



# The First Congregational Church of Reading

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST • AN OPEN AND AFFIRMING CONGREGATION

Produced by our Church Family

March 2011

Volume 2011, Issue 3



## 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.*

### Welcome!

At FCCR, you will find joyful hearts, open minds and a caring community. If you are a long-time church member, seeking a new spiritual community, or brand new to the very idea of "church"...if you are young or have young children or are mature beyond your years...if you are single, married, partnered, divorced, widowed, or in transition...no matter who you are, at FCCR, you are welcome to join us in celebrating God's love, sharing warm welcome, and offering sanctuary for all.

### Ash Wednesday Soup Supper and Service— March 9th

Lent begins at FCCR this year with a special Soup Supper in the Chapel from 5:30 to 7:00, followed by a service of worship at 7:15 pm. Come and join in around the table for good food and in reflection and prayer with others. As we enter into the church season of deepest meaning, we will open our hearts to God's great mercy and love, and pray for renew understandings of what it means to be Christian in today's world.

### Ash Wednesday Soup Supper



We will also share soup every Tuesday during Lent at 6 pm. All are welcome, and there is always enough for all who come. If you would like to bring salad, soda, dessert or bread to share please do, but this is not necessary. Any questions contact Joan Kingston 944-0533 or Laurie Tucker 944-6786.

### March Worship Schedule

Sunday, March 6 – Transfiguration Sunday Worship with Communion Rev. Lisa Stedman, preaching FCCR Ensemble playing	Sunday, March 20 – Second Sunday in Lent – HEIFER SUNDAY! Worship in the Heifer Spirit! Heifer Fair following Worship
Wednesday, March 9 – Ash Wednesday Worship in the Chapel at 7:15 Soup Supper – Chapel 5:30 – 7:00	Sunday, March 27 – Third Sunday in Lent Worship, Rev. Lisa Stedman, preaching HandBell Ensemble playing
Sunday, March 13, First Sunday in Lent Worship, Rev. Lisa Stedman, preaching	

Church Contact Information:

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[www.churchofreading.org](http://www.churchofreading.org)

Office Email: [office1.fccr@verizon.net](mailto:office1.fccr@verizon.net)

Dear Friends,

A couple of years ago, on one of those late February warmer sunny days, I attended a day-long seminar in Gloucester, at a retreat center right on the ocean. It was a beautiful day! The setting was spectacular, the companionship of colleagues was very enjoyable, and the program was both wonderfully reflective and fun! It reminded me once again of how much I enjoy being part of a group actively exploring our relationships with God.

The season of Lent, which begins March 9<sup>th</sup> with Ash Wednesday, is a time in the Christian calendar to explore and draw into closer relationship with God. In some traditions, this is done by forfeiting for the season something that might be a barrier to that closer relationship. In other traditions, this drawing closer is the result of an intentional and intensive exercise of prayer.

This year, I will be offering an opportunity for adults to join in a group experience to explore our faith and our relationships with God. Offered at two different times for your convenience, every other week during Lent, this experience will utilize the same program materials from the retreat I attended several years ago. We will use some of the Biblical Psalms as a basis for reflection and sharing.

The opportunity is entitled “Just a Closer Walk: A Psalm-Inspired Lenten Path.” As I review hymns for the Lenten season, I am always inspired by the words of this wonderful hymn of faith. Whether you are able to join a psalm group or not this season, I hope you will experience the call of this hymn, and the inspiration of God’s Spirit.

*Just a closer walk with Thee,  
Grant it, Jesus, is my plea,  
Daily walking close to Thee,  
Let it be, dear Lord, let it be.*

in faith,

Lisa



### Adult Lenten Series

“Just a Closer Walk: A Psalm-Inspired Lenten Path”, as discussed above, is a great way to draw closer to God during the Lenten season.

Lisa will be offering this opportunity at 2 different times, as long as there is sufficient interest at each time. All sessions are open to anyone who wishes to participate.

Group A will meet from 7:30 until 8:30 every other Tuesday evenings after Soup Supper. (March 15 & 29 and April 12). Group B will meet from noon to 1 pm on three Sunday afternoons (March 13 and 27 and April 10).

I also would be very interested in offering this to a group on-line, either through a blog or a group skype, if there is someone who could help with the technology and others who would like to join in. Please email me if you can help or are interested in how this might work.

If you wish to sign up for a particular group/time and/or have questions about this unique Lenten opportunity, please email, call or speak to Rev. Lisa Stedman. Feel free to just join in whenever you like.

### FCCR Member Info Offering

If you are interested in learning more about First Congregational Church of Reading and our denomination, the United Church of Christ, or if you are considering what it might mean to become a member of the church, please speak to Rev. Lisa, Judy Austin or Deidre Ryan. We are hoping to schedule a gathering for those who are interested during March and a new member Sunday for April. If you aren't sure, but want more information, please let us know!

## Dates for Upcoming Youth Events, Heifer Sunday

Be sure to mark your calendars for the following youth events in March. Also, please be aware that most of the communication organizing youth outings occurs through email. Contact me (bhggins@bu.edu) if you would like to add yourself to the list. Be sure to watch the church announcements and E-news for an announcement about the dates of our summer Mission Trip very soon!

March 6 – Sr. Youth meeting in the Youth Room after worship

March 20 – Heifer Sunday

March 27 – Jr. Youth event

Peace,

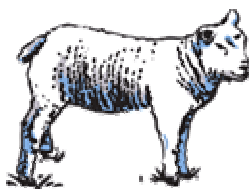
Blake Huggins

Director of Children's and Youth Ministries



## Heifer Marketplace Returns to FCCR!

Please join us at the annual Heifer Marketplace after worship on Sunday, March 20th. Support the work of this great organization, Heifer International, which not only helps lift people out of poverty, but also gives them the chance to "pass on" their good fortune.



Our church school members, High School Youth Group, and Prayer Shawl Ministries will be sponsoring animals/gifts from chicks to water buffalos to knitting baskets.

Invite your friends, family and neighbors to attend this lively and successful fundraiser.

## Looking for Teachers for Next Session of Church School

The Christian Formation Ministry is looking for teachers for the next session of Church School. This session runs from March 27th to June 5th and will end with Children's Sunday. If you enjoy singing and drama this may be the session for you! The session includes 7 teaching weeks which will include lessons based on the curriculum and preparation for Children's Sunday. Teachers are free to join worship on holiday weekends, school vacations, and intergenerational services. We are looking for 2 teachers for each of the following classes: Pre-K & K, 1-2 grade, 3-5 grade, and 6-7 grade. Please contact Betsy Schneider, Lesley Kerr or Blake Huggins if you are able to help.

## 2011 Summer Camp Opportunities

Yes, it is already time to start thinking about summer activities!

The NH UCC Outdoor Ministry has posted camp schedules and registration information at [www.hortoncenter.org](http://www.hortoncenter.org). New this year are mini-camps for elementary school children in July and an extended week for high school students in August. Family camp, a great vacation and chance to experience Horton Center, will be held on August 9-12th.

Children and families from FCCR have been attending Horton Center for years, and would love to share their experiences with you. Contact Betsy Schneider for more information.

**Marilyn will be out of the office** March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> and March 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> for cataract surgery and a procedure on her cornea. For those weeks, the office will be closed on Tuesdays and there will be coverage on Wednesday and Thursday. Office coverage will be posted and on the office phone message so please check if you need assistance.

Rev. Lisa will be at the church for her regular office hours both weeks, and will be trying to answer the phone as she is able on the Tuesdays.

The 2011 Stewardship pledge campaign is now well underway. We are asking for your pledge of financial support for the 2011-2012 program year, which begins July 1<sup>st</sup>. Our theme for this year is Count Your Blessings. Throughout the month of March we will hear from our church ministries -- Christian Formation, Congregational Care, Worship, Resources, and Mission - about the programs and activities that serve our congregation, our community, and the world.

These programs and services are made possible by your generosity. Your pledge greatly helps FCCR to predict what resources we will have to retain staff, purchase materials, maintain or upgrade our facilities, and to support and perhaps influence causes beyond our congregation. To your credit, pledges have been a reliable and accurate predictor of your financial contributions.

You will receive a pledge card in the mail. When you consider your pledge, we suggest that you first think of your pledge as a percentage of your in-

come. What percentage of your income is an appropriate response for you? Then convert that percentage to a dollar amount for your pledge. On April 3<sup>rd</sup>, Stewardship Sunday, we will ask you to bring your pledge card forward during worship and deposit it into a basket. If you will not be able to attend that day, please complete and return your pledge card to the church office.

Ultimately, your generosity is your response to the blessings that you receive from God every day. Your gifts are an important statement of your faith and what it means to you to be part of this community of faith and ministry.

The First Congregational Church of Reading needs and asks for your financial support.

Please feel free to contact any member of Stewardship if you have any questions:

Chris Kerr, John Myers, Steve Viegas, Cathy Zeek, David Zeek.

## Lent Looms—Reconnect with Your Spiritual Roots

Lent is just around the corner. What could be a better time to reconnect with your spiritual roots? The ACE group can make that easy for you. ACE is an email and on-line group where members of FCCR share prayers and scripture.

In Lent, we fire up the *psalm-o-matic*. This feature delivers a randomly selected psalm to your email inbox every morning. Beginning each day with a psalm brings you a whole different understanding of this much beloved collection of liturgical poetry. Last year, the ACE people read through all of the epistles in the New Testament that were *not* attributed to Paul. This year, we'll read through four of the Pauline epistles. These writings are considered to be the foundation of our faith, but sometimes, we forget what's in them. Won't it be fun to re-read some of them? It's just a little bit at a time so as not to become overwhelming.

Then, we'll have a daily prayer from one of our hardy prayer writers/finders. Please feel free to join in with your own prayers as well, or just enjoy the ones that show up each day. In past years, a few people have tried writing a prayer each day. That could happen again. You'll never know unless you sign up to find out.

To sign up for the whole ACE experience, send an email to [FCCR-ACE-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:FCCR-ACE-subscribe@yahoogroups.com). If your only interest is in testing the *psalm-o-matic*, just send an email to [psalms@fccr-ace.org](mailto:psalms@fccr-ace.org).

## Centennial Committee Prepares to Plan for May



The Centennial Celebration Team has begun to plan for the May 1, 2011, activities. Our successful and fun luncheon on Oct. 31 celebrated the first service held in the yet to be completed sanctuary.

Our May 1 activities will reflect the celebrations held during the week around May 1, 1911, which included the final completion of the building project, the dedication of the new organ and the installation of a new pastor. There were 11 worship services in the week of celebration.

We will celebrate our church's history our church's future by an Open House, a Rededication ceremony, an organ interlude, followed by a concert by our own Jubilate Ringers, our bellchoir. During the Open House we plan on a special belated Coffee Hour, informational booths about the current activities of and in our church and activities for children. Special historic tours will be offered before the Open House.

The team is looking forward to another great time together!

# January Congregational Meeting Report

Over 50 friends sipped soup and heard reports during the January 30th Informational Meeting. Mission presented its current budget (shown below). Resources provided a financial and building work update, which included good news about the progress of the mortar being replaced. The Info Seekers ad hoc group, Jane McCord, Betsy Schneider and Vern Imrich, shared some very interesting stats about how valuable church buildings are in our society—how they provide reasonably priced meeting space and how each week they greet and support many people (many more than fill the pews on Sunday). If you are interested in working with them as they help us all think about our building as an asset and what we can do with that asset, contact any of them.

Visioning has been working to develop some small group ministry opportunities. A new spiritual nurturing evening small group ministry is underway, and we are looking to schedule an early morning spiritual nurturing small group ministry (might you be able to help?). Deidre Ryan is looking into an adult mission trip. We have monthly soup suppers on the calendar. Amy Imrich and Lesley Kerr are planning family nights to develop a new social group for families of young children. And Rev. Lisa has planned spiritual nurturing opportunities (see page 2 of this newsletter).

Please contact any member of the Visioning team if you are interested in working on any of these activities or join us at the next Visioning meeting on Monday, March 20.

Linda Ananian

### Planned Benevolence Disbursements, 2010-2011\*

MACUCC (Mass Conf)	\$24,000
City Mission Society	\$ 2,300
Andover Newton Theological - general	\$ 500
Andover Newton Theological - book fund	\$ 500
BU Book Fund	\$ 500
Habitat for Humanity	\$ 500
Emmaus House	\$ 500
Reading Food Pantry	\$ 500
Evangelical Presbyterian Church Sem. Ghana	\$ 500
Ecclesia	\$ 500
Gaza Hospital	\$ 500
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$30,800</b>

As agreed upon at the Mission Ministry

## The Rummage Sale Returns!

Thanks to the efforts of many volunteers, FCCR will once again be hosting the annual rummage sale. Last year was a great success, not only in recycling vast amounts of used clothing, but also in donating a portion of the proceeds to the Reading Food Pantry. It was truly a town-wide event, and we are excited to be able to provide this service to our community again.

Clean, functional clothing and linens may be dropped off at the church basement off Sanborn Street anytime. Hours for the sale are Friday, March 18<sup>th</sup>, from 6-9pm and Saturday, March 19<sup>th</sup>, from 10am-2pm.

Please consider helping out, even for just a few hours. We need sorters during the week before the sale, clerks during the sale, and clean-up help. Earn vouchers to use at the sale, help your community, and have fun with your friends and neighbors! Volunteer to help by calling Cindy Dixon 781-942-2145 or by contacting [info@readingcares.org](mailto:info@readingcares.org). We hope to see you there.



## RCCB Winter Concert

On Sunday, March 6 at 3:00 pm, the Reading Civic Concert Band will present their winter concert at the Parker School auditorium. This year's theme will be Myths, Legends, Fables, and Tales. Admission at the door is \$12, \$8 for students and seniors, and children, 8 and under, are free. RCCB is a not-for-profit volunteer band, supported in



# Saturday night, April 9th, beginning at 5 pm: An Evening of Fun for Everyone!

No one seems to know the true origin of April Fools Day, which makes it easy to stretch and reshape it as we wish! We're extending the fun this year to April 9th when together we will be "**FOOLS FOR FUN!**"

We will have something for everyone: kids, teens, parents and grands:

- Silent auction items—from local vendors as well as members of our own church family
- Chance items—where everyone has an opportunity to win
- Live auction items—a fun time bidding against one another for some special item or service
- Food—of course...there's always food—dinner and dessert
- A magician to dazzle and delight you
- Balloons shaped in every manner
- And a community sing-along with a singer/song-leader



## We need YOUR help!

- ⇒ To follow up on letters sent to area businesses for donations (3 or 4 volunteers needed)
- ⇒ Someone(s) to plan our meal
- ⇒ Decorators for tables and space—Dining, Guild and Pilgrim Halls
- ⇒ Folks to help with the set up for dining, auction tables and entertainment areas
- ⇒ A "dessert maven" - soliciting finger desserts for after dinner
- ⇒ Assist with set up—laying out of auction items—early in the day on April 2nd
- ⇒ Helping during the event—selling chance tickets, assisting with closing out and dispensing goods at the end

Please let Linda Ananian know what you will do to help. Phone her at 781.944.0460, or send an email to [lananian@gmail.com](mailto:lananian@gmail.com).



## We need your donations too!

Maybe you've done this before—or, maybe the Auction is a first for you. Either way, it will be a great event, made even more spectacular by your donations for bidding.

**Services**—home made soups or cookies or meals scheduled out over time; help in the home; a bike or canoe or kayak trip with your gear; a gardening assist; child care; flower arranging; use your imagination!

**Goods**—a handcrafted item such as jewelry, knitted or quilted goods; a photograph or painting; tickets to a show or sporting event; a restaurant outing; home grown fruits or vegetables; or a gift basket.

Please contact Gay Williams to let her know what you will be donating—with a description and approximate value! Phone her at 781.944.5140 or send an email to [ggwill@aol.com](mailto:ggwill@aol.com). With your help this event will be nothing short of phenomenal!

**Tickets will be \$10 per person or \$25 per family. Advance reservations a must!**

Call Gay Williams at 781.944.5140 or email at [ggwill@aol.com](mailto:ggwill@aol.com).

**Watch your mailbox for the exciting details about our performers!**

## “There is Enough” - One Great Hour of Sharing

This is the theme of this year’s One Great Hour of Sharing, which our congregation will celebrate Sunday, April 10. On this vast planet of God-given resources, we honor our Creator because there is already enough for all. We live in a world brought into being and intended by God to sustain all of creation. Yet far too many across our globe do not have all they need. Brothers and sisters near and far lack even the basic necessities of life: water, food, shelter, jobs, or peace. So if there is, indeed, enough to go around, why are so many without?

There is enough—but for all to have access, we must share. And that’s what One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) has been doing for more than 60 years—sharing your resources with those who need them most. OGHS is the special mission offering of the United Church of Christ that carries God’s message of love and hope to people in more than 80 countries. This offering is also taken by eight other Protestant denominations, thus multiplying the effectiveness and extent of our witness many times over. In cooperation with hundreds of local partners around the world, One Great Hour of Sharing is part of a remarkable network of service and caring that is efficient, effective, and faithful. Administrative costs are typically less than 8 percent annually.

Through OGHS, the UCC works with national and international partners to provide sources of clean water and food, education and health care, small business micro-credit, emergency relief, and advocacy and resettlement for refugees and displaced persons. OGHS also supports domestic and international ministries for disaster preparedness and response. The UCC annually channels more than \$3 million dollars through One Great Hour of Sharing to these and other humanitarian needs in the world.

The funds collected help to:

- Build sustainable communities through self-help programs that enable people and communities to stand against and rise above hunger, disease, illiteracy, and other forces of injustice that deny and destroy dignity.

- Respond to disaster with emergency and long-term assistance to people in the aftermath of natural or human-caused events such as hurricanes, tornados, storms, floods, tidal waves, fires, explosions, technological disasters, civil strife, and war.

- Minister to refugees by responding with advocacy and help, hope, and hospitality.

As you can see, sharing your resources through your One Great Hour of Sharing offering can literally change the lives of those who otherwise would not have enough. Sharing our God-granted resources helps others not only survive, but perhaps even thrive as they find new ways to generate income, gain access to clean water, grow food, and live in communities where peace and justice prevail over poverty, violence, and inequity.

### Drivers Needed

The Care Committee is trying to expand our list of volunteers who are available to drive members of our church family when a family member or friend is unavailable. Most of these trips are to medical appointments in the area, some for shopping and errands, or even transportation to church. Since you would usually have to be available during the day, retirees are the most likely source of volunteers. We have an energetic, loyal core of helpers now, but the need has grown lately and it would be helpful to have an expanded list from which to draw. To add your name to our list does not mean a definite commitment for any particular job or length of time, just an okay to call you if a need arises. I’m sure you would find this service rewarding, and often a good opportunity to meet a new friend! If this sounds like something you’re interested in please call me.

Nancy Ballantyne, 781-944-7564 For the Care Committee.

## Building Centennial - Other Memorials of the Church

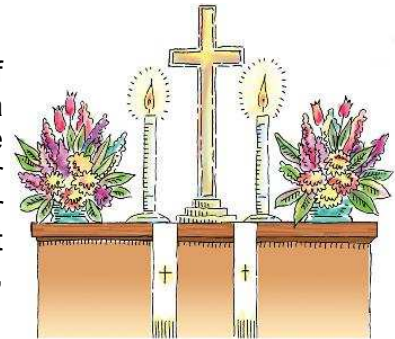
Last month, the history of the Stained Glass windows of the sanctuary were discussed. However since 1910, other permanent memorials have been given to the church.

The first of these of course was the Bell in the Belltower, in place when the first service was held in October 1910. It was dedicated by Miss Lucretia Hopkins in joyful memory of her sister, Mrs. Mary Pratt.

The new church organ was installed next in March 1911. This was a gift from Miss Clara Pierce in memory of her father, Samuel Pierce, for many years an organ builder in Reading. A special inaugural recital was held Tuesday evening, March 28, 1911, dedicating the new organ. Another Organ Recital was held on Wednesday May 3, 1911, during official 'Dedication Week' Ceremonies.

As was mentioned in the previous newsletter, the Sanctuary's Stained Glass windows were installed over the years. The first, the 'Resurrection' window, over the Altar, was installed in 1914. The last of the windows, the 'Ascension' window over the Balcony, was dedicated in 1977.

On March 5, 1961, a new sanctuary altar was dedicated in memory of Rev. Payson Pierce, pastor of the church from 1922 to 1946. Long a dream of Rev. Pierce, it was made of imported Italian marble with the monogram 'IHS' in the center - the traditional Greek monogram for 'Jesus'. The ceremony was presided over by Rev. Paul Sheldon, pastor of the church. Guest preacher Rev. Kermit Nord, minister of the first Presbyterian Church of Mineola, N.Y., and son-in-law of Rev. Pierce, also officiated.



In 1991, the Annual Meeting endorsed the idea of building an Atrium between the Library of the 'new' (1959) building and the 'old' (1910) building, in space formerly deemed unusable - as well as 'homely'. On Sunday, Jan. 24, 1993, an attractive new Atrium was dedicated by Rev. Alan Bond, in memory of several former Church Members.

Shortly after the Atrium dedication, the Schmitt Memorial Windows, which can be seen from the Atrium, were dedicated on April 18, 1993. The previous windows, located in what is today Classroom 23 upstairs, had fallen into disrepair after completion of the 1959 Building Addition. The new windows, symbolizing the works of 'Creation' were installed & dedicated in memory of Charles A. and Katherine Schmitt. Images such as the Oak, Grapevine, Apple, Rose & Butterfly, to name but a few, symbolize the many Christian virtues.

The pastors photo gallery, a project begun by former church historian Alan Ulrich in 1994, posted as many known portraits as possible, of all former pastors and associate pastors of the church in 1994.

In addition to the above 'tangible' memorials, many 'intangible' memorials have been donated to the Church over the years, for various building improvements, to further Christian Education & Music programs, as well as other charitable works of the Church.

### 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**.

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

AWOL OA meet on Sunday mornings, 7:00-8:30 am in **Pilgrim Hall**.

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

## Opportunities in the Greater Community

Dear Friends,

Can you envision a coalition of LGBT welcoming churches within our community? Might this coalition sponsor outreach at community events? Provide resources? Send a message of tolerance to the wider community? What would your vision be? We look forward to hearing your ideas.

Collectively, our voices are stronger. Together we can build a faith based movement for equality and inclusively. Anne Wiehem member of South Church's Committee for Open Dialogue will be contacting you within the next few weeks.

Coalition of Churches first meeting date will be:

April 4<sup>th</sup> 7pm, South Church, 41 Central St., Andover, MA 01810

For more information, please feel free to contact Anne at: 978-475-1491

**Merrimack Valley Hospice is forming a Threshold Choir.** Initiated in 2000 by Kate Munger of Inverness, California, a Threshold Choir honors the ancient tradition of singing to people at bedside as they near the end-of-life. A Choir service will also perform for patients in nursing homes and hospitals. Along with singing at the bedside, a Threshold Choir service alleviates stress for caregivers and family members and can be included as a part of a patient funeral or memorial service,



Merrimack Valley Hospice is currently recruiting volunteers to join this Choir. Interested parishioners should be at least 18 years of age, enjoy singing, and be willing to travel to sing at the bedside of patients in our service area. Choir practice is scheduled to begin in late February and will take place twice a month in Andover. Parishioners who would like more information should contact Sheryl Meehan by phone at 978-552-4522, or by email at [smeehan@homehealthfoundation.org](mailto:smeehan@homehealthfoundation.org)

### From the MBA—Ending Homelessness

Recent Successes and the Next Steps The seventh annual homelessness forum of Advocacy Network to End Family Homelessness will be held on Sunday, March 6, 3-5 p.m. at Trinitarian Congregational Church, Concord. Tina Brooks, MA Undersecretary of the state's Department of Housing and Community Development, will be keynote speaker at the annual forum sponsored by the Advocacy Network to End Family Homelessness. Brooks will report on the successes as well as current and future plans of the state's new programs to end family homelessness by 2013. The new programs are based on homelessness prevention and diversion, and rapid re-housing from shelters. In addition, two citizens will share their personal experiences of how the pilot program helped their families avoid homelessness through the diversion and prevention programs.

### Chronic Disease

Hallmark Health and Hallmark Health VNA and Hospice are sponsoring a Free Program on Chronic Self-Disease Management for six sessions beginning March 7 through April 11 (9:30am—noon) at the Medford Senior Center. The Program is a "must attend" for those with chronic diseases, such as diabetes, arthritis, heart disease, and asthma. Caregivers are also invited to participate. To register, or for more information, call (781) 338-7572.



**Cookie Walk, February 13**

Thanks so much for supporting the Cookie Walk. It seemed like everyone enjoyed getting Valentine's Day cookies. The bakers came out in full force, and there wasn't one bar cookie or brownie in the place!! The beautiful assortment gave everyone a great selection to choose from and we profited \$260!!

**Antique Appraisal Morning, April 16**

Have you always wondered the value of the painting Aunt Sue gave you? Wondering if you should hold on to those old books? This is your chance to get the answers. CWF is having an Antique Appraisal on Saturday, April 16th from 10-1 in the dining room. Bring up to three items to be appraised by Gerald Herrot, a certified appraiser. The cost is \$5 per item or 3 items for \$10. Coffee and crumpets will be served, as we listen to the stories about unique items. No antiques??? Come anyway for the fun.

**Looking ahead**

Plant Swap, May 21st

In case you were wondering, we will not be having a Spring Ham n' Bean or Spaghetti Dinner. Please enjoy yourself at the Auction and the Antique Appraisal instead.

**Thank You Notes**



Dear Prayer Shawl Ministry,

I want to thank you so very much for the beautiful blue shawl that I was presented with in December. When I wrapped myself in it the first time I felt warm and peaceful and loved. It helped me when thinking of my brother and his recent passing but also of my sister and when she passed on 8 years ago. It has helped me remember both God's love and the love and fondness of kind people such as yourselves. Thank you for such a wonderful gift.

With appreciation,  
Janet Russell

To the Members of the Chancel Choir, FCCR, UCC,

Many thanks to all of you for your gift of \$220.00 in honor of Chad Kidd and Jill Lauterwasser to the Reading Food Pantry. Your donation will be used buy gift cards so that our families will be able to purchase perishable items in addition to the groceries that we can provide.

If any of you are available for an hour or more on Saturday, May 14th, we will need many volunteers to help sort the groceries that will be collected by the Reading Mail Carriers. After noontime at Old South Church will be the best time to come. We are grateful to all of you for thinking of your Reading neighbors who need some extra help.

Sincerely, Charlotte Harlan and Phyllis Maxwell

(from Samaritan's Purse)

We would like to extend a very special thanks to your congregation for partnering with Samaritan's Purse in the work of Operation Christmas Child. In 2010, we were blessed to receive over 5.5 million shoe box gifts in the United States and nearly 2.7 million boxes from 11 other sending countries, bringing our total to some 8.2 million gifts for needy children around the world!

Thousands of churches just like yours from across the United States participate in the project each year. The ultimate gift we want children to receive goes far beyond the colorfully-wrapped packages. That gift is the Good News of the Savior, Jesus Christ. Through our follow-up discipleship program, "The Greatest Journey," more children than ever before have the opportunity to hear about Jesus and commit their hearts to Him. We are especially excited that "The Greatest Journey" Bible course will be offered in 65 countries this year!.

**National Collection Week is Nov. 14-21, 2011.**

Dear Rev. Lisa and FCCR,

Thank you for your donation of two laundry baskets full of toiletries. In-kind gifts of goods and services are essential to our mission. We appreciate your thoughtfulness and concern for those who are homeless.

Sincerely yours, Jeanine T. Murphy, Emmaus House

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.



### Prayers for the Month of February

Following are many of the prayers shared during the past month

#### **O God, We lift up our petitions and concerns in prayer..**

- ✠ Betty Horne recovering from surgeries and preparing for cancer treatments.
- ✠ Norma Commins, Jane McCord's mother.
- ✠ Ginny Davenport and Kathy Ulrich who are dealing with Cancer.
- ✠ Amy Imrich's uncle, Andy Colby that his chemo treatment for acute myeloid leukemia will be successful and have minimal side effects. Give him strength.
- ✠ Nathan, a young boy with leukemia.
- ✠ Ed Dombrowski who is still battling cancer and does not have long to live.
- ✠ May God be at my wife's side as she travels to Chicago to visit her mother for possibly the last time.
- ✠ A friend's wife struggling with mental illness.
- ✠ All who are dealing with depression or anxiety.
- ✠ Shirley Osborne, recovering from hip surgery.
- ✠ A mother suffering from alcoholism.
- ✠ Strength to the members of Pleasant Street Congo, UCC in Arlington that closed yesterday after 168 years of ministry. May they continue to be Easter people as they find new faith communities.
- ✠ My wife Laurie who hurt her back.
- ✠ Elaine, recovering from heart surgery.
- ✠ Joan Kingston who is having back problems.
- ✠ For comfort.
- ✠ For Ann and Milton Iwen in FL, Milton having had a heart attack following surgery.
- ✠ Those dealing with chaos and change in countries in Northern Africa and the Middle East.

#### **O God, we lift up these celebrations and joys in prayer...**

- ✠ Happy Birthday Joe Kingston, Marissa, John Myers, Marilyn Hossman, Gary Hylan and Ginny Davenport.
- ✠ The tradition, the fellowship and the many ways the CWF support the ministries of this church.
- ✠ We are grateful for the experience we shared with our exchange student from China and wish he and his group safe travel as they tour the US and then fly home next week.
- ✠ My mother Margaret who turned 90 this month.

#### **O God, we pray for those who are grieving...**

- ✠ For Arthur Knapp and Marilyn Russell as they grieve the death of their sister Lois Donovan.
- ✠ The family of Barbara Thomas who passed away suddenly from a brain hemorrhage.
- ✠ Norma Commins, (Jane McCord's mother) and Jane and family, grieving the death of two brothers/uncles in recent weeks.
- ✠ The McDonald family in Lawrence who lost their mother Darlene.

#### **And those who are cared for at home:**

Jane Rice	Peter Thorstensen
Grace Faulkner	Bill Rule
John Weston	

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 February**

- In loving memory of departed members by CWF.
- In loving memory of my husband Bruce, by Carol Patterson.
- In loving memory of loved ones by Joan and Joe Kingston.
- In loving memory of Lois Donovan, sister of Marilyn Russell and Arthur Knapp.



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