



The First Congregational Church of Reading

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST • AN OPEN AND AFFIRMING CONGREGATION

Produced by our Church Family

December 2009

Volume 2009, Issue 1

DECEMBER 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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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.

Pastor's Ponderings

Dear Friends,

This year it seems we barely got through Halloween before the "Christmas season" had begun. Now, as the music of the season plays everywhere we go, as the bells ring and lights glare (or glow), and as every retailer offers us special "Christmas" deals, it is harder than ever to remember and focus on what Christmas is about and the REAL reason for the season.

In worship during the Advent season, we will be observing a time of anticipation and preparation for the coming of Christmas. We focus on the joy of knowing that God's love is alive in our world and lived powerfully in the one we call Jesus Christ.

As we recall the meaning of Jesus' life, our worship and scripture will focus on a spiritual journey toward the true Christmas. Special wreathes in the sanctuary will show us the star symbolizing Jesus' birth, the heart representing God's love that lived in Jesus, the cross that recalls Jesus' sharing, crucifixion and resurrection, and the circle that reminds us that God's love never ends. These symbols, along with beautiful seasonal greens and the Advent candles encourage us to prepare for a Christmas when Jesus will again enter our hearts and change our lives.

I hope you will join as we celebrate the Advent Season and journey as people of faith through this special time of year to the manger at Christmas Eve.

With joy and love,

Lisa S

We hope you and your family will join us for worship on Christmas Eve!



Church Contact Information:

Office Phone: 781-944-0205

www.churchofreading.org

Office E mail: office1.fccr@verizon.net

Pastor's Ponderings (continued)

PS – Many, many thanks to all for your warm welcome to FCCR! It is wonderful to be with you and getting to know each of you. Please do call upon me whenever there is any way that I can offer support, or if you have questions or ideas about what's happening at church!

Lisa's Cell Phone Number: 978-314-4265 (Yes, I also text, but I don't tweet!)

Email Address: RevLisa@churchofreading.org or RevLStedman1@verizon.net

From November 30 – December 23, I will be testing my new office hours. Please feel free to drop by or call me during these times! I am also happy to make appointments to see you at other times and to receive your emails and phone calls anytime!

Mondays - 2:00 pm to 5:00 pm – Open Office Hours

Wednesdays – 2:00 pm to 5:00 pm – Open Office Hours

Thursdays – 10:00 am to 1:00 pm – Open Office Hours

PLEASE NOTE: On Tuesdays we will be holding staff meetings from 10:00 to noon. I will be in the building, but will not have open office hours.

Fridays are my regular day off.

If you have an emergency, please do call my cell phone and leave a message. I will get back to you as soon as possible.

Worship during Advent and Christmas

Sunday, Dec. 6th – Second Sunday of Advent

Worship with Communion & Rev. Lisa Stedman, preaching
Lighting the Advent Candle of Peace

Sunday, Dec. 13th – Third Sunday of Advent

Worship: *Gaudete* - Special Music
Lighting the Advent Candle of Joy

Sunday, Dec. 20th - Fourth Sunday of Advent

Worship with Rev. Lisa Stedman, preaching
Lighting the Advent Candle of Love
After Worship in Guild Hall: Sunday School
Christmas Pageant



Thursday, Dec. 24th 5:00 p.m.—

Family Christmas Eve Service
Readings, Carols with
a Special Message for Children

10:00 p.m. —

Christmas Eve Service
Readings, Carols and Candle-Lighting

Sunday, Dec. 27th—

Worship on the First Sunday after Christmas

Worship will include singing our favorite Christmas carols
Seminarian Ruth Richards, preaching
No Sunday School or Children's Program

Sunday, January 3rd—

Epiphany Sunday

Worship with Rev. Lisa Stedman preaching
Sunday School Resumes

We invite you to send one holiday greeting card to church for the **WHOLE** church - which we will hang outside the Main Church office. Consider donating the monies saved on cards and postage to benefit one of your favorite charitable organizations (or some that the Mission Ministry is supporting).



Holiday Happenings

Christmas Eve at FCCR

Christmas Eve is always a special time in our church! Once again this year, FCCR will celebrate the birth of the Christ Child with services of readings and carols with a special message for children at the 5:00 p.m. service and with candle-lighting at the 10:00 p.m. service. Both services will include wonderful and traditional Christmas carols and stories from scripture.

We hope you and your family will join us for worship on Christmas Eve!

Christmas Pageant



Please join us after church on Sunday, December 20th in Guild Hall for the Annual Christmas Pageant. This year's pageant will be a mix of the traditional with something new. Come find out the best part of Christmas, as well as sing some of your favorite Christmas carols. Interested in helping?

Please contact Lesley Kerr at leslykerr@comcast.net or 781.670.9096.

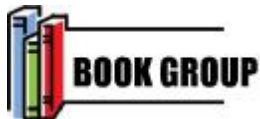
Christmas Caroling

Come ye carolers of all ages to Longwood Place Assisted Living, 75 Pearl Street, Reading on Saturday, December 12 at 6:00 p.m. We will sing along with the residents, possible visit a couple of church members who are shut-ins, and then refresh ourselves with coffee, cocoa and dessert at the Coreys' house. Please contact Laurie Tucker with any questions; 781.944.6786 or tuckerlandb@yahoo.com.



We hope to see (and hear) you there!

The Book Group Choice for December 1 –



Reason For Hope: A Spiritual Journey by Jane Goodall.

Jennifer Souza will be our guide as we consider the faith and the works of Jane Goodall. We know of Jane Goodall as an influential person who has studied chimpanzees for most of her life. We know of her dedication to improving the environment. In this book she shares all of her story including her strong personal faith.

January 5, 2010 – Nine Parts of Desire: The Hidden World of Islamic Women by Geraldine Brooks.

The book brings better understanding of Islam through stories of the progress and struggles of women in the Middle East. Judie Williams will be the leader.

Read ahead to February 2, 2010 when Joyce Burnham will be our guide for Change of Heart by Jodi Picoult. In Change of Heart, the author questions early Christian and Jewish beliefs through a character sentenced to death.

Book Group meetings are usually the first Tuesday of the month in the church parlor. Everyone is welcome to participate.

Altar Committee News

Many thanks to CWF members who have volunteered to deliver flowers through January.

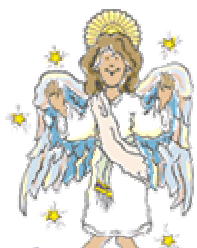
Many thanks also go out to the many people who helped to decorate the Christmas tree and sanctuary for the Christmas season.

It looks lovely with the new greens and wreaths.

There are a few openings in the spring and summer for those who would like to give flowers in celebration or in memory of loved ones.

For those who may have missed a Sunday here or there in November, we want to share with you the richness of the “ministry moments” that were offered up. In other churches some of these might even be called testimonials! That’s not exactly our habit-but we invite you to read these “moments” and listen for the ways in which they testify or bear witness to the Spirit at work in our church, and in our lives.

November 8th: Christian Formation, Lesley Kerr



One of our upcoming programs is the Annual Christmas Pageant. I don’t know about you, but I’m already feeling bombarded by the Christmas commercialism. I have barely put away my Halloween decorations!

I feel that the Christmas Pageant is an important part of the Christian Formation Ministry because it helps remind us all about the true meaning of Christmas, the birth of Jesus. In the past two years that I have been involved in the pageant, I’ve come to realize that the kids really enjoy dressing up in their costumes and sharing this important event with all of you.

Christmas
Pageant

We are planning to change up the Pageant a bit this year. Rather than holding the Pageant during the family service on Christmas Eve, we’ve decided to do it after church on Sunday, December 20th in Guild Hall. We’re hoping that you will all grab a cup of coffee and stay to watch the pageant. Flyers will be coming out on November 22nd to sign up for parts, both speaking and non-speaking. As always, adults are more than welcome to sign up for a part in the pageant.

As with any other theatrical production, we need lots of hand to make the pageant a success. In addition to the cast, we are looking for:

Costume Designers: to clean, organize and assemble costumes from our abundant supply

Set Designers: to assemble and decorate the stage and manger scene

Production Crew: to herd the livestock, shepherd the shepherds, provide wisdom to the wise men and keep the angels angelic.

Caterers: to provide refreshments for the rehearsals and the pageant.

If any of these jobs match your gifts and talents, and you are interested in helping, please let me (Lesley Kerr) know.

November 15th: Mission, Linda Ananian

My name is Linda Ananian and I am the facilitator the Mission Ministry. We have been in the midst of our new structure for about 6 months-and considering we voted it in and then went out for summer vacation, we are really just in the first inning of this new organization. We are all working to make this successful and are trying out new ways of being forward thinking and still get ting the work done.

On Saturday, November 14th, the visioning team met as visioning’ team, not as a ‘doing’ team. I think of these as two different activities because I cannot vision while I do, yet I need to both do and see ahead. We had some good discussion but we are still learning what this visioning means and how to do it.

Monday, November 16th, we have a ‘doing’ visioning meeting—all are invited— where we do more of what I am comfortable with—doing. With Mission, there are unlimited ways we can participate as a church-and we are interested in insuring our ministry matches our vision.

While we reexamine our Mission ministry and reassess our commitments-and if I can piggy-back on today’s themes and “figure out what our favorites are”, Mission will continue to offer our Advent collections. Our first collection is next Sunday-sort of a Kohl’s early bird advent collection-for Reading Food Pantry. Then we collect for the CMS Christmas shop-for children and adults (or the other way around-it really doesn’t matter because we take them all to CMS at the same time). This collection allows families to select gifts for their families-we are looking for people to help sort in Winchester in December. We then collect for the Emmaus-toiletries-, then for common cathedral-we will be collecting art supplies for their common art program as well as socks and underwear (also visioning and doing-visioning with the art and the daily tasks of doing with the socks and underwear).

Please consider ‘sharing your good fortune’ with the Advent collection and continue to participate in our evolving mission.

November 22nd: Congregational Care, Joyce Burnham

For those of you who don't know me, my name is Joyce Burnham (Joyce's words through the voice of another), I'm coordinating Cocoa and Cookies again this year. We will invite the entire town into the church next Sunday, the 29th after the tree lighting on the common, for cocoa and cookies. The weather is supposed to be nice so we expect about 500 people. Thus, we need *lots* of cookies. If you are able to help in any way, we would really appreciate it. Cookies can be dropped off downstairs before 3:00 next Sunday. We also need volunteers to greet folks at the door, make cocoa, serve cocoa, light luminaries and put out the cookies beforehand. This is a wonderful outreach to the community and we need many helping hands.

Although I don't want to lessen my plea for volunteers, my main reason for speaking to you today is tell you a little bit about my involvement and how it really got me started in being member of this church. I've been involved in churches all my life, being a preacher's kid, but this is really the first church that I've committed to by my own choosing. I remember making the decision not to be involved in my church at college at all because the idea of coming to worship and sneaking out without even going to coffee hour was rather exciting.

I was then involved in another church but it didn't ever feel like home. So when my husband David and I moved to Reading and started attending here, I wasn't sure what I wanted to get involved in. I joined the bell choir pretty quickly and then when a call came out for help with cocoa and cookies (3 or 4 years ago), I thought, well, it's a very short term commitment, I can do that and if I don't like it, it will be over quickly. Well, that's not exactly what happened because I had the best time!

I was asked to help out again the next year, and then asked to help with the spring auction, and one thing led to another, and now this church really feels like a family to me. So thank goodness I said yes to helping out at cocoa and cookies that first year. And I think that is the great thing about our new church structure-everyone can pick one little thing that they might enjoy and try it out without being locked into much of a commitment. Everyone can find a little niche that is fun for them, that way our commitment to the church doesn't feel like work. So I encourage all of you to try out new things with our new structure and have fun doing so, because I have and it has really enriched my life.

Congregational Care Ministry Contacts

Care Ministry General Concerns:

Nancy Ballantyne (781.944.7564) or Gay Williams (781.944.5140)

Meal Needs:

Eleanor Grant (781.944.1736) or Carol Johnson (781.944.1347)

Transportation for Appointments, or Errands:

Nancy Ballantyne (781.944.7564) or Carol Patterson (781.944.6592)

Visitation, Companionship:

Flo Sorenson (781.944.2272) or Liz Swallow (781.944.5878)

Prayer/Prayer Shawl:

Carol Patterson (781.944.6592) or Gay Williams (781.944.5140)

Cancer Treatment Support:

Marcie Atkins (781.245.1993) or Barbara Philbrick (781.944.7037)



You may recall that a number of folks in our church made 9 inch squares for Pine Street Inn over the course of recent months. A total of about 95 squares went to Boston from this church! We wrote to ask how the project went and got this message from Julie Lima at Pine Street. "I am so amazed by the knitting efforts of the First Congregational Church of Reading! Please extend my thanks! ... Thank you for making a difference in the lives of our guests and tenants." The official news release follows:

We would like to report that the numbers for the **THIRD ANNUAL PINE STREET INN KNIT-A-THON AND FUNDRAISER** have been tallied. We did not meet our goal....We **completely** surpassed it!

We had hoped to raise \$25,000 - we actually raised \$35,000.

We had hoped to make 50 blankets - we completed 58 and have 40 more on the way. We had 120 fantastic assemblers, Junior League and Pine Street Council volunteers join us on Sunday to help put together the more than 3,750 squares that we collected.

It was an *incredible* day. Thank **YOU** for your participation, whether you KNITTED * CROCHETED * SORTED * SEWED * DONATED * OR ENCOURAGED...**YOU** have helped **PINE STREET'S SUPPORTIVE HOUSING PROGRAM** and that is something for which we should all be extremely proud.

Gently Used Assistive/Adaptive Equipment

The Congregational Care Ministry has heard from several corners a suggestion that we might look into making available for loan, assistive or adaptive equipment that folks might have from a previous recovery time of their own. Please note that we are *not* speaking of taking in and storing equipment at the church – our space and our resources preclude that. What we are thinking about is inviting those of you *with* equipment that you would be willing to loan to another during their time of recuperation.

So, if you have such equipment, please let us know – things such as raised toilet seats, bath chairs or benches, walkers (with wheels, without wheels, with hand-brakes, with seats), canes, crutches, adaptive tools such as reachers/grabbers, grab bar for the tub, etc. We will create an "inventory" list of the things that are available for borrowing, and will then seek to match the lender and the borrower. It seems the landfills are full enough of no longer needed walkers, bath chairs and the like! If you do have such equipment that you would be willing to loan to another, you may contact Gay Williams at 781.944.5140 or via email at ggwill@aol.com. Please be as specific in your description of the equipment as you can. Thank you!



Update on Our Whole Lives

The Our Whole Lives Sexuality Education program got off to a good start last month; we have eight High School youth participating in the program and are learning a lot from each other. Our meetings in December are scheduled for December 6 and 20 from 6:30 - 8:30 PM in the Youth Room.

Meetings are organized and led by trained facilitators Ruth Richards and Dwight Baker but we still have a need for one or two more adult chaperones to observe and join in with the activities who are members of the congregation but are not parents of the participants. If you are interested in helping or would just like to know more, please contact Ruth Richards rutherichards@gmail.com or Betsy Schneider betsy.schneider@comcast.net

This holiday season, the Mission Ministry will again be holding collections to help social-service agencies minister to needy individuals and families.

The first two weeks of Advent, we will be collecting items for the City Mission Society's annual Christmas Shop. The CMS invites needy families and individuals to come and select gifts for themselves and their children. The gifts are donated by partner churches such as ours, and then sorted and packed by volunteers. In 2007 almost 2,000 adults and children benefited, thanks to the generosity of more than 45 local churches, groups, and organizations. On November 29th, we will collect items for children. The following Sunday, December 6th, we will receive items for adults. (Although, we will accept both the children's and adults until December 13th). *Anyone interested in traveling to Winchester after the service to help sort should contact Sharon Ofenstein (skofenstein@charter.net).*

The third Sunday in Advent – December 13th – the Outreach Commission will be soliciting toiletries for the residents of Emmaus House and other clients of Emmaus Inc. in Haverhill. Services provided by this nonprofit organization include emergency shelter and meals, counseling and substance-abuse treatment, and job training and placement. Over the past 20 years, the agency has grown to become a significant service provider and developer of affordable housing. Emmaus House, its best-known facility, is a family emergency shelter.

On the fourth Sunday of Advent we will be collecting for Ecclesia Ministries, which offers social services to the homeless. Their list of needs includes what you might imagine the homeless are lacking—Socks, hats, mittens, underwear, art supplies.

We hope that all of you will join us in these collections to share our blessings with those in need this holiday season. Thank you!

Self-Help Groups at FCCR

OVEREATERS ANONYMOUS meet in the **Music Room** on Saturday mornings, from 7:00-8:00 am, and from 10:00-11:30 am in the **Music Room**.

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS meet on Sunday evenings, from 8:00-9:30 pm in **Pilgrim Hall**.

EMOTIONS ANONYMOUS meet on Saturdays, 10:00-11:30 am in the **Conference Room**.

December 6 ~ City Mission Society

ADULTS

New items for adults: Clothing, wallets, perfume, scarves, hats, gloves, socks, electric razors, bathrobes, afghans, fleece blankets, and gift cards.

CHILDREN

New items for children: Infant clothing and layette items, stuffed animals, toys, games, brown/black/white dolls, backpacks, soccer or footballs, educational toys, art supplies, craft kits, clothing (especially larger sizes), hats and mittens, and gift cards.

December 13 ~ Emmaus House

All types of toiletries (including hygiene products) for men, women, and children. Shampoo, razors, toothbrushes and toothpaste, etc.

December 20 ~ Ecclesia Ministries

Socks, hats, mittens, underwear, art supplies.

December 25 ~ Reading Food Pantry

Nonperishable food items, coffee (reg. and instant), tea (reg. and decaf.), juice and juice boxes, mayo, salad dressings, cookies, crackers, sugar, jam and jelly, brownie mix, pasta, and cereal. Also dish and laundry detergent, toilet paper, Kleenex, and paper towels. Cash donations are also welcome.



We're a collection point for Anton Cleaners Coats for Kids this year—their 15th year. Coats or jackets for kids, adults

and infants are welcome as long as they are in good condition—no tears or broken zippers or permanent stains. Anton's will clean the coats and then distribute them to organizations in MA and southern NH that serve those in need.

Our box is in the Chapel entry way. Be sure to tell friends and neighbors as the collection runs until early January.

NOVEMBER HAM AND BEAN DINNER

Thanks to all who attended the Dinner and Coffee House. Once again, all were able to enjoy good food and great entertainment! Special thanks go out to all who participated in the dinner preparation. A 10-year-old member of the Congregation who helped with the set-up was heard to say, "You know, when you just come for dinner, you have no idea how much work goes into this". Amen!



CHRISTMAS BAGS FOR SHUT-INS

Continuing our long-standing tradition, each Circle will contribute items to fill a goody bag, which will then be delivered to our shut-ins. This bit of Christmas cheer is always very much appreciated. We extend our thanks to Flo Sorenson and Circle 8 for organizing this event. Non-perishable items should be delivered to the Church Office before December 9th. If your Circle contributes a perishable food item, please check with Flo to determine the exact date of assembly. Thanks to all who donate and help assemble.

PIZZA PARTY TO WELCOME OUR COLLEGE STUDENTS HOME FOR WINTER BREAK—DEC. 27TH 6 P.M.

CWF will host a pizza party for the members of our congregation who are home from college for Winter Break. Invitations will be distributed in the Care Packages being coordinated by Carol Johnson. We hope this "reunion" event will become a FCCR tradition. Stay tuned for details.



SOCK AND MITTEN TREE

Once again the Sock and Mitten Tree will adorn the Dining Hall. Members of the Congregation are invited to purchase (or make) socks, mittens and/or hats which will decorate the tree and then be donated to the City Mission Society. Eunice Degal will be coordinating this event and we appreciate her efforts, as well as your donations!

HOLIDAY GIVING

Circle 10 will once again provide a Thanksgiving and a Christmas dinner to a local family in need. Circle 7 will continue their tradition of giving holiday gifts to a Reading child.

NO COOKIE WALK

Please note that CWF is not hosting a Cookie Walk this year. We hope that those who enjoy cookie making might next year make cookies for the church's 7th Annual Cocoa & Cookies!!

CWF BOARD MEETING

The next Board meeting will be held on Wednesday, January 13th, at 7:30 in the Church Library.

JANUARY CIRCLE ASSIGNMENTS

January Altar Flower Delivery: Circle 2 on Jan 3, Circle 4 on Jan 10, Circle 5 on Jan 17, 24, 31

"SAVE THE DATE"

Sunday, February 7th: Circle Sunday Breakfast and Worship

Saturday, February 13th: "First Annual" Spaghetti Dinner and Coffee House

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR VOLUNTEERING YOUR TIME!



Come and enjoy a Winter Wonderland, crafted for your friends, neighbors, and local businesses

Reading Festival of Trees

\$10 admission per-family

To benefit the Reading Technology and Education Foundation

at Parker Middle School, 45 Temple St.,

Saturday, Dec 5, 12 – 6; Sunday, Dec 6 10 – 5.

Also, on Sunday, Dec 6, at 3:00 pm Reading Civic Concert Band presents "Music from Across the Pond"

A celebration of British musicality

Concert admission: Adults, \$12

Students and Seniors, \$8



Enjoy both events, and receive a discount on joint admission

Orders for RED CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS

The gift of a beautiful plant is a thoughtful way to remember a loved one during the Christmas season. Many parishioners do so by ordering poinsettias which decorate our Christmas altar. After the service on Sunday, Dec. 20th, ordered plants maybe taken home or if requested, delivered to a home-bound member of our Church family.

If you would like to place an order, either in honor or in memory of a loved one, please fill out the form below and return it to the office by Wed., Dec. 9th. There will be a box outside the office, or you may mail your order. Please make a note on the envelope – Attention: Altar Committee.

Questions? Call Mary Ann Higgins 781-944-4428, or mahiggins@gmail.com

I would like to order a poinsettia plant to decorate our Sanctuary for Christmas

Enclosed is my check for: _____ Plant(s) at \$5.00 each Total enclosed \$_____

Make checks payable to "The First Congregational Church" and note, "Poinsettia", in the memo.

The dedication should read: In loving memory of _____

(or) in honor of _____

Given by _____

Check one: ___ I will take my plant(s) home

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

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone number: _____



Share the Joy of Christmas

The Property Committee wishes to thank all of the people that came out to help us for the Fall Cleanup on November 7th. It is always a big job in the fall with much to do to get the property ready for winter. Thanks so much to the following: Anne & John Cusolito, John Fairchild, Kathy Guyott, Jennifer Hart (CAK), Gary Hylan, Amy Imrich, Joan Kingston, Craig Taylor, Rev. Lisa Stedman, Brian Tucker and Craig Vickery.
The Property Committee

Dear Friends,

Myself and my family were overwhelmed by the support and love we received from our wonderful friends from FCCR at the time of my beloved husband's death. In fear of leaving someone out, I will not name you all, but YOU and I know who you are. You came to Fred's wake and beautiful Funeral Service. You sent me cards, you phoned and visited me, you comforted me, and for all of this I thank you from the bottom of my heart. Working as your Church Secretary for nearly 20 years, and retiring some 13 years ago, I am so grateful to you all for remembering Fred and me with so much love. What a wonderful tribute to Fred! He had many, many friends and will be sorely missed.

With Love and God's Blessing, Barbara Green and Family

Dear Church Members,

Thank you for my Bible. I read with it every day.

I love my Bible. Thank you so much.

Sincerely, Casey Chabra

Dear Members of FCCR,

On behalf of homeless men and women in Boston, I am pleased to thank you for your recent contribution of squares in support of our Knit-A-Thon event. Your generous contribution supports 1,300 homeless men and women who turn to us for help each day. It is especially meaningful, as we approach the Thanksgiving holiday when men and women, who have very little in their lives, will come together in our shelter and our 29 permanent housing locations to share a traditional meal. A holiday like Thanksgiving, so focused on the companionship of family and friends can be especially difficult for the men and women who have lost connection with those once close to them. Your gift helps ensure that no one will be alone or forgotten. At Pine Street Inn, we believe that everyone deserves a second chance – a chance to rebuild their lives and reconnect with their community. Your generosity makes a real difference, not only during the holiday season, but also throughout the year.

Sincerely, Lydia Downie

THANK YOU!

We're sending our many, many thanks to Judy and Jack Austin and friends for their gift of a true Thanks-giving Dinner at church on Sunday, November 22nd. They purchased and prepared with love, turkey and all the extras that go with such a meal. About 130 people were served! We gave thanks, sat with friends and made new ones at the table, and were treated to a wonder-full day! Blessings to you, Jack and Judy!



Journey Pals 2009

Thank you to everyone who participated in the Journey Pals program this year. We had twenty-four pals, adult and youth, who exchanged letters over a six week period. On November 15th most of the pals got to meet each other and decorate (and eat!) gingerbread cookies. If you have not met your pal, please contact Betsy Schneider to arrange a meeting. We hope you will consider participating in the Journey Pal program next year. It is a wonderful way to make new friends in our church community.



*Great Job!
Journey
Pals!!*

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 son-in-law's father who is losing his battle with cancer.
- ✓ A brother who is having thyroid surgery and all who are having knee surgery.
- ✓ Enid Schmuch, who fell, that she will recover quickly.
- ✓ My cousin Abby to get better.
- ✓ Bryce Le Conti who is again at the hospital that they may find some answers to help him.

We also pray for the following special concerns:

- ✓ The Wyman family of Newton.
- ✓ Brian who is in the last stages of colon cancer and is now home under care of hospice.
- ✓ All our brothers and sisters who are searching for jobs.
- ✓ Ken, who has blown rehab and is in danger of becoming homeless, may he know he is a child of God
- ✓ All who are dealing with loss - of loved ones, employment, hope and disappointment
- ✓ The Carciro family
- ✓ The families in Reading tragically affected by the shootings at Mass General
- ✓ Troops in Iran and Afghanistan
- ✓ A lovable teen who does not know how lovable they are
- ✓ Two extended family members who are battling recurring cancer
- ✓ Jan, who was diagnosed with stage 5 cancer.
- ✓ Those who are out of work and unable to find employment
- ✓ Mike Bailey, 48, very ill in final stages of Cancer. His wife, Sylvia, was just diagnosed with MS—they have three children
- ✓ A friend and neighbor in the final stages of cancer
- ✓ A friend going through a divorce
- ✓ A friend's 7 year old nephew, dying of brain cancer, who may be taken off the ventilator

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

- ✓ We praise God for our Church Family, a Lord's Blessing.

- ✓ Chad's 8th anniversary at FCCR.

- ✓ The safe return of Shirley Osborne's nephew from Iraq.

- ✓ Prayers of gratitude for everyone who helped prepare church Thanksgiving dinner on 11/22

- ✓ Carol Patterson on her return home following successful surgery and her continued recovery

- ✓ Joann, Shirley and members of CWF for Ham & Bean dinner and Brian for the great Coffee House.

- ✓ We are grateful to all for the prayers for Reading's school superintendent, Pat Schettini's successful pancreatic cancer surgery. He is recovering and thanks everyone for their kind thoughts and powerful prayers.

- ✓ Work by the Visioning Team at yesterday's retreat.

- ✓ Our wonderful Thanksgiving Dinner put on by the Austins.

We pray for comfort of those who have lost loved ones:

- ✓ The Langone family as they mourn the loss of Matty, age five, who died from a rare childhood cancer
- ✓ The family of my nephew Rob Perry, who passed away suddenly yesterday
- ✓ Family and friends of Ryan Golden who died in a car accident on Saturday night
- ✓ Paul Langone and family
- ✓ Brian Swanson who died on 11/21, his family and friends

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.

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.



Thanks to those who donated flowers to beautify our worship space in November:

In loving memory of Jean and Donald Pray by their daughter Elaine Bachelder.

In loving memory of Vi and Whit Woodward by Shirley Myers-Thurston and their family.



In loving memory of Barbara Brown by her husband William Brown.

The cornucopia (November 22nd) full of the abundance of our harvest, reminds us of the many blessings that fill our lives. Given to the Glory of God by the people of our dear Church.

In loving memory of Jacqui Little, former deacon, Faire Chairman and Altar Committee Chairman, whose birthday was November 29th. Given by her loving husband, Gordon, her daughter Dianne and her granddaughters, Charlene and Jacqueline.

