



The First Congregational Church of Reading

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST • AN OPEN AND AFFIRMING CONGREGATION

Produced by our Church Family

April 2009

Volume 2009, Issue 4

Alleluia!

HE IS ALIVE!

First ChurchNEWS

Statement of Purpose

We gather as a faith community to love and magnify God. Guided by the Holy Spirit, we will love our neighbors as ourselves, advocating for peace and justice. We will go out and share our faith in Christ, inviting others to join us. We will be nurturers of the spirit and teachers of the Word. We will welcome and provide sanctuary to all.

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HOLY WEEK



WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Holy Lent is a season which calls us to introspection and repentance. But if it stays there it is deadly. It needs to end with the Easter announcement of reconciliation and healing. Holy Week here at First Congregational Church of Reading, UCC is going to try to follow that rhythm this year.

On Palm Sunday (April 5) we will assemble outside on the church steps (weather permitting), distribute the palms, and process in to "Glory, Laud, and Honor." There will be a pancake brunch after worship. Please come.

On Maundy Thursday (April 9 at 6:30 pm) a light supper of bread and soup will be followed by a Worship Service at 7:30p.m. We will follow a Maundy Thursday liturgy with appropriate readings, music, and communion.

On Good Friday (April 10 at 12:15 pm) there will be an Ecumenical Good Friday Service sponsored by the Reading Clergy Association at The Church of the Good Shepherd, Episcopal at 95 Woburn Street, Reading, MA 01867. Dr. Bendroth and members of our choir will be participating.

An Easter Sunrise Service (April 12 at 6:45 am) will be held at the Laurel Hill Cemetery behind the Old South United Methodist Church.

Sunday Worship at FCCR - The Festival of the Resurrection (April 12 at 10 am) will be held on Easter Sunday.

This promises to be a powerful week of renewal and worship. We hope to see you at several of these services and that you experience the reality of the risen Christ!

Save the Dates

"RE" Forums...REvamp, REmake, REshape, REform, REstructure, REdesign, REfashion, RENew

April 19, May 3 after church



Friday, May 15
Pizza at 6pm
Meeting at 7 pm



Saturday, May 30

Church Contact Information:

Office Phone: 781-944-0205

www.churchofreading.org

Office E mail: office1.fccr@verizon.net

THE IN-BETWEEN TIME—Friday's Here, but Sunday's Comin'!

General Wellington commanded the victorious forces at the great battle of Waterloo that effectively ended the Napoleonic Wars. Historians tell the story that when the battle was over, Wellington sent the great news of his victory to England. A series of stations, one within sight of the next, had been established to send code messages between England and the continent. The message to be sent was "Wellington defeated Napoleon at Waterloo." Meanwhile a fog set in and interrupted the message sending. As a result, people only saw news of "Wellington defeated--" Later, the fog cleared and the full message continued, which was quite different from the outcome that the people originally thought had happened!

The same is true when we look at Holy Week. On Good Friday the best gift that God ever gave us, the gift of Jesus, was tortured and brutally murdered. If we stopped there we would see only defeat and the triumph of the mighty over the weak, hate over love, and death over life. Yet, on Sunday morning the tomb is burst and all those evils lie in ruin. If we wait until Easter, we will see God's message fulfilled. When the fog lifts we see the Resurrection which spells victory.

The world today is full of Good Friday news—a global economy in shambles, corruption in high places, genocide looming in Dafur, high unemployment and inaccessible healthcare for minor procedures, terrorist groups with access to weapons of mass destruction... never mind our own personal battles. At times the message seems to be, "Planet earth defeated—" But that is only part of the story. "We are Easter people and alleluia is our song!" is how St. Augustine put it. As "people of the open tomb," we have a right to expect that God's new creation will break in on us in surprising ways--and in spite of ourselves. In 2003 I heard Archbishop Desmond Tutu say at a public forum, "People never expected South Africa to be a place of reconciliation and freedom. It was against all odds. But here I am today saying it was a miracle of God." Indeed! What are signs of Resurrection life here at the First Congregational Church of Reading, UCC?

Sermon Schedule for April

April 5th, Sixth Sunday in Lent (Palm/Passion Sunday)

Mark 11:1-11 or John 12:12-16, Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29
(Liturgy of the Psalms)
Isaiah 50:4-9a, Psalm 31:9-16, Philippians 2:5-11,
Mark 14:147 or Mark 15:1-39, 40-47
(Liturgy of the Passion)
Into Jerusalem Rev. Bendroth preaching

April 9th, Maundy Thursday

Exodus 12:1-4, (5-10), 11-14
Psalm 116:1-2, 12-19 or 1 Corinthians 11:23-26
John 13: 1-17, 31b-35
Dinner at 6:00 pm Worship at 7:00 pm

April 10th, Good Friday

Isaiah 52:13– 53:12
Psalm 22 and Hebrews 10:16-25 or Hebrews 4:14-16, 5:7-9
John 18:1-19, 42
Ecumenical Service at Church of the Good Shepherd, 12:15 pm

Easter touches every day, Al-le-lu-ia! April 12th, Easter

Acts 10:34-43 or Isaiah 25:6-9
Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24
1 Corinthians 15:1-11 or Acts 10:34-43
John 20:1-18 or Mark 16:1-8
Now What? Rev. Bendroth preaching

April 19th, 2nd Sunday of Easter

Acts 4:32-35
Psalm 133
I John 1:1—2:2
John 20: 19-31
Marks of Faith Preaching TBA

April 26th, Third Sunday of Easter

Acts 3:12-19
Psalm 4
I John 3:1-7
Luke 24: 36b-48
Integrity of Creation Karl Gazarian preaching



Bring a flower for Easter Sunday!!! On Easter morning a bare cross will be in the front of the sanctuary. At the appropriate moment we are going to ask everyone to come forward with colorful flowers (could be bought or artificial) and greenery. Elastic will be on the cross so you can tuck in your flowers. We'll also order extra flowers that day in case you forget to bring some. This way we'll turn an ugly instrument of death into a symbol of glorious beauty!

The Budget is the heart of the church

We usually think of the church budget as little more than a practical tool, something that helps us monitor income and keep track of expenditures. Or we think of it as a necessary evil; the budget is something we have to work hard to meet. How, then, is the budget the "heart of the church?"

A church budget reflects the dreams of the people of the church. It is a practical tool for accomplishing what we wish to do and be as a church. Not everything we do in church costs money—some of the most significant things that happen here are absolutely free. But none of them would be happening if the church was not here in the first place, and it costs money to have a church. The budget is the heart of the church because without it, we would not have this place in our lives to experience God's grace.

A church budget is like any other budget, with one critical difference. Every dollar in a church budget is a dollar that someone has given freely, under no compulsion, driven by a wish for the church to exist. Every dollar in a church budget represents someone's generosity and good will. The church budget is not a necessary evil or a mere tool; it is a celebration of organized generosity.

Stewardship Sunday was celebrated on March 29. If you haven't made your pledge yet, please do so we can prepare for next year's budget. If fear of the financial crisis is giving you pause, put God to the test. Operate out of the gospel of abundance, not the myth of scarcity. Make a faith-promise and watch God provide.

Stewardship Committee

While officially, our 2009 Stewardship campaign has come to an end, we view Stewardship to FCCR to be more of a culture than a process, which means that pledges can be made throughout the year as we are able. Many thanks go out to all the "Trail Bosses" who volunteered their time and effort to make this campaign a success. To those of you on a trail who have not turned in your pledges yet, please mail them in to the Church office by the first week of May. For those who weren't on any "Trail", you should have received materials from the Stewardship Committee, along with a pledge card, and we hope you will take the time to thoughtfully and prayerfully consider making a pledge.

We thank everyone for their ongoing support of First Congregational Church of Reading. Without your care and your great sacrifices of time, talent and treasure, many of our church's programs and ministries would not be possible.

Stewardship Message

Pay it Alleluia!

After the religious authorities had assembled with the elders, they devised a plan to give a large sum of money to the soldiers telling them, "You must say, 'His disciples came by night and stole him away while we were asleep'." (Matthew 28: 12-13)

"It's just my job - I don't have to like it." "I don't care where it comes from – it's for a good cause." "This church can't afford to be picky about its portfolio."

The tradition that Matthew's gospel was written by someone busy in April... well, a tax collector, gains credence by his two financial notes for Holy Week. Matthew remembers the price of Judas' betrayal was thirty pieces of silver and that the soldiers were paid to stifle what they saw of the resurrection and spread the body-snatching rumor.

We regularly reflect on the ethics of spending money. We consider personal and church budgets. We choose "green" in home, community and congregation. We give offerings, make pledges, invest in projects. As these serious days of Lent shift to Holy Week, it is also important to prayerfully examine how we earn, receive, accept and benefit from money. Money is neither good nor evil in itself, both there are transactions that hide the holy or risk the resurrection.

Easter is priceless, certain and can never be 'bought off' as these lyrics to "Christ the Lord Is Risen Today" claim!

Seek we now where Christ has led, Al-le-lu-ia!
Stewardship un-li-mi-ted, Al-le-lu-ia!
Ours the faith, the peace, the joy, Al-le-lu-lia!
Gifts that nothing can destroy, Al-le-lu-ia!

Lift our hearts and raise our voices, Al-le-lu-ia!
Hope has opened up our choices, Al-le-lu-ia!
As we work, invest, and pray, Al-le-lu-ia!
Easter touches every day, Al-le-lu-ia!

Maren C. Tirabassi is Pastor of Union Congregational UCC of Madbury, NH. Her most recent book is *God in My Life: How and Why We Share Faith Stories*.

The NOW group met most recently on Monday evening, March 16th – comprised of folks like you who are looking to our future as a church and vital member of our community. If you have not yet come to a meeting, we'll meet next on Monday, April 20th beginning at 7:30 pm and would love to have you there. On the agenda in March were conversations about Reading Cares (celebrating the successful Rummage Sale, looking forward to the bike recycling event, and the continuing work on searching out further funding); the annual auction event (given new shape this year in light of the economic crisis); Mother's Group (with concrete plans to start it up in the fall); and reorganization of our church structure. You'll find information about the Rummage Sale, Bike Recycling and the Spring Auction elsewhere in this edition of the newsletter.

Re-structuring

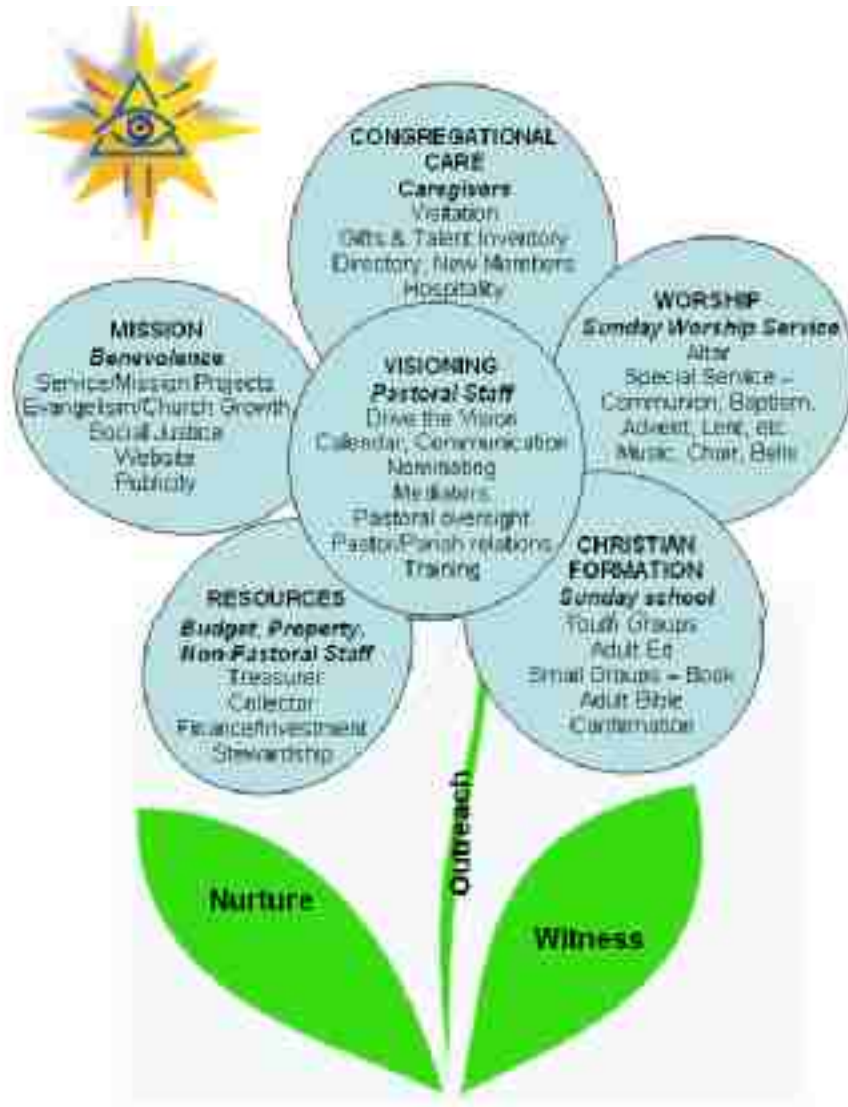
A small group met several times to give thought to the topic of our possible reorganization. As you know we had several guests who told us about the experience of their churches or insights, beginning with Rev. Dominic Taranowski last summer from the Melrose First Congregational Church, followed by Rev. Paul Nickerson of the MACUCC, and then with Rev. Dr. David Reid, our neighbor across the street at the First Baptist Church of Reading. The group took all the information from these presentations, along with some information from the Wollaston Congregational Church. They reviewed as well the work done here at FCCR in the past ten years with the Transition Team, Silobusters, and GOALden Days. As a new structure was contemplated the group tried to keep in mind the 80/20 rule, to focus primarily on the important 20% of church activities and to release the more nearly routine work (the 80%) to small groups to handle.

From these reviews these objectives were identified:

1. Visioning by a leadership group vs. simply reporting
2. Flexibility to form/dissolve committees around specific goals but have responsible groups for oversight
3. Identify the *must do* items to "be church" and let other things happen organically from grassroots
4. Allow people to identify where they need to grow and to discover their gifts/calling, coming forward to make the things happen that are important to them
5. With #3, reduce the number of people needed in the formal structure
6. Allow for assessment and change to proposed structure before codifying in bylaws – minimum year-long process
7. Build on the Missional goal from GOALden Days
8. Communication and conflict resolution need to be built into structure

The proposed structure is represented graphically on the adjoining page. Please take a look at it. The Visioning group would be responsible for keeping the vision, forming multi-year plans, communications, and mediation. It might be seen as similar to Deacons but is more forward looking. There are five main ministry teams around Visioning: Mission, Worship, Christian Formation, Congregational Care, and Resources. The graphic shows "must do" and oversight responsibilities. The proposed grouping of ministries is similar to our current Commissions but has some shifting of responsibilities since there are five proposed Ministries. For instance Worship has some current Deacon responsibilities. Small self-identified groups will own pieces of the vision and bring them to fruition (e.g., rummage sale, auction, blood drive). Please note that all current Commission/Committee responsibilities have a "home" in the proposed structure for oversight. The idea is that we will "try on" the new structure for 2009-10 year with specified evaluation points during the year - with the option of making adjustments.

This is just a framework. Please plan to come to one or both Forums (after worship on April 19th and May 3rd) to help flush out the details. Bring your questions, ideas, concerns, comments. Everyone's help needed to plan the transition process and evaluation period. We will make a decision about how we move forward in the new year at our Annual Meeting on Friday evening, May 15th!



C O N G R E G A T I O N

Vision:

As Gardeners of the spirit, we provide fertile soil to nurture both church and community, harvesting faith, compassion, and understanding of God's love, as taught by Jesus Christ

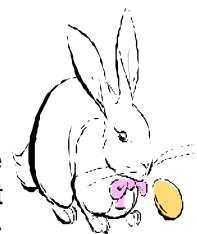
Essential responsibilities are shown in bold and italics



2nd Annual FCCR Easter Egg Hunt!

We are thrilled to announce that we will be having our 2nd annual egg hunt following worship on Easter Sunday. We invite everyone to journey downstairs to enjoy the fellowship of friends immediately after the service while our Helper Bunnies dash about tucking goody-filled eggs in all the nooks and crannies of the sanctuary.

Once their task is completed, we will invite all of the children back upstairs to start the hunt! Please join us for this fun filled event on Easter Sunday. And perhaps, like last year, the fun will continue until the last egg is found which truly happened as we prepared for the Christmas pageant. Our hidiers are good!



Book Group Selections for April and May

April 7th...The Scandalous Gospel: What's So Good About the Good News? by Peter Gomes

Gomes calls us to make the message of Jesus the focus of our attention. As is usual for his writing, there are memorable lines such as – “The opposite of fear is not courage but compassion.” He also warns against “cheap hope” and suggests that “...if things don't turn out right, we endure....” Gomes reminds us that Jesus' teachings are radical and relevant for today.

John Lape will lead the discussion.

May 5th...The Cost of Discipleship by Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

This classic book was first published in 1937 when the Nazi regime was taking place in Germany. Bonhoeffer distinguished between “cheap” and “costly” grace. “Costly” grace is the way of following Jesus exemplified by Bonhoeffer himself who chose to oppose the Nazis from the beginning. Much of the book deals with the Sermon on the Mount through which he interprets what he believes it means to follow Jesus.

Joyce Burnham will provide an overview of the book and lead the discussion . Those who are unable to read the book may still wish to come and discuss Bonehoeffers thoughts and ideas.

The Book Group meets on the first Tuesday of most months from 7:30 to 9:00 in the church parlor. Please contact John or Mary Ann Lape if you have questions (978 664-3583 or malape@verizon.net).

12th Annual FCCR Auction!



The economic times are challenging this year...However, we still know how to have fun! So, we're planning a party for everyone, an intergenerational, fun-filled evening with a theme (soon to be announced!) with entertainment sure to be enjoyable for all.

And...like every good Congregational event we will be at table together with good food to eat. We have already had some of our finest cooks step forward and offer to prepare the meal.

And since this is our 12th Annual Auction, there will be auction activity too—both silent and live. **Mark your calendars and save the date, Saturday evening, May 30th.** And watch for more on ways you can help, donate, and participate in any number of ways!

You are Invited on a Trip to Overlook Farm—Sunday, April 26th

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has. Margaret Meade

Time and again, the children of the First Congregational Church of Reading have demonstrated that Margaret Meade's quote could be easily be amended to read “never doubt that a group of thoughtful, committed SMALL people can change the world ...”



Christian Education has an exciting opportunity for those in grades Pre K-7 and their families! On Sunday, April 26th, after worship, we will leave to visit Overlook Farm in Rutland, Ma. Overlook Farm is a Heifer International Learning Center offering the extraordinary opportunity for visitors to experience some of the challenges of global hunger and poverty – and come away with a re-energized determination to be part of the solution.

This outing will give children the opportunity to learn how the money they raise at the Heifer Market-Place is used in the effort to end global hunger and poverty and to consider how their actions can help other children change their lives. The 2 ½ hour program will include an introduction to Heifer's mission, a hands on tour of Overlook Farm, including the Global Village, Livestock and Organic Gardens and an age appropriate take action discussion.

We have a limited number of spaces available. Contact Diane Wilson at dew145@comcast.net or 781.910.1092 to reserve your space or if you are able to provide transportation.

Search Committee Update

The church profile is complete! This lengthy and detailed document is a required step in the UCC search process. If we are interested in a candidate we will give authorization to receive this profile. We all worked on this document, but two members who deserve special recognition are Jane McCord and Craig Taylor for the many hours they put in making this an accurate, thorough and attractive document. We think their efforts really paid off.

Thank you to all who completed the survey. The data collection was extremely helpful to us as the last survey was done eight years ago. Thank you also to all committee members who answered our many questions and helped us find or correct data for the profile. Special thanks go to Reverend Norm and Council for reviewing the profile in its almost-complete form, to Linda Ananian for her aid with many NOW and Golden Days questions, and to Admin for its assistance with salary information. A copy of both the profile and the survey data will be available in the church office for viewing.

On March 18th, our classified ad appeared on the national UCC website, www.ucc.org. It reads:

We are: multigenerational, theologically diverse, warm and welcoming, ONA, with wonderful music program. Are you: skilled at working with lay leaders to engage youth? Gifted in helping individuals develop their spirituality? Able to provide thought provoking worship? Global mission minded? Visit us: churchofreading.org

We immediately received 18 resumes (called profiles in church lingo). Since then, profiles continue to arrive very regularly but at a slower rate. We are busily reviewing this batch of profiles and are meeting quite often to keep up with the applications. We have also scheduled a mock interview with a no-longer-available candidate for next month to sharpen our skills. The committee will provide an updated timeline of our activities in the church basement, and will continue to keep the congregation apprised of our progress through this newsletter and other venues. Meanwhile, do not hesitate to ask any of us any questions you may have about the Search process.

The Search Committee: Joyce Burnham, Ginny Davenport, Christine Hylan (co-chair), Jane McCord, Bob Svensson, Craig Taylor, Laurie Tucker (co-chair), Steve Viegas

Welcome to Our New Members



Mark and Lin Chabra have lived at Colonial Drive in Reading for about 14 years. Lin grew up in Sharon, Mass. She comes from a family of seven, who were all very active in the Congregational Church. She attended Hood College in Maryland and received a B.A. in Finance/Economics. She worked in the D.C./Alexandria area for about 4 years and returned to Boston to work for John Hancock. Currently she works for the Massachusetts Interlocal Local Insurance Assoc. as the Membership/Training Coordinator. She is a Brownie co-leader and participates in the Killam PTO. Mark grew up in Lynnfield. His family were members of Our Lady of The Assumption in Lynnfield where he attended elementary school. He received a BS in Accounting at Bentley. He is the Vice President of Finance at the Burlington office of Coventry, a national health care concern. Prior to having children Mark and Lin relaxed by playing golf.

They have two children, Casey, 8, in 2nd grade, and Michael, 7, 1st grade. They enjoy school, school activities, scouts and the many youth sports. Family time is spent both watching them participate in these activities, including soccer, basketball, baseball, gymnastics, swimming, hockey and wrestling as well as enjoying time with their extended family and friends. They have appreciated the hospitality of-

ferred by members of this church and they look forward to participating in a number of church activities.

David Zeek, a Nebraska native, earned a BS and MS in Electrical Engineering from the University of Nebraska. He moved to Dallas to work for Texas Instruments, and earned an MBA from Southern Methodist University and met Cathy. David currently works as a member of technical staff at Raytheon.

Cathy Zeek grew up in Wichita, Kansas. She moved to the Dallas area for college, earning a BA in English and an MA in Elementary Education from Austin College, an MBA from Southern Methodist University, and an Ed.D. in Supervision, Curriculum, and Instruction from Texas A&M University – Commerce. She currently works at Lasell College as chair of the Education Department. David and Cathy have only been here 5 years – and are both long-time Presbyterians who are looking forward to becoming involved in FCCR.

Melissa Carpenter grew up in Westwood, MA, where she attended St. Margaret Mary's Catholic Church. She attended Boston University and now works at Youville Hospital in Cambridge as an Occupational Therapist. She and her husband, Erick, moved to

Our church, particularly the CWF Circles, participates in the annual Church World Service (CWS) Kit Drive. Health Kits are distributed to those in need, both in the US and abroad. Kits have been distributed to earthquake survivors, flood victims and orphanages worldwide.



CHURCH WORLD SERVICE

resettles refugees, promotes fair national and international policies, provides educational resources, and offers opportunities to join a people-to-people network of local and global caring through participation in CWS

Kits and other programs. For more information visit www.churchworldservice.org.

Outreach and CWF will be sponsoring an "All Church Collection" of these kits for CWS from April 14 to May 1. Assemble as many Kits of any type as you wish, and drop them off before May 1. There will be a labeled box in the Church Office for collection. See the list of contents for the kit and instructions for packaging (below). Please follow the lists and instructions exactly. The contents of the Kits are carefully planned to make them as usable as possible, in any situation, wherever and whenever they are sent. The Outreach Commission will box and transport the kits to the collection site.

Please include only the items listed and do not include personal notes or any additional items. Do not include or decorate your kits with religious symbols, as these are shared with people based only on need, regardless of religion.

Donations are always welcome to cover shipping costs (\$2 per kit) or to purchase kits (\$11 – 50 per kit). Make checks payable to FCCR with a notation "CWS kits." Contact Judie Williams, 781- 944-2836, to make a monetary donation or with any questions.

Hygiene Kit...In the face of natural disasters, violence, or grinding poverty, Hygiene Kits can mean the difference between sickness and health for struggling families.

CWS is people reaching out to neighbors in need near and far--not with a hand out, but a hand up. With partners in the US and around the world, CWS works to build interfaith and intercultural coalitions to eradicate hunger and poverty and promote peace and justice. Within the US, Church World Service helps communities respond to disasters,

- One hand towel measuring approximately 16"x28" (no fingertip or bath towels)
- One washcloth
- One wide-tooth comb
- One nail clipper (no metal files or emery boards)
- One bar of soap (bath size in wrapper)
- One toothbrush (in original packaging)
- Six Band-Aids®

Please do not add toothpaste to the Hygiene Kit; toothpaste with an extended expiration date will be added to prior to shipment. Seal all items in a one-gallon plastic bag with a zipper closure.

Value: \$11 Processing/Shipping Cost: \$2 per Kit

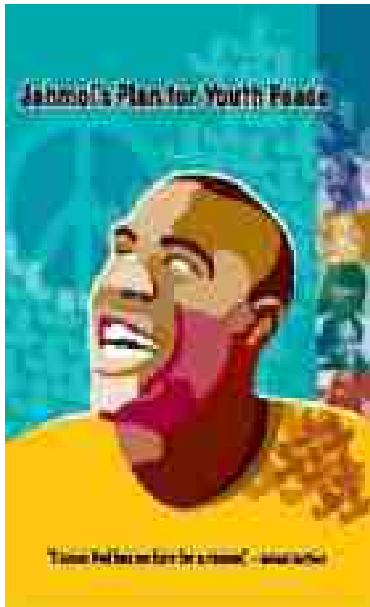
Heifer Marketplace 2009!

This year's Heifer Marketplace on Sunday, March 29th was an enormous success! The children arrived full of energy and soon they were sprawled all over the floor creating the remarkable banners and artwork for their class booths. It seems the way to a congregation is truly through its stomach since the pigs-in-a-blanket, honey sticks, water buffalo mozzarella, moo-shakes and other culinary treats started to disappear from the tables before 11 o'clock even rolled around. We thank the 3rd – 5th grade Tree table for also providing tree-fruit salad for the health conscious among us! It was a bounty that inspired many to give generously to help feed a hungry world.



We thank Sandi Watson from Heifer International for coming to present our congregation with the beautiful ark award for our donations from 2007 & 2008. We hope to see another plaque on the wall next year for this day's efforts as well. By the end of the day we had reached \$4,000! Many people stopped by to say they still intend to contribute and some simply forgot their checkbooks. Please know that it is never too late to help us reach the goal of an Ark! Please see Linda Jerrett or Betsy Schneider or you may leave your contribution in the office to help us get there! Checks may be payable to FCCR with "Heifer" in the note line.

These donated animals will transform the lives of hundreds of children and families around the globe so please accept our thanks for your generosity and continued support. **All** proceeds from the day will be sent directly to Heifer International. Further information about Heifer International can be found at its Web site, www.heifer.org.



Some of you had a chance to see the Peace Video that was a collaboration of City Mission Society of Boston and the Pleasant Hill Baptist Church about the legacy of a young African American man who was a victim of street violence. We recently received this update about the film and its message. The Six Point Plan for Youth Peace is one that we, children of every

age, should consider. Even adults have "hoods" where the way in which we carry ourselves and respond to situations not to our liking, make a difference – to us and to others.

Jahmol Norfleet was a ray of hope. These days his younger sister Teah and a close circle of friends struggle every day to fulfill Jahmol's vision of peace in the streets. The documentary focuses on the challenge facing this group of young people to stay committed to promoting youth peace even in the horrific climate of escalating teen handgun violence.

Their efforts take them from peace parties to talking to the renowned Harvard professor and lawyer Charles Ogletree. The goal of the video is not simply to memorialize Jahmol Norfleet, but to reach the young people of America's neighborhoods and encourage them to end the cycle of gun violence that has gripped our neighborhoods, cities, states and country.

The Youth Peace video was featured at a meeting of the Boston Foundation on March 9 and will be shown as part of the University of Massachusetts at Boston's "SEEDS" Day (Spring Enrichment and Engagement Days) on April 29 for 2:00-5:00 p.m.

Jahmol's Six Point Plan for Youth Peace

1. *Withdraw* - I will not go into another "hood" to start trouble, cause harm or threaten the life, health or safety of anyone.
2. *Responsibility* - I will take responsibility for myself and any of my legal, moral and social obligations.
3. *Rebuild* - I will focus on my spirituality, employment, education and leadership.
4. *Resources* - I will connect with my church, community, organizations and others who can help me achieve my goals.
5. *Autonomy* - I will create my new path to peace and success anywhere I want to.
6. *Sector Meetings* - I will work with other youth to "dead problems" and initiate peace-keeping conversations with other "hoods" to resolve conflicts.

Confirmation News Update

The Confirmation class continues to move along our Christian journey. We met in March to learn and reflect upon human nature, sin as separation from God, the subtle ways we can deceive ourselves and God's intervening faithfulness in Jesus. We also learned and reflected on the meaning and promise of God's gift of eternal life. On March 15th, the Confirmands had the opportunity to witness the Sacrament of Baptism in our Sanctuary. During Lent, each Sunday a Confirmand has had the opportunity to participate in worship reading Scripture and Lenten ritual practices, as well as call and response liturgy.

Dates to Remember:

4/5: Confirmands will meet at 6 pm in the Chapel for dinner and lesson on Chapter 12 in your "Affirming Faith Journal" on Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection. Please read this chapter in advance of class. We'll be looking closely at evidence for the resurrection of Christ.

4/19: Confirmands will meet in the youth lounge at 10:15 to work on the Confirmation Banner and lesson on Chapter 13 in your "Affirming Faith Journal". Please read this chapter in advance of class.

Mentors and Confirmands Reminders:

Please continue to meet and explore your faith journey in conversations.

The confirmation process encourages each Confirmand to faithfully meet with their adult mentor. They meet at least four times together over the church year to discuss their faith journey, spiritual gifts and service, and spiritual practices. In addition, everyone is encouraged to observe a worship service, a funeral, baptism or wedding together and attend a worship service in another faith tradition. The mentor and their student are each reading the Gospel of Luke and keeping a journal on it.

Bicycle Recycling and Give-Away

Have the kids grown since they last rode their bikes in the color-filled days of Fall? Are you looking for some inexpensive adult exercise – like biking – but don't own one? On Friday and Saturday, April 3rd and 4th, Reading Cares and the Reading Advisory Committee on Cities for Climate Protection (RACCCP) are sponsoring a bicycle recycling and give-away program. This is a chance to clean out your garage or storage shed and to provide your children with bikes that fit – to do your part for Reading's Earth Day celebration.

The bikes will be collected and given away at the Reading Municipal Light Department (RMLD) at 230 Ash Street in Reading. On Friday, April 3rd from 9 am until noon, and again on Saturday, April 4th from 8 to 10 am, you may donate a bike in good working condition. For your donation you will receive a voucher for early admittance to the bike give-away. Those holding vouchers may look for and select a new-used bike on Saturday afternoon, April 4th between 12 and 1 pm; the general public is welcome to come and choose a bike between 1 and 3 pm. No cash involved, and no land-fill either!



Reading Cares, an outgrowth of our visioning work several years ago is blooming! It held a Volunteer Fair Day in the Fall, co-sponsored the very successful Rummage Sale which benefited the Reading Food Pantry, and is now collaborating with RACCCP. If you can help out on Friday or Saturday, please contact

info@readingcares.org, or speak to Betsy Schneider.

Donate a bike in good working condition
Friday, April 3rd, 9am-12pm, or
Saturday, April 4th
8am-10am and receive a voucher for
early admittance to the bike give-away.

Look for a free "new-used" bike on

Saturday, April 4th

12-1pm Voucher Holders

1-3pm General Public

230 Ash Street – RMLD



Contact:

info@readingcares.org

Earth Day Fair April 4th,
11am-3pm

Hosted by Reading ACCCP

We could use some volunteers,
please call Betsy @ 781-779-1108 or

Betsy.schneider@comcast.net

Spring Clean Up, Saturday April 18,

9:00 AM: The Property Committee is asking for your help to keep our beautiful building and grounds looking good. Please join us for our annual Spring Clean Up. Bring your leaf rakes, strong legs and backs and the Property Committee will bring the rest...or just bring yourself.

We would love your company. Youth are welcomed!!! Refreshments will be served. Contact Gary Hylan at 781-942-4853.



Faire Request ~ I am looking for glass baby food jars for the sand art craft for the Midway. We made \$110 profit on them in 2007. We could have made more but we only had 110 jars!! If you have any jars, I'll take as many as you have, please bring them to the office whenever it is convenient for you. Thank you Kathy Guyott, (781) 944-7617

Notes from the Altar Committee...

Orders for the Easter lilies will be due on **April 5th**. Fill out the form (below) or find one outside the Church office. We will also need help delivering the plants on Easter and the week following.

The Altar Committee is in need of two committee members for the upcoming church calendar year. Tasks include calling donors to confirm their gift, ordering the flowers, and being sure the flowers are delivered. There are no meetings. Please consider saying yes when you are called. If you have decided to be on the Committee already, call Mary Ann Higgins.

We have two dates open if you would like to donate altar flowers to honor a loved one or in memory of a loved one. May 31 and June 28. If you would like to help deliver flowers, see Mary Ann Higgins for an assignment. You may deliver on Monday if that day works better for you. This is a great activity to do with your children. Call Mary Ann Higgins 617-347-8346 if you have any questions.

Plant Swap

Is your garden getting boring? Do overtaking plants need some taming?

Are you just starting to plan a garden? Do your indoor plants look like they are taking over? We have just the thing for you! On May 9th, from 8:30-12:00, CWF is holding their annual Plant Swap on the Church lawn outside the office.

You dig up any plants in your garden that are overgrown, you are tired of, or you'd like to share. Bring them to the plant swap and trade them for plants that others have brought from their garden. Indoor and outdoor plants are welcome. No money is exchanged, but you may buy plants if you have none. Floral cards will also be for sale. Any profit will go to the CWF Kitchen Fund. Neighbors are welcome to participate. Questions? Need help digging things up? Call Joan Kingston (781-944-0533) or Mary Ann Higgins (617-347-8346).

Memorial Easter Plants Order Form

Deadline April 6, 2009

I would like to order an Easter Plant to decorate our Sanctuary for the Easter Services.

Please order the following for me:

___ Pink Tulip Plant(s) @ \$6.00 each

___ Easter Lily Plant(s) @ \$6.00 each

Total Enclosed \$ _____

Make checks payable to FCCR and mark the memo "Easter Plants"

In loving Memory of: _____

or

In Honor of: _____

Given by: _____

Check one of the following:

___ I will take my plant(s) home

___ Please give my plant(s) to a Shut-in

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Please pay when ordering. Questions: Call Mary Ann Higgins 617-347-8346

Thank you



Thank you

Dear Friends,

I broke my wrist (silly me) and then I had surgery. Neither are happenings I would have chosen. And yet there was an important discovery in them. Unable to do some things for myself I said "yes" to the many offers of help: "yes" to meals, "yes" to transport, "yes" to your cards and to your prayers. And in saying "yes" I found I was able to feel the love of this church family in ways I would not have, had I said "no thank you" and asserted my independence. So "thank you" to all, for the love which I felt as you cared for, prayed for, wrote notes or called me while I was home-bound. Grace abounds in this place!

With much love, Gay Williams

A Hugely Successful Linen Drive

It took two trips to deliver all the linens to Emmaus House in Haverhill. We delivered over 20 bags of towels, sheets, blankets and new pillows to the family shelter, as well as a few toiletries. The shelter was delighted by the new supply and as always appreciative that our church supports them with such generosity.

Emmaus and its many residents thank you, as well as the Outreach Commission.

One Great Hour of Sharing Report

Many thanks to everyone who contributed to the One Great Hour of Sharing collection sponsored by the Outreach Commission last month! So far \$1,521 has been received, which will help people around the world build lives and communities that are healthy, safe, and sustainable.

Rummage Sale—HUGE Success

Many, many, many thanks to Cindy Dixon from our church, and Betsy Schneider from Reading Cares (and also our own!) for their collaboration on the town-wide rummage sale that was held here at the church in March. Cindy estimates that somewhere between 30 and 40 people from the church and the community participated – unpacking, sorting, stacking, selling, and disposing of at the end. The church was reimbursed for expenses related to space, heat/light and custodial support (\$1000), and the Reading Food Pantry received the proceeds – a whopping \$1200.02! The check was presented to Phyllis Maxwell of the Food Pantry, along with Old South Assoc. Pastor Pam Paquette by Cindy and Betsy on March 20th. The monies will be used for the purchase of vouchers or needed food items.



Cindy reports that after the last happy customer left (which may have been the very satisfied woman who bought a large number of items to send to relatives in Kenya), the balance of clothing and linen supplies were donated to Mission of Deeds (linens and curtains), North East Animal Shelter (towels that were ripped or frayed), Children of the Appalachian Area, Native American Children of South Dakota, Emmaus House (infant clothing), Common Cathedral in Boston (men's wear), Rosie's Place (women's wear), Ethiopia (by way of a church in Burlington) and three van loads of clothing to the Salvation Army in Wilmington. In addition, period style clothing was delivered to the RMHS Drama Club, and left-over wire hangers were graciously accepted by Anton's Cleaners (nothing was to be wasted!). In addition to Cindy and Betsy, many thanks to all of you who supported the sale and worked at the sale – or before or after – as well as to Curtain Time in Stoneham for their generous donation of numerous new curtains.

Daily prayers are invited for all of our friends and members-especially those who are dealing with these special joys and concerns. They and their families are most grateful for your spiritual support and cards of greeting.



We pray for healing, recovery, and strength for:

- ✓ My friend Paula, who is fighting cancer, and her husband Jim, who lost his job.
- ✓ My nephew Brian Sereno who has done well with his first round of chemo and radiation and is starting his second round.
- ✓ Healing for my six-year-old grandson who had a long bout with pneumonia.
- ✓ Marcie to continue to heal.
- ✓ Two of my friends recently diagnosed with cancer.
- ✓ My sister-in-law to find help for alcohol addictions.
- ✓ Dylan, a young boy with a brain tumor, grandson of a friend.
- ✓ My sister who is in the hospital.
- ✓ Joe Kingston's who is doing much better after his bout with pneumonia.
- ✓ My friend Linda having cancer surgery.
- ✓ Adelaide Winham who is healing from her fall.
- ✓ Chris Gazarian and his continued treatment and strength for his supportive family.
- ✓ Esther Larsen, Christine Hylan's mom as she recovers from her second eye surgery.
- ✓ A mother-in-law who is struggling with her health.

We also pray for the following special concerns:

- ✓ The LeConti family for strength and hope with Bryce's everyday challenges.
- ✓ Mark and Marianne as they deal with Mark's diagnosis of cancer.
- ✓ To keep my nephew Tommy safe in Afghanistan.
- ✓ My colleagues who received notice that their positions were eliminated this week.
- ✓ Leah as her mom struggles with drug addiction and emotional issues. Help her to realize its not her fault.
- ✓ Alice who is coping with the final stages of cancer and for her family.
- ✓ Marjorie Orpin who was hospitalized with trouble breathing. She is out of ICU and doing better.
- ✓ Ken that he may remain committed to his healing.
- ✓ A young mother entering hospice care in the end stages of cancer, and her family.
- ✓ Joan Kingston with family struggles.
- ✓ Thank you for praying for my sister-in-law, Cathy who is out of intensive care and ready to go to rehab. Please continue to pray for her.

There is much in our community for which we thank God and we pray in celebration for:

- ✓ The first rational conversation I have had in 25 years with Ken. Thanks be to God!
- ✓ Congratulations to my nephew Kim in the army who just got married.
- ✓ The FCCR kids who put on a great run of Alice in Wonderland at Parker Middle School.
- ✓ The support of the entire Reading community (and beyond) and the Reading Clergy Association in particular regarding the performance by RMHS students of the Laramie Project. God's presence was omnipresent as our Community rallied against hate.
- ✓ My nephew participating in High School track and Field Nationals today - shot-put.
- ✓ Marci Atkins and her beautiful spirit and light.
- ✓ Boy Scouts and their good work outdoors.
- ✓ Cindy Dixon, family, friends old and new for a successful Rummage Sale.
- ✓ The children of our church learning about "mission" as they host Heifer marketplace.

We also pray for those who are grieving:

- ✓ The family of Tracy, 41 years old and mother of two children, for whom funeral services were held this past week.
- ✓ For Mary and her family on the loss of her father last night.

Our prayers continue for those who are in need of ongoing nursing care or assisted living:

- ✓ Bertha Babb (Susan Suarez's mother) at Bear Hill.
- ✓ Doris Torppa (Susan Torppa's mother) at Bear Hill.
- ✓ John Weston at Longwood Place.
- ✓ Libby Hodges at son's in Connecticut.

And those who are cared for at home:

Jane Rice Peter Thorstensen
Molly Rowe Grace Faulkner

Please call the church office for these addresses if you would like to send a card or visit these friends.

Altar Flowers in March

In loving memory of Cliff Allen with love from Lee, Scott, Dawn and all five grandchildren.

In loving memory of Muriel, Bill and Donald Myers from John Myers.

In loving memory of my husband David by Kitty Jones and also for Anna and J.O. Jones and Grace and Nathan W. Eaton.

In loving memory of Robert Fosberg given by his wife, Nancy and family.

In loving memory of departed members of CWF.



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