

JANAURY 2010

Congregation, Ministers to all
Rev. Debbi Carter, Interim
Pastor
Rev. Meg Clapp,
Associate Pastor
Chad Weirick, Minister of
Music
Deborah Bowen, Director of
Christian Education
Ed Melchin, Sexton
Stacey Stahl,
Office Administrator

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.

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COVENANT FOR 2010

What a great blessing it is to be able to enter a new year. Most of us are willing to let go of 2009 and all the complexities of an economic downturn, violence and warfare in Iraq and Afghanistan, not to mention the dramatic changes in church leadership in Hanover. But if we have learned anything about difficulties, it is that they cause us to re-think the old and to look for a newness of life.

Clearly First Congregational Church of Hanover is facing a time of transition. It may be too much to talk about what will be new as the transition is "new enough."

And yet it is time for the church community to begin thinking about the future and ways in which we can build on the strengths of the church. We know these strengths of the church:

1. Commitment to children and youth
2. Commitment to mission and outreach
3. A yearning for spiritual depth through programs like the labyrinth, the spiritual healing worship, and called to care

4. Ecumenical and community involvement and cooperation
5. Meaningful worship and communion

As we move toward the new, we can build on the strengths that are already here, and we will discover together a clarity about the future as we re-constitute the boards and committees, clarify our goals and resolve to enter into the dialogue of belonging to God's church.

The words of the angels to the shepherds told at Christmas time are so helpful: "Do not be afraid, for we bring you good news of great joy for all the people." With courage and joy and a re-commitment to our covenant with one another, we have nothing to fear and every reason to hope that 2010 will usher in a year of healing, blessing and hope.

Happy New Year! May your lives be blessed with joy!

Rev. Debbi Carter

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.



MLK BREAKFAST

Mark your calendars for Monday, January 18th and come as a family to honor Martin Luther King, Jr. at the third annual MLK Breakfast. The event will be held at Riley Hall. First Congregational Church will provide the space, the coffee, tea and juice and the other churches in town will provide the fixings for pancakes, sausage and fruit.

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

Tickets are \$5.00/person with a \$15.00 max for families and will be available at the door. Please bring a non-perishable food item for the Hanover Food Pantry.

Please contact Kathy Talbot if you have questions or would like to volunteer to set up the hall for the event or provide beverages for the breakfast. Phone- 781-447-5256. E-mail address is kathy0649@comcast.net.

MISSION FAIR

The Fourth Annual Pilgrim Association Mission Fair is February 6 at Riley Hall. Your Pilgrim Association Missions Committee hosts a fair once a year for a broad range of mission and justice organizations. Organizations are invited to come, set up a booth and talk about their work.

Keynote Speakers are Sr. Linda Bessom, Faith Into Action Together Coordinator, Mass. Conference Task Force on Homelessness, Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless and Sr. Diane Whitmarsh, intern at Faith Into Action Together.

Contact Ruth Poole at 508-583-9086 or rtpoole@netzero.net for more information or to register.

CWS: 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!

For over 60 years, Church World Service has worked in partnership with local communities to identify their needs and access the resources they need to build the foundation for a more viable future, including:

- Blankets, tents, food and other emergency supplies in the wake of a disaster
- Tools and seeds for refugees returning home to replant their fields
- Wells for families living in drought prone areas to provide clean, safe water to drink and to irrigate crops and gardens
- Literacy training and microcredit for women struggling to realize their potential.

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+. Karen Tripp

WOMEN'S WINTER GATHERINGS

Pilgrim District Women Winter Meeting: Tuesday, January 26, 2010 Old South Union Congregational Church, UCC, South Weymouth

Circle the date on your 2010 calendar and plan to join Pilgrim District Women for our winter meeting on January 26. Our guest speaker will be Margery Eramo, RN, CHM, and a Faith Community Nurse at First Parish UCC in Westwood. Margery is graduate of MGH and holds a Certificate in Health Ministry and Parish Nursing from Andover Newton Theological School. Her presentation will focus on the history of health ministry, current practices and how to start a health ministry program in your church. Join us for coffee fellowship at 9:30, program at 10:00, and luncheon at 12:00. All church women are welcome to attend, whether or not your home church has an active women's group.

Celebration VIII: Friday - Sunday, March 12-14, 2010 Burlington, VT

"Happy New Year!" The time is getting closer! Come, Renew Your Spirit! Join other women from New England when we gather to celebrate our faith in Burlington, VT March 12-14, 2010. This is a once-every-four-years event. Approximately 1,000 women attended in 2006.

It's not too late to register for the UCC Women Leaders of New England CELEBRATION VIII, Together Building Bridges. You can still register and choose from 28 stimulating workshops and sign up for any of the speaker meals planned during this exciting event. You can register at www.uccwomenscelebration.org.

Be sure you make your hotel reservations by calling one of the three hotels we have suggested - The Sheraton, The Holiday Inn or The Best Western. Ask for the New England Women's Celebration VIII rate. Please invite your daughters, granddaughters (14 and older) and friends for our intergenerational participatory workshop, "CONNECTIONS".

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

Meaningful Worship

WORSHIP & STUDY OPPORTUNITIES

January 3 - Communion at both 8:30 and 10 am services.

Deacon's Fund Offering will be taken to benefit those in our community. Book Conversations after the second service.

January 7 - Indoor labyrinth from 6-8 pm. 7:00 pm Prayer Shawl Ministry, Vestry.

January 9 - 9-11 am, Indoor Labyrinth

January 10 - Worship at 8:30 and 10 am. Right after church is Confirmation. At noon is the Church Staff Christmas gathering. At 2 pm is a neighborhood Listening Session at the Itz's.

January 17 - Worship at 8:30 and 10 am. Evening worship at 7:30 pm

January 24 - Worship at 8:30 and 10 am

January 31 - Worship at 8:30 and 10 am

Book Conversations - Join the conversation on the book, *The World is Flat*, by Edwin H. Friedman, on Sunday, February 7. The rise of China and demise of America is well-trodden literary territory. Friedman, *New York Times* super-columnist

and multiple Pulitzer Prize winner, sees as many opportunities as problems for the USA in the irresistible new global world order. In the crowded market of globalization books, this is an entertaining, informative addition. He has clocked up many an air mile, traveling to all points on his flat world, but devoting most of his time and energy to the superpowers of the future, India and China. Join us whether you have read the book or not.

Faith Conversations - Join Rev. Debbi on Monday evenings at 7:30 as she follows the Church School rotation topics and shares her informative and informal teachings:

Christmas Messengers Rotation

January 10 - New Year Resolutions

Lost and Found Rotation

January 17 - Parables of the Lost

January 22 - More Parables of the Lost

Everyone is welcome, and those who might be intimidated to join the conversation are welcome to simply listen. You'll enjoy the discussion and Rev. Debbi's insights.

Empowering Leadership

SEARCH COMMITTEE UPDATE

The Search Committee continues to gather data for the Church Profile, which will be utilized in our search for a settled pastor.

We mailed questionnaires to approximately 200 households and 117 questionnaires representing 85 households were returned. This represents a good sampling of the congregation. In 2005 approximately 100 households were surveyed during the Timothy Project. While there are some variations in the questions asked, the two surveys show similar results. Areas that show a significant difference are: couples with children at home has decreased from 54% to 25%, couples without children at home has increased from 25% to 46% and people living alone has increased from 9% to 23%. The number of retired people has increased from 24% to 40%.

We have held five neighborhood meetings to get input from members of the congregation on their vision for the future of the church. The meetings will continue in the New Year and we encourage all members to attend a meeting. Sign up sheets are in the vestry, but we will make every effort to contact all members. If you are unable to attend a meeting, but would like to express your vision for the church please call or send me a note. Your input will enable the Search Committee to find a pastor who is most compatible with our church.

We ask for your continued support and prayers during our search for a new pastor.

Hal Thomas, Chairman - 781-826-7952



Youth Fellowship

CHURCH SCHOOL

- January 10 Christmas Messengers
- January 17 Christmas Messengers
- January 24 Lost and Found
- January 31 Lost and Found

CONFIRMATION

Here are the events through the end of the year. **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 3 Book Conversations
- January 10 Understanding Worship
- January 17 Head to Boston after Church
- January 24 Attend Annual Meeting
- January 29-30 Retreat
- January 31 No Confirmation Class

YOUTH FELLOWSHIP

UPCOMING EVENTS FOR JUNIOR HIGH FELLOWSHIP:

- January 3 New Year Celebration
- January 16 Prep for Common Cathedral
- January 17 Head to Boston after Church
- January 24 To Be Announced
- January 31 Bread Making

UPCOMING EVENTS FOR SENIOR HIGH FELLOWSHIP

- January 3 Resolutions
- January 16 Prep for Common Cathedral
- January 17 Head to Boston after Church
- January 24 To Be Announced
- January 31 Soup Making

The Youth Fellowship Groups are joining forces to raise awareness of hunger and homelessness that surround us.

SOUPER BOWL OF CARING: Plans are underway for our "Souper Bowl of Caring" Sunday on February 7. This event is a nation wide event where food and money are collected and donated locally to the Hanover Food Pantry. Some come to church with bags of staples and cash to help our brothers and sisters in need! Look for an opportunity to help fight word hunger. Did you know that 25,000 kids die each day-mostly from preventable

causes like hunger? We have learned that it takes a \$1 a day to care for one child in need, \$30 takes care of a month, you can do the math to figure out the impact we can

have! But we will also know what it is like to be hungry! Leading up to Souper Bowl Sunday we will take part in a 30 hour famine to raise money to take feed children. Please support those of us that are able to participate! After the church service the Youth will share with you their "Stone Soup" during fellowship.



Remember that the Permission Slip for Youth Fellowship activities is online. Go to Programs>Youth ministries.

The 2009-10 Christian Education schedule for activities for Church School, Confirmation, Book Conversations, Youth Fellow-

ship and Faith Conversations can be found online and in the "Walk by Faith" brochure.

CALENDAR

First Congregational Church United Church of Christ

Where God is still speaking

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Church Office: 781-826-4762

Parsonage: 781-826-9457

Office@FCCHanoverUCC.org

www.FCCHanoverUCC.org

Facebook Group: First Congregational Church -
Youth Fellowship

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RETURN ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

INSPIRE AND SPIRE DEADLINES

Please e-mail the church office with InSpire, Spire and bulletin announcements or articles: office@fcchanoverucc.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 25 at 9 am. Volunteers will collate on Thursday, January 28 at 1 pm.

IN APPRECIATION

I would like to thank all who expressed their sympathy at the passing of my Mother.

Your prayers and words of comfort have been most appreciated. In times like these the closeness to God is felt most intimately from the support and love you receive from your Church and friends.

Thank you!

Susan Alexander and Family

If you look at the WORLD, *you'll be* DISTRESSED.
If you look WITHIN, *you'll be* DEPRESSED.
If you look at GOD, *you'll be* at REST.

~ CORRIE TEN BOOM