labyrinth is open from 9-noon.

Empowering Leadership

WINTER MEETING

An Open Invitation to All Church Women

WINTER MEETING - PILGRIM DISTRICT WOMEN

Tuesday, January 27, 2009 at First Congregational Church, UCC in Stoughton

Program: *Thin Places*, a photo and story presentation gleaned from over 7 thousand pictures taken on a 7 thousand mile journey across the country visiting "Sacred Space" and "Holy Ground."

The Rev. Katrina Clinton, Pastor and Teacher at the First Congregational Church, UCC in North Attleborough, MA will be our presenter. Katrina says, "Everyone has special places where they feel close to God. These pictures and stories will inspire you and encourage you to seek out the Thin Places in your own lives."

Plan to join us, beginning with Coffee Fellowship at 9:30 am; Worship and program presentation at 10:00; Hot Luncheon at 12:00 noon. Mark your calendar now and hold the date! You're welcome to bring a friend.

DEACON'S FUND

In our church the Deacon's fund is the resource we use to help families in times of need. We offer assistance to individuals or families with young children. We take an additional offering on Communion Sunday each month. We will be receiving an offering for the Deacon's Fund on January 4 in addition to our regular offering. Your generosity will enable us to help those going through some very difficult times.

INITIAL OFFERING ENVELOPE

People often ask about the first envelope in their pledge envelope package. It is marked *Initial Offering Envelope*. In the past we have invited folks to use this envelope to help with some of our basic annual costs for all members. These include the dues to our Conference that are part of our covenant with them. These are \$16.50 per member. This money goes to support our Conference Staff who offer us support in times of challenge and transition. It also goes to

provide the resources and research that helps our Conference carry out its mission which is "To nurture local church vitality and the covenant between our churches." We have also invited folks to use the envelope to cover the basic cost of preparing and mailing the monthly church *Spire*. These costs come to about \$30. Thanks for asking.

ANNUAL REPORT

The deadline to submit report by e-mail for the Annual report is Friday, January 9, 2008. This gives the office and the volunteers two weeks to prepare the document for the annual meeting.

Please e-mail office@fchanoverucc.org.

ANNUAL MEETING

The 280th Annual Church Meeting will be held on Sunday, January 25, 2008 in the Vestry of the Church immediately following the 10:00 a.m. Worship Service. This will be an important time to determine how our budget will help us fulfill our mission and vision for the coming year. We will also be discussing changes in the Bylaws. Copies of the Annual Report will be available in the narthex by January 18th.

Please make every effort to attend.

CHURCH CABINET


There will be a meeting of the Church Cabinet of the First Congregational Church in Hanover on Wednesday, January 14, 2009, in the Church Vestry at 7:30 p.m. All heads of boards and committees or a representative are urged to be present. Please mark your calendar. Thank you!

WATCHCARE LIST

We are developing a Watchcare List ministry. Every participant in our church will be included on lists distributed to members of our church leadership. The leadership folks will stay in touch each month with the people on their list. Their ministry is to just check in on how things are going and to offer to hold your concerns in their prayers.

YEAR END

Please submit all 2007 check requests for me by January 6, 2008, for 2007 accounting purposes. ~ Brad Martin



Youth Fellowship

Confirmation, youth fellowship, youth diaconate and church school schedules are now on the church website, as is the youth fellowship permission slip.

YOUTH FELLOWSHIP

Junior Youth:

Rather than unwrapping gifts the JHF spent a day buying gifts and wrapping them for a family in need at this Christmas season. The Bowlathon which seems so long ago was the seed money they raised for this wonderfully generous effort. The gift I found in each of them was compassion and generosity. Mainspring house enjoyed a meal created and served by JHF. We discussed the hardship that comes with being homeless, the loss of choice and privacy and created a welcoming space for the guests. Radical hospitality was the gift offered by the JHF. The gifts of the season were found through the "Faith in Action" of our fellowship community.

UPCOMING JYF:

Jan 4: Getting to know God
Jan 11: Bowling
Jan 18: Getting to Know God
Jan 25: Tubing
Feb 1: Souper Bowl

Senior Youth:

"Toto, we are not in Kansas any more." Dorothy led her friends to unwrap the gifts that they always had and to safely bring herself and Toto home in the Wizard of Oz. This age old classic movie offered new insights and lessons for teenagers. SHF enjoyed the Wizard of Oz and a trip of their own to Boston. The walking paths of Boston Common are not the Yellow Brick Road but our worship service at the Cathedral on the Common brought many folks from many places to honor and praise God. We were at the cross roads with so many who are seeking unwrap their gifts for God. Sharing a meal that we prepared

and offering a smile of hope in this Advent season was our gift to Gods family in Boston. Our path then led to an afternoon of wandering, eating and shopping at Fanuel Market.

UPCOMING SYF:

Jan 4: Feeding the poor
Jan 11: Feeding the poor
Jan 18: Evening Worship
Jan 25: Tubing
Feb 1: Souper Bowl Sunday

CONFIRMATION

Our Regular Classes begin with worship at 10 am and end at 1 pm. Please take notes during worship of any insights or questions you have.

January 4: Book Conversations
January 11: Prepping for Worship I (Regular Class)
January 18: Prepping for Worship II (Regular Class)
January 25: Prepping for Worship III (Regular Class)
January 30-31: RETREAT!!! At Craigville Conference on Cape Cod

CHURCH SCHOOL

I am sitting here watching the snow come down. It is peaceful and beautiful. December was just that same kind of month. We completed our Christmas Mission Project, making treats for the dogs in the Scituate Animal Shelter. It was a great project that I think the children had fun doing. They are all packaged up in cute Christmas bags and some of us will be taking them down to the shelter today. The Christmas pageant was, as always, a day of fellowship and fun. The CE Committee thanks everyone who brought the delicious soups and sandwiches that make up such an important part of the day. It is always a special day when we take the time to get together, watch our children in the pageant and have time to socialize. True church spirit!

I want to thank all the wonderful people who helped out with the mission project and helped pull the pageant together and feed us all! These are the people who every year say yes to helping our Sunday School at a very busy time for us all. Again, my thanks go to everyone.

Sunday School will resume January 4, 2009. Our rotation will be *In the Stable*. See you then. Deborah J. Bowen



The Souper Bowl of Caring believes that youth are not only the leaders of tomorrow, but can also be the leaders of today. It is our hope that by equipping young people with knowledge about hunger and poverty, we are guiding them to a lifetime of service. On February 1 members of the Youth Ministries of our church will help in worship leadership. Everyone is invited to bring donations for the Hanover Food Pantry with them to church (non perishable food and toiletries or cash.)

CALENDAR

First Congregational Church United Church of Christ

Where God is still speaking

515 Hanover Street
Hanover, Massachusetts 02339

Church Office: 781-826-4762

Parsonage: 781-826-9457

Office@FCHanoverUCC.org

www.FCCHanoverUCC.org

www.FCCHanoverUCC.blogspot.com

www.FCCFaithConversations.blogspot.com

Facebook Group: First Congregational Church -
Youth Fellowship

NON PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
HANOVER, MA
02339
PERMIT NO. 7

GIFT TO THE CHURCH

You may have noticed the lovely watercolor of the church that now hangs in the narthex. Local artist Janet Barker did the watercolor in the 1970's. Janet Barker was the mentor for Shirley Adams, who is an accomplished artist in her own right. Shirley has graciously donated the watercolor to the church.

MOONLIGHTERS

Our next meeting is January 21, 2009-7:30 p.m. in Room 5 at Riley Hall. This is our month to celebrate Birthdays so bring a game or challenging questionnaire. We will also be making plans for our February meal at Mainspring House. Moonlighters is a group of women who meet once a month for fellowship, making crafts for the Fair and finding any opportunity to have a good meal. All women of the church are invited to join us - please come.

BULLETIN & SPIRE DEADLINES

Please e-mail the church office with InSpire, Spire and bulletin announcements or articles: office@fchhanoverucc.org.

- To publish announcements in the **Sunday InSpire**, please e-mail articles to the church office by Wednesday at 9 am.
- **Bulletin information** (names of volunteer greeters, lay readers, acolytes and flower donations) is due by Wednesday at 9 am.
- **February Spire articles** are due on Monday, January 26 at 9 am. Volunteers will collate on Thursday, January 29.

CALLED TO CARE

This is a wonderful ministry in our church offering caring to church members who are going through challenging times. The group offers spiritual care through cards, phone calls, visits, a simple meal, transportation to appointments. The folks who are part of this ministry offer an important supplement to the care provided by pastors. New members are always welcome to help at whatever level you feel prepared to offer.

We will be holding a gathering in January for support and training. **Rev. Rosemary MacKay** will be our featured presenter. Rosemary has worked as a hospital chaplain, pastoral supervisor, hospice caregiver, and currently chairs the Church and Ministry committee of our Association. Rosemary is currently working on her doctorate in the area of spiritual care. She will share her insights on how we can be better caregivers for ourselves as well as the members of our family of faith. This program will be held on **Saturday, January 24th beginning at 10 am**. Lunch will be provided.

It has always been the nature of people of faith to care for one another. Called To Care is a venture in spiritual care that the diaconate of our Church developed. It provides a more organized way to offer our compassion and to make sure no one is overlooked or overwhelmed in our Church.

Whether a phone call, card, visit or a meal, Called To Care is there to help. Our ministry is prayerful and confidential and is essential to the life of our Church.