



# The First Congregational Church of Reading

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST • AN OPEN AND AFFIRMING CONGREGATION

Produced by our Church Family

May 2009

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## 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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### All—Church Picnic – June 14th

Who says you have to be a kid to have fun? Join us at the annual FCCR picnic on **June 14<sup>th</sup>** at Ipswich River Park in North Reading for some fun for all ages. We have reserved the Gazebo from noon to 3:00pm, so there will be shade and tables and space for games as well. CE will provide grills, burgers (meat and veggie), hot dogs, and buns. Families whose last names begin with A through L are asked to bring desserts. Families whose names begin with M through Z are asked to bring side dishes. Everyone should bring his or her own beverages. If you have ideas or materials for outdoor games or crafts, please contact Linda Jerrett at [ljerrett@bu.edu](mailto:ljerrett@bu.edu) or Betsy Schneider at [betsy.Schneider@comcast.net](mailto:betsy.Schneider@comcast.net).

### FCCR Idol? – Talent Show May 9th

“If you have the notion, come join the commotion. Whether you sing, dance or play a tune, tell a story or joke around like a loon, give it a try and you’ll find out, what having fun is all about. If you know that you don’t want to participate, come watch and make the rest of us feel really great.”

Share your gifts and talents at the annual **FCCR Talent Show on May 9<sup>th</sup>, 6:30 pm** in Guild Hall. Will you play an instrument, recite a poem, dance, sing a song, tell a joke? Get some friends together and perform a skit! It is up to you, and Simon won’t be there, so everyone is a star. The Congo Club will provide desserts and beverages, so just bring your talent and your family and friends. We can’t wait to see what everyone has to offer. We will need audience members as well. Please contact Betsy Schneider to sign up or with any questions at [Betsy.Schneider@comcast.net](mailto:Betsy.Schneider@comcast.net).

### Annual Meeting

**Friday, May 15**

Pizza at 6 pm

Meeting at 7 pm

Read more about this on Pages 3-5



### Barn Dancing—Auction—Dinner—Pie Baking Contest

**Saturday, May 30**

5-9 pm

Read more about this on Page 10



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On May 31 the Pentecost Season begins. "Penta" means fifty. It was fifty days after Christ rose from the dead that the promised gift of the Holy Spirit came. "I will not leave you as orphans," said Jesus to his disciples the night before his execution, "I will come to you" (John 14: 18). Who, or what, is "the Holy Spirit" (or "Holy Ghost" in the King James Version)? Is it a Casper the Friendly Ghost who attends church? I can wrap my mind around the idea of God as the Creator and Caretaker, and Jesus as the Teacher and Redeemer, but what about this Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit would bring many things, Jesus said. *"The Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you"* (John 14: 26). *"When [the Spirit] comes he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment..."* (John 16: 8). *"But when the Spirit of Truth comes he will guide you into all truth...the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you"* (John 16: 13-15). So the Holy Spirit is the spirit of Jesus imparted to us. The Spirit is the mysterious presence of God given to comfort, guide, convict, teach, and empower those who would follow Jesus.

Billy Graham, I believe, once said, *"If the Holy Spirit was taken from the church, 90% of our activity would continue like it always has."* Sad, but true. We often wind up "playing church" instead of letting the Spirit empower and direct our activities. Prayer becomes a perfunctory activity used to open meetings, but do we really expect that God might show up and ask us to put our agenda aside and listen for the Spirit's call?

The Holy Spirit is also known as the "Advocate" in John's writings. An advocate is one who argues on your behalf, who fights for your position. The Holy Spirit is an advocate during those times when your conscience accuses you and compels you to bring it to God or to the one you've wronged. The Spirit reminds us that Christ died and rose for that sin and we can approach God without fear of rebuke or punishment. But there are also false voices that accuse us; voices that say we are incompetent, unlovable, and unworthy. The Spirit says to our spirit, *"No, you are loved with an inestimable love. You are an accepted, forgiven, gifted person from Me to the world. Yes, you fail and fall short, but that never affects my love and support for you. I have a dream, a vision of wholeness for you. Live in my love and power."*

I try to practice what I call, *"spiritual breathing."* It's based on the idea of exhaling the bad air and inhaling the good air. Whenever I am aware of an area of my life that is displeasing to God (and to me), where I feel weak and unsure, when I need a word of encouragement and insight, I will breath out the bad air by confessing it to God. *"God, I know you don't want me to harbor that resentful attitude toward so and so..."* *"God, I'm having a hard time trusting you with my money right now..."* *"God, I'm feeling really crummy about myself right now and I need some divine perspective..."* *"God, I know that there are hungry people in the world while I am overweight, but I really don't care..."*

In place of the bad air, I breathe in the refreshing breath of the Spirit of God. *"Lord, fill me with your Holy Spirit. In place of unbelief, give me faith. Instead of resentment and bitterness, change my heart to love that person. Grant me peace instead of worry because I can trust your power and grace in my life."*

I doubt if you will hear bells ringing or choirs of angels singing the Hallelujah Chorus. But, by faith, you can know that God the Spirit has filled your life, for this is God's will. *"Do not be filled with wine, which is debauchery,"* wrote Paul, *"but instead be filled with the Spirit."* And elsewhere John said, *"If you pray according to my will, I will hear you and grant you the requests you have made."* It is surely God's will to fill us with the Spirit. The promise of Jesus is not only favor toward you, but also power through you by the Holy Spirit.

*Keep in step with the Spirit,"* one translation of John's writing puts it. Happy walking!

Blessings,

Rev. Norm

**Rev. Bendroth** will be on vacation from May 12 through 20 hiking in the Grand Canyon. Any pastoral emergencies should be directed to the office where they will be referred to the appropriate clergy person.

**May 3****Fourth Sunday of Easter**

*Good Shepherd Sunday and Holy Communion*

Acts 4:5-12

Psalm 23

1 John 3:16-24

John 10:11-18

*"Enfolded by Love,"* Rev. Bendroth preaching

**May 10****Fifth Sunday of Easter**

***Mother's Day***

Acts 8:26-40

Psalm 22:25-31

1 John 4:7-21

John 15:1-8

*"The Motherhood of God,"* Rev. Bendroth preaching

**May 17****Sixth Sunday of Easter**

Acts 10:44-48

Psalm 98

1 John 5:1-6

John 15:9-17

*"Friends Together,"* Guest preach to be announced

**May 24****Seventh Sunday of Easter**

Acts 1:15-17, 21-26

Psalm 1

1 John 5:9-13

John 17:6-19

*"The Real Lord's Prayer,"* Rev. Bendroth preaching

**May 31****Pentecost Sunday**

*Confirmation Sunday*

Acts 2:1-21 or Ezekiel 37:1-14

Psalm 104:24-34, 35b

Romans 8:22-27 or Acts 2:1-21

John 15:26-27; 16:4b-15

*Confirmands presenting their "God glimpse"*

**Camperships Available...** Summer is almost here. There are many UCC camping opportunities available for youth in New England. Check out [http://www.macucc.org/youth/Outdoor\\_Ministries-NewEngland.htm](http://www.macucc.org/youth/Outdoor_Ministries-NewEngland.htm). The Christian Education Commission is offering camperships to youth interested in attending one of these camps. Please contact Lesley Kerr, [kerr.c@comcast.net](mailto:kerr.c@comcast.net), or Betsy Schneider, [betsy.schneider@comcast.net](mailto:betsy.schneider@comcast.net) if you are interested in applying.

## Annual Meeting—Friday, May 15—Important Discussions

As we prepare to meet for our **Annual Meeting** on **Friday, May 15**, we are continuing to examine ways to reorganize our committees and commissions. The forum held was well attended with a great deal of thought provoking discussion. A second forum will be held on **May 3** after church. Please attend.

The image of the restructuring is shown in the Flower Power image on the following pages. The Visioning group would be responsible for keeping the vision, forming multi-year plans, communications, and mediation. Similar to Deacons, it 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.

All current Commission/Committee responsibilities have a "home" in the proposed structure. The plan is to "try on" the new structure for 2009-10 year with specified evaluation points - with the option of making adjustments. We are planning on having coordinators for each ministry as we begin the change.

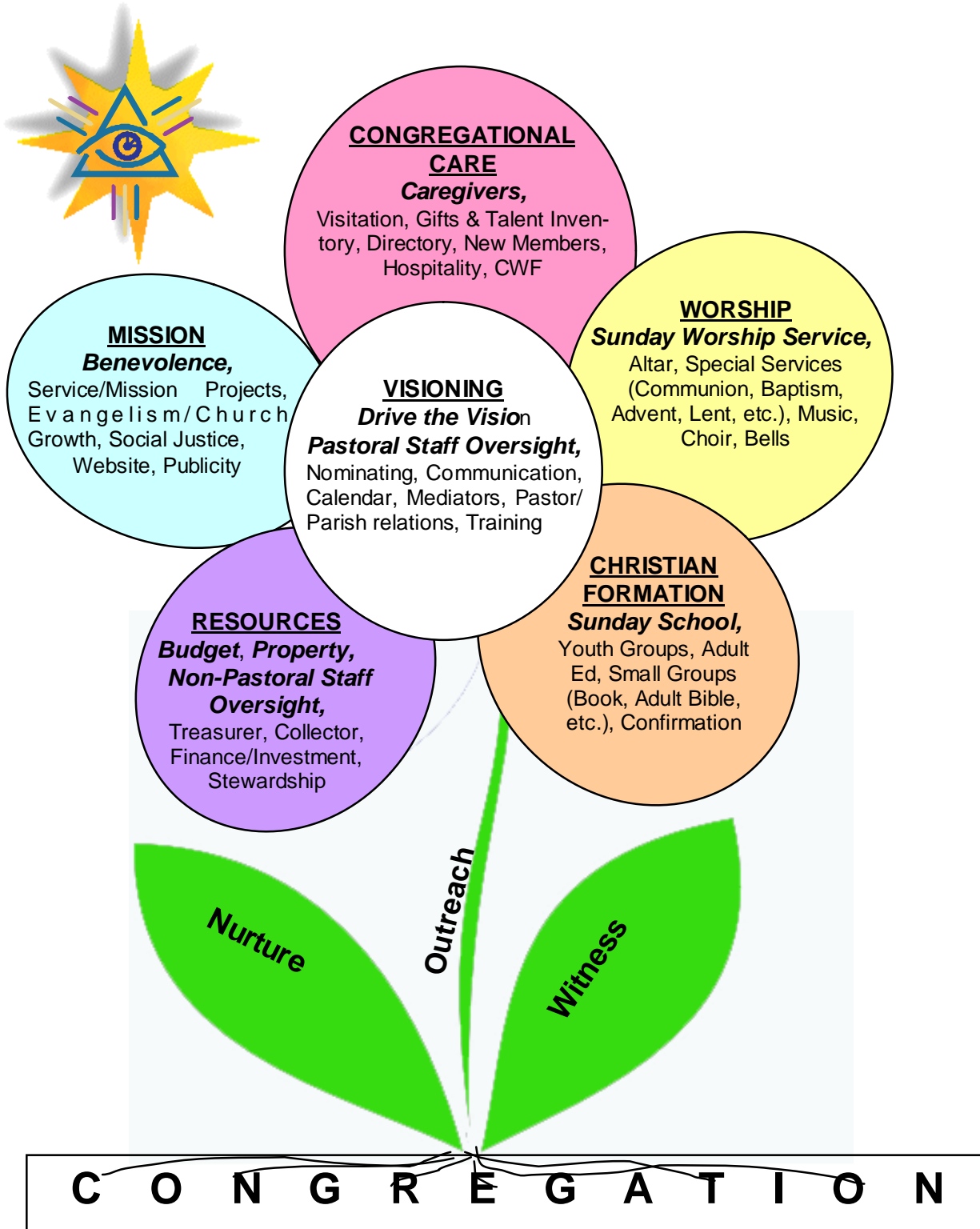
Please come to the **May 3 forum** to help flush out the details. Bring your questions, ideas, concerns, comments. We will make a decision about how we move forward in the new year at our Annual Meeting on Friday evening, **May 15<sup>th</sup>**!

Labels for Education is an easy way for us to support Elon Homes. Elon Homes and Schools for Children provide for over 1,000 children and families a year in North Carolina an excellent opportunity for safe haven, life skills and education. See the bulletin board outside the office to see which labels are accepted.



Rev 4/26/09

May 2009



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

**Unchanged** from current Bylaws: Name, Covenant, Character, Membership, Governing Body (i.e., congregation), Executive and Financial Officers of the church, Pastors

**Proposed changes:** From current four Commissions plus Committees to:

**Visioning Team** (flower center) – provides the leadership to bring the church's vision to fruition. Made up of active members - the Moderator (acts as Chair of Visioning), Clerk (acts as Recording Secretary of Visioning), five Ministry chairs/liaisons, two At-Large members (who may be focals for special functions like nominating or mediation), Treasurer and Sr. Pastor. Visioning's prime goal is to look to the future of the church as directed by the Governing Body (congregation) and keep the Ministries focused. Visioning will also serve as the central communication point for all the church's activities and act on behalf of the Governing Body. It is not Church Council by another name. It has been suggested that a special quarterly visioning meeting be held to ensure the prime focus is kept. The other main responsibility of Visioning is Pastoral Staff oversight. **Ministries** (flower petals) – have broad areas of responsibility, form goal-oriented sub-teams as needed (size and duration as needed), must carry out function(s) listed first in bold italics. Each Ministry is represented on Visioning and that Visioning member would be the main two-way communication vehicle between Visioning and the Ministry and would coordinate the formation of the Ministry. Ministry members are not elected at Annual Meeting.

(More information is available on the bulletin board outside the office)

### ***How come God is on the outside of the chart instead of at the center?***

This is an organizational chart of how the church would function, not a theological chart about our core convictions or values. The graphic shows God as the sun who bathes everything we do.

### ***How will the Visioning Team work?***

The Visioning Team will be the representative body of the church acting on behalf of the Congregation for routine matters. Its primary purpose, however, is to drive the vision that the congregation establishes at any congregational meetings

### ***How will the Visioning Team be selected?***

The Visioning Team will include the Moderator/Chair of the Team, Clerk/Recording Secretary, Treasurer, a representative from each of the five Ministries, two at-large members, and pastoral staff. The Visioning Team will be elected at the Annual Meeting – nominees can be presented by Visioning or can be nominated from the floor of the Annual Meeting.

### ***Doesn't this centralize the "power" in the Visioning Team?***

No. The vision comes from the congregation at Annual Meeting and other times when we meet for discernment and prayer. The Visioning Team are charged with providing leadership to make sure the vision is carried out.

### ***What will happen to the Deacons?***

The Deacons' functions will be carried out by Visioning (pastoral oversight and mediation), Worship Ministry (worship planning and music) and the Congregational Care Ministry (visitation and other assistance to families in need). As of this writing, the NOW/RE-group does not have a recommendation on the future of the position of "Deacon" – Worship or Congregational Care or Visioning members might continue the title of Deacon or the title might be dropped or replaced.

### ***How will we monitor the progress of this new model?***

NOW (Nurture Outreach Witness) has been intimately involved in this REnewal process and will be active in the new structure. NOW will monitor progress and be available to get feedback from the congregation. A Congregational meeting in January is planned to evaluate how the new structure is functioning and if any adjustments are needed.

### ***What about term limits?***

Since we will try this for a year and then evaluate, the first term will be for only a year. Permanent term limits will be decided after the trial period.

### ***How will Ministries be "staffed"?***

All members of the church will be highly encouraged to pick a Ministry that best matches their prime interest and gifts. This does NOT mean you have to attend regular meetings. It does mean that you will participate as actively as you like in the area to which you feel called.

## Say Goodbye to Karl

Come say good bye to Karl Gazarian, our seminary intern from Andover Newton Theological School this past year, on **Sunday, May 10**. Karl has been working with Rev. Bendroth leading the confirmation class and sharing in a wide-variety of pastoral tasks. He will be back on May 31 for Confirmation Sunday, but May 10 will be his official farewell. Come for a special coffee hour and well-wishes to Karl.

## Confirmation News

Confirmands continue to meet with their mentors to talk about their faith journeys, and read the gospel of Luke together. The entire class participated in Heifer Sunday and raised money to buy a cow..

One of the required activities of the confirmation class is that the confirmands attend services of other faith traditions. In some years, this has meant visiting the jazz service in Cambridge or the Remnant Youth service in Dorchester. This year the confirmation class ventured outside the Christian tradition by visiting Mun Su Sa, a Korean Buddhist temple in Wakefield. On Sunday, April 26, nearly 30 youth and adults were warmly received and introduced to the Buddhist faith. Our host, Dr. Ernest Unhoi Do, a certified International Dharma Instructor of the Jogye Order of Korean Buddhism, presented a slide show: "Eight Scenes of the Life of the Buddha". Then Dr. Do, assisted by Roy Goodwin, recently certified as a Dharma Instructor, gave a tour of the temple so we were able to view their original Buddhist art, both paintings and sculpture. We also saw the wonderful lotus lanterns that they make every year at this time as part of a celebration of the Buddha's birthday, which is May 3 this year.



The confirmands also met for dinner and class on Sunday, April 5, to answer the question, "What Did Jesus Do for Us?" We looked at ways the Church has looked at the meaning of Christ's life, death and resurrection, theories on how his life reconciled us to God, and what it means for us in our daily lives. Our session this month will be **Sunday, May 3** with dinner at 6 p.m. and class at 6:30 p.m. We'll be looking at "Jesus Christ, Risen Savior." Please read chapter 13. On **Sunday, May 17**, students will have a chance to finish up their Christian Year banners and work on their statement of faith or "God Glimpse."

During May, Rev. Norm would like to meet with the confirmands individually to talk about their confirmation experience and see if they are ready to make a commitment to Christ and the church. Mentors will be working with students on their statement of faith and Rev. Norm will help with some guidelines.

**Sunday, May 31**, is **Confirmation Sunday** where those students who wish to be confirmed will share their "God Glimpse" with the congregation and confirm their desire to be a disciple of Christ. A celebration, of course, will follow.

## Youth Group Leader Opportunity

We are looking for an energetic, creative, part-time Youth Group Leader starting in the fall of 2009. This individual will be responsible for shaping and running youth groups for middle and high school students, in conjunction with the Christian Education Commission and the Pastor. S/he would lead 3-4 monthly meetings that would build community, provide opportunity for Christian formation, recreational activities and service projects. Anticipated requirement of 12-16 hours per month, with possibility of additional hours for OWL and/or mission trip leadership. Applicants should email a resume and cover letter to: Rev. Dr. Norman B. Bendroth at [revnorm.fccr@verizon.net](mailto:revnorm.fccr@verizon.net).

**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.

## Our Whole Lives Training

Our Whole Lives (OWL) is a comprehensive sexuality education curriculum which was co-developed by the UCC and the UUA. The curriculum provides age-appropriate information for kindergarten through adults in six areas: human development, relationships, personal skills, sexual behavior, sexual health, and society and culture. We will be offering this program to our middle school and high school youth in the fall/winter of 2009/10. This is a voluntary program, and parental orientation will be available prior to the start of the program.

The Mass Conference (MACUCC) is offering comprehensive training for potential leaders on **May 29-31** in Framingham. We already have 1-2 people who are interested in attending, and would love to have few more. Are you interested in working with our youth in this crucial area? Ideally, both men and women should be involved in leading this program. You can find out more about the program and training by going to [www.macucc.org](http://www.macucc.org), click on Youth Ministry and scroll down to OWL Training. Additional training dates may be available.

If you have any questions or suggestions, please contact Linda Jerrett at [ljerrett@bu.edu](mailto:ljerrett@bu.edu) or Betsy Schneider at [betsy.schneider@comcast.net](mailto:betsy.schneider@comcast.net).

## Youth Mission Trip 2009

During June, five youth from FCCR (plus a friend from Old South Methodist Church) will be traveling to Washington DC for a week-long work camp. They will be sharing this mission with youth from the Melrose UCC. Organized by YSOP, this trip involves helping at various service sites in the city, as well as preparing and serving dinner for homeless clients. There will also be some time for reflection, discussion, and sightseeing! Our missionaries include: Elysa Bond, Emily Crampe, Sarah Cruickshanks, Margaret LeLacheur, Billy Tucker and Chris Webb. Accompanying them will be our amazing chaperones Larry Piper and Laurie Tucker.

As part of the mission experience, the youth will be attempting to cover their expenses through fundraising. They have a relatively short amount of time to raise these funds, so please be on the look-out for ways to support them. You can become a "share holder" in the mission trip by purchasing a certificate, or participate in a bake sale, car wash or restaurant fundraiser. More details will be available shortly. Working with others to support those in need will be a great experience for our youth!

## New Seminarian to Join FCCR in the Fall

The Deacons are pleased to announce that Ruth Richards will be joining us in September as our Field Education student from Andover Newton. Ruth's bio is below. She will bring tremendous gifts to our church with her experience in Christian Education and leadership in her home church. She spent last year as a seminarian at First Baptist Church in Worcester and honed her ministry skills even more there. She plans to concentrate on adult education, women's ministry, and working with us on our infrastructure. In addition, she and other members of FCCR are taking the training to teach Our Whole Lives (OWL), a curriculum for teenagers on human relationship and sexuality from a Christian perspective.

From Ruth Richards: "I grew up in Canterbury in the United Kingdom, and studied Chemistry at the University of Oxford, which was where I also came to my Christian faith and was confirmed in the Church of England at the age of nineteen. On

graduating, I developed platinum group metal catalysts in the chemical industry for nine years, becoming a stay-at-home mother when my husband, John, and I were expecting our second son.

"In 1993 John was offered an interesting-sounding job in the pharmaceutical industry in Cambridge, MA and we moved to the USA with our two young sons, James and David, expecting to spend two or at the most three years in the States. We have lived here in Acton MA ever since, are US citizens and my sons are now both college students, although James graduates this spring. I am a member of the Acton Congregational Church, UCC, and worked there as the Coordinator of Children's Christian Education for several years, which was when I began to sense the beginning of a call to ministry. I am now nearing the end of my M. Div. at Andover Newton Theological School and am looking forward to joining First Congregational Church, Reading in the fall as a Field Education student."

Your Pastoral Search Committee has been hard at work since the last newsletter! We strive to open and close each gathering in a faith-centered manner which includes scripture, reflection, and prayer. In response to our posting on the UCC website, we have received numerous candidate profiles. We have been meeting at least weekly, and at each meeting we review seven or eight candidates to sort them into three groups as follows:

- Candidates to whom we send our church's profile
- Those profiles we hold for further review at a later date
- Those to whom we send a "thanks, but no thanks" letter

Interview candidates will be selected from the group receiving our church's profile. We have crafted a uniform list of questions to be used for each interviewed candidate to learn about their theology, their personality and their management style. We hope to have our first round of initial interviews within the next month.

The Search Committee is sensitive to the congregation's desire to find a settled pastor so that our church can move forward in an environment of stability as opposed to living with transition. This is a big, time-consuming process, and to rush it might leave a gem undiscovered. We thank you for your patience. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask any of us. We are: Joyce Burnham, Ginny Davenport, Christine Hylan, Jane McCord, Bob Svensson, Craig Taylor, Laurie Tucker and Steve Viegas.

## Property News

The Property Committee has a number of things going on which you might be interested in.

Considering that our building will be 100 years old next year, the committee thought it was time to take a look at the condition of our stained glass windows. We proceeded to do a survey of all 120 windows (yes you read it right) and document the condition of those windows. We especially wanted to identify windows that were in need of immediate repair where we are losing heat through cracked or broken glass and frames. We were pleased to find that out of the 120 windows only ten were in need of immediate repair. The window survey will be available in the office if you are interested in seeing it.

You might have noticed that there is a new plaque in the Dining Room. It is next to the kitchen door closest to the stairs. It recognizes the contribution that the families of Phyllis Morand and Julia Gilligan made in their name to the Kitchen Renovation Fund. We were able to bring the kitchen up to code last year thanks to their generosity.

A thorough survey of our buildings heat and electrical systems was recently completed by Massachusetts Interfaith Power and Light. The report contains many recommendations concerning the heating system, hot water system, windows, insulation, and lighting. We believe many of these recommendations will help us improve the efficiency of our systems making us better stewards of both our financial resources and the environment.

## Take a Hike for Humanity – May 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup>

A team of FCCR hikers, the Congo Climbers, are once again participating in the Take a Hike for Humanity regional fundraiser for Habitat for Humanity. We will be hiking to benefit Habitat for Humanity of Great Lowell (HfHGL), the affiliate for whom we are a covenant church. HfHGL built the two homes in Reading a couple of years ago and is currently building homes in Bedford using "green" technology.

Join the Congo Climbers! We will hike on **Sunday, May 31<sup>st</sup>**, at the Blue Hills Reserve, leaving from church around noon. The anticipated trail choices include a flat, ½ mile trail around the pond and a 2 mile easy trail through the woods with an optional moderate climb. We'll poll the team and split into smaller groups if necessary. You may also hike on your own Saturday or Sunday, May 30<sup>th</sup> or 31<sup>st</sup>, at

either Mt. Monadnock or Blue Hills. Each hiker is asked to collect pledges, suggested \$25 minimum. Contact Joann Sanford (781-944-7805 or [jo.take@verizon.net](mailto:jo.take@verizon.net)) for registration forms and pledge sheets or go to [www.takeahikeforhumanity.org](http://www.takeahikeforhumanity.org). **Forms are due to Joann by May 11<sup>th</sup>** – if we send in \$1000 with our registration, we will qualify for "Congo Climber" shirts. You can also register online at <http://takeahikeforhumanity.dojiggy.com/index.cfm?PageID=48949> – click on "Register for this hike-a-thon online" and join the Congo Climbers team.

Can't hike? **Consider a pledge to the FCCR team.** Pledge sheets are posted outside the office door. Make checks payable to HfH-Greater Lowell and place them in the box in the office or pledge online at <http://takeahikeforhumanity.dojiggy.com/pledge/index.cfm?mid=CONGOCLIMBERSTEAM>

## Book Group Selections for May and June

### **May 5 – 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 Bonhoeffer’s thoughts and ideas.

### **June 2 – Hot, Flat, and Crowded – Why We Need a Green Revolution – And How It Can Renew America** by Thomas L. Friedman

Friedman proposes what he calls “Geo-Greenism” to save the planet from overheating and to make America healthier and more secure. He suggests clean-technology breakthroughs needed and declares this an “energy technology revolution” that will be of significant proportions.

Tom McCord will lead the discussion. The **May 5<sup>th</sup>** meeting will be at **7:30** in the church parlor. The **June 2<sup>nd</sup>** meeting will be at **7:30** at the home of John and Mary Ann Lape (3 Niblick Way, North Reading, 978 664-3583). Everyone is welcome to participate in all or some of the book discussions. The group meets on the first Tuesdays of the month from October to June.

## ACE Praying Through Lent

The FCCR-ACEs, our on-line prayer and discussion group, tried to be a bit more spiritually disciplined during Lent. This involved reading a Psalm each morning and participating in the daily prayer activity. The Psalm, chosen randomly by the Psalm-o-matic program one member devised, was delivered to people’s e-mail each morning at 1 a.m. Fortunately, for those with short attention spans, Ps. 119 was not in the cards for this year’s random selection process. Perhaps next year.

The daily prayer took two forms. We continued the process of creating a schedule that randomly assigned various members to provide a daily prayer. In addition, we set up a Prayer Blog so that members could post more frequently than scheduled. Several people did post rather frequently. You can check it out at <http://fccr-ace.org/>. If you’d like to participate in the prayer blog, drop Larry Piper a line ([Larry@LGPiper.net](mailto:Larry@LGPiper.net)) and he’ll set you up with log in credentials. If you’d just prefer to comment on other people’s prayers, you can do that without needing to log in.

The ACE group is primarily an e-mail list group. List members can post by sending e-mails to [FCCR-ACE@yahoo.com](mailto:FCCR-ACE@yahoo.com) and anything other people post will be delivered to their e-mail, either each message as it is sent out, or in digest form, all messages from a given day in one combined e-mail. You can also check out old posts on-line by visiting <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/FCCR-ACE/>. If you would like to join the list, drop Larry Piper an e-mail, or merely send an e-mail to [FCCR-ACE-subscribe@yahoo.com](mailto:FCCR-ACE-subscribe@yahoo.com), and you’ll be all set.

## Widely Successful Bicycle Recycling/Give-Away

About 60 bikes received new homes during the 1st annual bicycle recycling and giveaway that was held on April 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>, sponsored by Reading Cares and the Reading Advisory Committee on Cities for Climate Protection (RACCCP). It was very successful and well appreciated—people are already looking forward to next year. Reading Cares continues to fulfill its mission. Next on board is **Town Day, June 20**. We are looking for helpers to staff our booth, please contact [info@readingcares.org](mailto:info@readingcares.org), or speak to Betsy Schneider.



Congratulations to our own Lisa Engelbrecht whose "Limeade" quilt was featured on the front page of the Chronicle in April, and which has been selected as a semifinalist in an international quilting competition in Paducah, KY. Lisa's quilt was chosen out of 709 quilts entered in the contest. Her quilt is a contemporary - and original - design; it's a square wall hanging in lime green, black and purple. We hope you did well!

## It's More Than An Auction... and—You Won't Want To Miss It!!

Sat., May 30th, 5-9 pm—Something for Everyone!

**TO START** there will be dinner—brought to you by the well-known FCCR team of Austin-Ryan-Svensson & Friends. We're having a country theme so you will sit at table with red and white checked tablecloths and be invited to various "stands" or stations to select your favorite fare. Rumor has that there will be fried chicken, pulled pork, corn on the cob, cole slaw, hot dogs, mac 'n cheese, potato salad, and taste treats about which we have been sworn to secrecy! You *know* that all of it will be tasty!



**TO END** there will be pies for dessert—pies dreamed up, lovingly crafted and artfully presented by members of the FCCR family. It's a contest—with prizes! We *know* there are any number of excellent cooks out there. We'll plan on slicing up the pies in small pieces so you can try more than one. And...if you're lucky, you might even be approached to be a judge! Please contact Eleanor Grant so she can track our count of pies well in advance of Auction day. Her phone is 781.944.1736, or you can email her at [egrant8178@aol.com](mailto:egrant8178@aol.com).

### AND IN THE MIDDLE...

Live and Silent  
Auction items from  
area businesses  
and the good folks of FCCR:



Red Sox tickets, wine basket, a Love Story portrait session, hand crafted jewelry, pet sitting, home baked goods for 3 months, yard work, paper cranes, a granny afghan created by one our loved members, a wide variety of gift certificates, and much more!

**Tickets \$10/person, NTE \$25 per family. Please purchase by May 24th—at coffee hour or from Marilyn in the office.**

**Have a good or service to donate? Please let Gay Williams know, not later than May 24th so we can put the program together. Want to help in some other way? Talk to Linda Ananian, Joyce Burnham or Craig Taylor. Thanks!!!**



Entertainment  
by Jacqueline  
and Dudley Laufman—*Two Fiddles*



As dance fiddlers, *Two Fiddles* has an earthy sound that combines with the beating of their feet as they call out the figures for old time New Hampshire barn and square dances. They are self-taught and play by ear, having learned by the oral tradition. They continue this tradition through their own students and apprentices.

The kinds of dances they do are Virginia reels, circle dances, square and contra dances, and dances from the colonial period to the present. Everyone is able to join in the dances; no experience needed.



The Easter lilies and tulips are given in honor of:

*Friends & family by Everett A. Blodgett  
Flo, Kathy, and Gay by an anonymous donor  
Our family near and far by Thomas J. and Jane C. McCord  
Marilyn, Tim, Jim and Bruce whose efforts make our Church function well  
Linda Jerrett, and all others who work with the youth of our Church whose talents  
enhance our worship so much by Thomas J. and Jane C. McCord.  
Rev. Dr. Norman B. Bendroth and Karl Gazarian by Thomas J. and Jane C. McCord  
Members of committees and commissions who work so hard for our Church and community  
Rev. Chad William Kidd, Jill Lauterwasser, Martha Goodman and our musical community,  
who enhance our worship with their music.*

The Easter lilies and tulips are given in loving memory of:

*Jacquie Little by Gordon Little*

*Jim Russell by Marilyn Russell*

*Tom Ofenstein by Sharon Ofenstein*

*Friends and family by Judie Williams*

*John & Esther Kane by Sharon Ofenstein*

*Loved ones by Carol Patterson*

*Mr. Mac by Joan and Joe Kingston*

*George P. Elliott by Phyllis R. Elliott*

*Ernest Degel by Eunice Degel and family*

*Our parents by Arthur and Lorna Knapp*

*Dorothy Scheib by Beverly Cook and family*

*Loved Ones by JoAnne and Stephen Peters*

*Manuel Souza by Mark and Jennifer Souza*

*Our family members by The Crampe Family*

*My parents, Ruth & Ralph Hobbs by Diane Cain*

*Maurice & Alice Swallow by Dan and Liz Swallow*

*Our daughter, Melissa, by Mark and Carol Johnson*

*Russell & Eleanor Pederson by Dan and Liz Swallow*

*My aunt and uncle, Helen & John Huber by Diane Cain*

*Our loved ones who are gone by Larry and Hazel Piper*

*Departed loved ones by Thomas J. and Jane C. McCord*

*My parents, Roland & Edna Russell by Janet Colclough*

*Aunt Gert & Uncle Clyde Moore by Nancy and Bud Graham*

*My parents, Michael and Edna Mekalian by Mary Ann Higgins*

*Gladys & Ed Rule and Laura & Bud Loud by Jane and Bill Rule*

*Karen Gibbs, Martin Gibbs, & Gina Frasca by the Gibbs Family*

*Christine Zwicker and Carl & Mickey Wood by Don and Ponny Wood*

*Isabel & George Newhall and Hazel Nelson by Peter and Bonnie Newhall*

*Donald T. & Ruth D. McCord, William J. & Leona B. Wilson,*

*Ellsworth D. Comins, Sr. and Elizabeth Y. Comins by Thomas J. and Jane C. McCord*

*Russell, Jean & Ralph Sturtevant and David V. Osborne by Shirley,*

*David and Patti Osborne*



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## Plant Swap

### Who Plants a Seed, Beneath the Sod—and Waits to See, Believes in God.

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.

Here is how it works..

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) **Swap and Sale will be held Rain or Shine**

## Thank you

Dear Linda Jerrett,

Heartfelt thanks to you, the children, and all the members of your church for your work in creating another successful Heifer Market. Your commitment and enthusiasm are wonderful! The only thing better than witnessing the joy everyone shared on Sunday, is knowing that your hard work and generosity of spirit changes lives for the better.

May God bless each of you, the animals you give, and the people who receive your gifts.

Sincerely, *Sandi Watson, Heifer International*

Thank you to Circle 8,

A grateful thank you to the members of Circle 8 who prepared and delivered a hearty beef stew to Emmaus House on April 19<sup>th</sup>. It was warmly received and much appreciated. Thank you ladies for all your hard work.

Dear Church Friends,

Thank you so much for all your kindness during my recent knee surgery and recovery. Mikey and I are very fortunate to have such a wonderful Church family that we can depend on. There are so many people to thank individually, and I will do so in person. I would like to acknowledge Eleanor Grant who organized meal delivery, people who took care of Mikey for me, and those who gave me rides to the doctor. Hopefully next winter won't be so icy, but if I slip again, I know I can count on you. Thanks again for everything and I hope I can repay the favor sometime.

Bruce Oliver

To Circle 5: Thank you to all of you. I appreciate the Gift Certificate, they really come in handy. I feel good and am doing well. I haven't broken my left hip yet this year. I really miss you girls and hope to see all of you. You are all wonderful and I am lucky to have you all as friends.

Marge Merrill

Outreach and CWF wish to thank everyone who participated in the Annual Church World Service Kit Drive. These kits will be distributed to people, not just in this country, but also to those around the world whose lives have been turned up side down by disaster. Thank you for your willing and continued help.

Many many thanks for the bright cheerful altar flowers given to me upon the recent death of my sister.

*Lois Steele*

## Outreach Opportunities

**Ecclesia Ministries** is working to save *common art* in these economic times. *Common art* is a program of *common cathedral* at Ecclesia Ministries which provides space, materials and caring support staff to homeless people to develop their artistic abilities. People who live in shelters, rooming houses, on unclaimed couches and benches, and on Boston's streets, gather every Wednesday at Emmanuel Church on Newbury Street to draw, paint, sculpt, make crafts, and to share with other artists in like circumstances.

Ecclesia Ministries is holding a Concert/Art Sale/Silent Auction on Friday, **May 29, 7-10pm**, at the First Church in Boston, UUA, 66 Marlborough St @ Berkeley St, near the Green Line-Arlington stop. \$20 per person. Please consider supporting this worthy project.

**Red Cross Blood Drive**  
**May 14, 2009**  
**2:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.**



FCCR will be sponsoring the American Red Cross Blood Drive on **Thursday, May 14, 2009, 2:00 p.m.–7:00 p.m.**

Volunteers are needed for 1-2 hour shifts to greet and register donors or to work at the refreshment station. If you would like to help, please contact Shirley Slack at 781-944-6394 or 781-956-7161.

We also ask any of you who are able to donate blood, please call 1-800-GIVE-LIFE or visit [www.givelife.org](http://www.givelife.org) to schedule an appointment.

May is the beginning of the cookout season, so please consider donating cookout foods to the **Reading Food Pantry**. Catsup, mustard, relish, chips, olives, or anything else to help a Reading family in need.

Also, please remember that the Post Office will be holding the nation's largest food drive to combat hunger on **Saturday, May 9**. On that day, letter carriers will collect non-perishable donations as they deliver mail. Carriers collected a record 73.1 million pounds of food in last year's drive.



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:

- ✓ Ralph Kubista, father of Lauren Dahm, who was just diagnosed with prostate cancer.
- ✓ My mother's friend who had quadruple by-pass surgery.
- ✓ Jim Breadmora who is in the hospital with an infection following surgery. Pray for healing.
- ✓ Steve Grumbach, who remains in a coma after being struck by a car February 24th.
- ✓ Mildred Higgins, Mary Ann Higgins mother-in-law who broke her sternum.
- ✓ John and Arthur who both face surgery tomorrow.
- ✓ David Maitland, Jim's father, that he might recover quickly from a broken hip.
- ✓ My son-in-law's sister Tammy, that her cancer treatment will be successful.
- ✓ Bryce LeConti who was taken to the hospital again Sunday the 19th.
- ✓ Jack, who will be operated on this week to remove a cancerous tumor from his liver.
- ✓ Seven-year-old Shane, who is hospitalized with encephalitis.
- ✓ Shirley Osborne, may she have a speedy recovery from her back surgery.
- ✓ Kathy Cordaro's upcoming surgery.
- ✓ Pray for healing and comfort for my parents and extended family.

We pray for those who are grieving:

- ✓ Mary Dube, mother of friends at CFW who died of natural causes at 95 and 1/2 years old.
- ✓ The soul of Jeannette Mills who passed away April 3rd.
- ✓ Connie Swaebe's sister who passed away too early in her life.
- ✓ Peace and courage to Lois Steele and her family following the death of her sister last week.

We also pray for the following special concerns:

- ✓ The LeConti family for strength and hope with Bryce's everyday challenges.

- ✓ Jim, who was involved in a deadly crash this week.
- ✓ Sean Mills, may he find a new home that will give him the help and love he needs.
- ✓ Strength for a friend Kathy. Her 24 year old son has had a recurrence of cancer.
- ✓ A daughter who is struggling to find her way.
- ✓ A marriage that is ending because of her husband's alcoholism.
- ✓ All the children that have special needs and development issues and those who care for them.
- ✓ Ken, who seems to be doing well; please continue to pray for him.

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

- ✓ Ben Nichols, former member and Boy Scout Master celebrating his 101st birthday.
- ✓ All the young men and women serving our country.
- ✓ The rescue of the Captain of the ship taken by pirates.
- ✓ All the beautiful and talented children of this wonderful church.
- ✓ Marcie who is improving.
- ✓ Thanksgiving for our friendship with Alex Torres and prayers for her success in her next endeavor.
- ✓ A beautiful day to celebrate with our brothers and sisters in Christ. We are truly blessed!

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 April

In loving memory of Joseph R. Evans by Kieran and Judythe Meagher.

In loving memory of Phyllis Morand from David and Gail Williams – "Happy Birthday Mom".

In loving memory of my Mom and Dad, Norman and Gladys Dickinson, whose wedding anniversary would have been today, from their daughter Norma Hailey.

In loving memory of Glenn Alan Killam by the Honorable James W. Killam III and family.



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