

CROSSWORD

First Congregational Church of Pelham United Church of Christ

Rev. William Ferguson, Pastor
P.O. Box 847 ~ 3 Main Street
Pelham, New Hampshire 03076
603 635-7025 ~ Office@pelhamucc.org

PASTOR'S MESSAGE

A church newsletter recently asked, "If you could throw anything out of the church, what would it be?" (Thankfully, "The Pastor" was not the most popular answer.) The most popular answers concerned music, but obviously other churches are not as blessed as we are with our Music Director, Tom Seniow, and Sue Howard, our Organist/Pianist.

The question really was about asking us to thoughtfully consider what parts of the church challenge us and sometimes trouble us. It is a good question, worthy of your thoughts too. No church is perfect: no denomination; no congregation; and as we reflect on ourselves during this season of Lent, we admit that as people, we within the church are not perfect either.

So what is your understanding and experience of the First Congregational Church of Pelham, United Church of Christ? Each church within this denomination is different from the others, making it a diverse collection of congregations. You'll find a variety of views within one congregation, and our church is no exception. It can take a while to understand what makes a particular congregation different from others, and whether your theological views fit within that group.

What would you keep?

If you aren't sure what the First Congregational Church of Pelham believes, look at our website at www.pelhamucc.org, (recently updated by the generous work of Shawn Duggan and Steve Blanchard). Under "About Us" it has a section on beliefs.

- We are a church that strives for **unity** at the same time we celebrate **diversity**.
- We emphasize the ways in which the gathered congregation itself seeks guidance from the Holy Spirit.
- And while our tradition affirms local church autonomy, our congregation also derives strength from the covenant bonds we share with other UCC congregations.
- And in the United Church of Christ **we emphasize personal faith**, guided by the Holy Spirit and scripture, as well as the **social responsibility** that derives from Jesus' teaching that we are to minister to others.

We encourage questioning and do not expect you will agree with everything, but there are things that "fit" with our members beliefs about God, Jesus, the world, and your values.

What would you throw out?

My advice is nothing, because everything that makes us what we are as a body of Christ has value. We may not agree on everything, but we do agree that as we gather in God's name, the Spirit's presence and Jesus' teaching can be example for others.

What would you "tweak"? Make a suggestion, and volunteer to help with its implementation. This is your church. What would you add? What is on your wish list for this church? Can you make it happen? This is a congregation that has a "can do" or "let's try it" attitude. It is encouraging and refreshing to know that few fingers are pointed, and that forgiveness is part of our faithful community.

Peace.

Rev Bill

BARNABUS CORNER

Barnabus was a disciple who roamed the countryside honoring those who performed anonymous good needs for the benefit of others. In that spirit, we do likewise.

- ~ **Dick Koch** for creating our beautiful Lenten Candle holder.
- ~ **Pete Bennett & John Ferguson** for rehanging the barn door at the parsonage
- ~ **Steve Blanchard & Shawn Duggan** for the awesome job they have done revamping the church's website

NEW MEMBERS

We will be welcoming new members into our church family and Fellowship on **Sunday, March 7th, 2010.**

If you would like information about joining our church, please speak with Rev. Bill.



THANK YOU!

Our **2nd Annual Deal-A-Meal Fundraiser** was a huge success! In addition to a wonderful Pot Luck Supper with incredible food, we auctioned off 35 meals, appetizers and desserts to support our General Fund. The end of the night found us giving thanks for \$3,042 that was raised! We hope you enjoy the fellowship that comes with sharing meals together and once again, thank you for your support!

Our Youth Group would like to thank you for your support during **their Super Bowl Sub Sandwich Sale**. Almost \$400 was collected to support their Mission trip to Virginia this summer!

A huge Thank you to the members of our Sunday School Youth Groups and church members and friends for collecting 1,200 pounds of food for our **1,000 lb Superbowl of Caring Food Drive** on Sunday, February 7. We exceeded our goal and also collected \$376 in cash contributions. All the food and donations were forwarded directly to the Pelham Food Pantry. Your generosity is overwhelming!

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION



The following is the Sunday School Schedule for March:

- March 7th: Communion Sunday
Sunday School
Food Pantry Donations
- March 14th: Sunday School
- March 21st: Sunday School/Lenten Fair
- March 28th: Sunday School/Palm Sunday

Christian Education contd.

On March 21st, the Sunday school classes will participate in a Lenten Fair. While parents are in the Sanctuary, Sunday school classes will go to Fellowship Hall to do fun activities/crafts which will give them a better understanding of Lent. If you are interested in hosting an activity/craft, please see Ron Schneider or talk to a CE Board member.

Thank you to all the children that brought in food and helped out with Souper Bowl of Caring. Over 1,000 pounds of food was collected and sent to the Pelham Food Pantry. Amazing!

We also want to extend a special Thank you and welcome to our new Sunday School Superintendent, Kelly Sauer, and our new Sunday School Teacher, Tracy Hollinger.

If you haven't received a revised Sunday School Calendar, please take one out of the folder which is pinned to the bulletin board in Fellowship Hall.

This month the Pre-Kindergarten/Kindergarten Sunday School Class will be decorating the bulletin board in Fellowship Hall. Please check it out!

Respectfully submitted,
Sandy Blanchard
CE Board

STEEPLETOPICS

The children will be returning from their winter break on March 1st and getting back into their classroom routines. They all enjoyed Valentine's Day and will be looking forward to seeing what tricks the special leprechaun has in store for us around St. Patrick's Day! A date to remember is there is no school on March 9th for Teacher Workshop day.

Steepletop has been offering a computer class for kids run by Imagine Tomorrow. If you are

interested in signing your child up please contact Imagine Tomorrow at (603)898-3300.

The Steepletop Executive Board is looking for two church members to fill the board positions that will be opening up in June. If you have any questions about the positions please speak with Michelle Vecchiarello, Melanie Surprenant or Julie Giniewicz.

We are continuing to accept registrations for the 2010-2011 school year. If you have a child who will be 3 years old by December 31st or 4 or 5 years old by September 30th and are interested in enrollment for the fall, please call the school at (603)635-2100 and leave a message for the Registrar.

Submitted by,
Melanie Surprenant

EASTER FLOWERS



Orders are now being taken for Easter flowers. If you would like to purchase an Easter plant to help decorate our sanctuary on Easter morning, please fill out the form below and return it to the church office with your payment. This year we are offering tulips for \$5.00 per pot. You may take your plant home after the 10AM service. Orders will be accepted on a first come, first serve basis.

Number of tulip pots you wish to order: _____

In Memory Of:

In Honor Of:

Given By:

of plants ordered: _____ Total Enclosed:

Please make your check payable to:
The First Congregational Church.

MISSIONS

The One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) Offering, administered by the Winder Church Ministries is the refugee relief and development fund of the UCC. It provides support to people in more than eighty countries.

This years theme is inspired by John 21:15-17 when Jesus asks Peter, "Do you love me?" If you are familiar with this scripture, you may know that after Peter confesses to loving Jesus, Jesus tells him, "Feed my sheep." We too are called to care for all who are in need, just as God cares for each of us.

As a "5 for 5" Church of the UCC, the Pelham Congregational Church faithfully supports all of the special offerings throughout the year as part of our Mission giving.

- One Great Hour of Sharing,
- Strengthen the Church (supporting new and revitalizing congregations),
- Neighbors In Need, (Supporting justice and compassion concerns throughout the United States, and
- The Christmas Fund (supporting pension and health premium supplements for low-income retired clergy families in need), as well as
- Our Church's Wider Mission Basic Support (supporting the New Hampshire Conference programs of health, educational and relief assistance.)

We are proud to be able to respond to Jesus' call to "Feed my Sheep". We thank you for considering support for our Offering on Sunday, March 14th.

OLD HOME DAY ~ SEPTEMBER 18th!

Hello Everyone!

Just a note to let everyone know that we are now meeting for Old Home Day on the second Sunday of each month after church @ 11:30. We had our first organizational meeting on February 14th and discussed many items including changing the date to the second Saturday after Labor day. This would make the **OHD date September 18th this Fall**. One of the reasons for this change is the 11 other activities in the area that are also on the first Saturday and we felt that they impacted our fair. We have also decided to eliminate the rain date because it is just too difficult to reschedule the food and all the crafters.

We are still looking for volunteers of all ages and talents to contribute to OHD and to help make it the wonderful day that has become a Pelham tradition. Community service hours are available for high school students. If you have any questions or concerns about OHD, please feel free to come to one of our meetings or contact Ron and/or Debbie Schneider @ 978 649-6362 or E-mail @ ron7249@yahoo.com or dschneid06@yahoo.com. Let's pull together and make this another great Old Home Day!

FROM THE DIACONATE

By the looks of things, I am not so sure Punxsutawney Phil saw his shadow....we've had some fairly nice weather lately and the birds are rather vocal. As we enter the season of Lent, please recall the sacrifices of our Lord and be mindful of those that we might be able to help out daily, even if it's simply with a smile or a kind gesture.

Here are some highlights from the February Diaconate meeting:

~**The first Acolyte Training** was held on February 7th for our 3rd and 4th grade Sunday School classes. The kids did a great job and are anxious to sign up and be involved in this very special part of worship service.

~**Fellowship Hospitality/Deb** Calabro – Deb is doing an awesome job with further organizing and preparing for fellowship hour after worship service. Thank you Deb!!

~The Deacons have been very busy in the kitchen lately! After working the **Spaghetti**

Diaconate contd.

Supper in January, we gathered together in February to sponsor Deal-A-Meal and then also worked the Simple Supper on Ash Wednesday.

~During Lent we will be using a **hand-crafted candelabra** that will have one candle extinguished each week. The Diaconate will take turns reading and extinguishing. Thank you

Dick Koch for this beautiful piece of woodwork!

~Transportation to Church Needed? If anyone has a need for transportation to church or a church function (e.g. church dinners/suppers), please contact the church office or a Deacon.

A BIG THANK YOU to all that donated, attended, and worked at the 2nd annual Deal-A-Meal on February 6th. In the interest of being "green," we took out the dishes and silverware and fired up the Hobart. Everyone seemed to have a wonderful time while also being mindful of the environment.

Prayer List

Please help us keep the prayer list current. You may contact Rev Bill or Peggy to let them know when someone needs to be added or removed from the list or needs a visit or call from Rev Bill.

Worship Coordinators & Greeters

The Worship Coordinators for March are Tom Wood and Bob Diack.

Our greeters for March will be members of the Pastor Parish Committee.

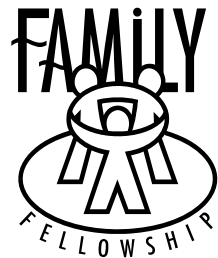
Our next Diaconate meeting is Tuesday, March 9th at 7 PM. Please feel free to drop by if you are interested in attending and would like to learn more about the Diaconate. As always, please feel free to contact a member of the Diaconate with any questions, comments, or suggestions. Diaconate Co-Chairs Judy Boucher and Bob Diack can be reached at: ja_boucher@comcast.net, bdiack@cio.com.

SPRING CLEANING!

Our third annual Spring Clothing Drive will be held on Sunday, April 11th. Start cleaning out your closets now and give your old clothes a "second life!"

3RD ANNUAL "FUNCERT" & PASTA SUPPER

Join us for our 3rd Annual All Church "Fun-Cert" and Italian Pasta Supper on Saturday night, March 20th, 2010 at 6:00 PM. This event has always been an awesome fellowship time as we are treated to a wonderful Pasta Dinner served by our Youth Groups in return for a free will offering to support their Youth Activities.



Following Dinner, we invite you to enjoy many of the talented people in our church family, as they share their many talents with us. In the past we have had singers, instrumentalists, storytellers and more.

Please sign up in the Fellowship Hall if you will share your talent with us. Ken and Wendy Henderson have agreed to once again be our emcees for the evening!

Join us!

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Thank you all so much for your support of both our Bake Sale and Hygiene Kits for Haiti. We hope you enjoyed the goodies that you bought at the bake sale. We made \$250 for our missions projects, thanks to your generosity and the "sweet tooth" that we all have. The bake sale on this month's CROSSWORD calendar for March 21st is cancelled. Our next one is scheduled for May 2nd.



The Hygiene Kits were assembled at our February 23rd meeting, and are on their way to Haiti. Many thanks to all of you who donated supplies for this. They are so desperately needed, and your response was great!

TRUSTEES' CORNER

The Trustees send a well deserved thank you to Ron Schneider and Donn Clark for two terms of service to the Board and we welcome our new members, Denise Duff and John Hollinger. They will be a great addition to our team.

We are working on scheduling general fundraising events for the year to supplement our primary funding sources which are Sunday collections and the electronic giving program. We are looking for volunteers to help organize the next event, a church and town-wide yard sale in May. In this event residents pay a small fee to place their house on a map and on a list for the Pelham Town-wide Yard Sale Day. People who want to find all the yard sales that day will pay a small fee for a copy of the map and list. If this sounds like fun to you, let a Trustee know and we'll put a group together to start the planning as soon as possible.

Notice of Proposed By-Law Amendment to Establish The Endowment Committee

There has been a lot of interest in establishing an Endowment Fund over the past few years which the Trustees have been researching. We feel we are ready to propose a by-law change to formally establish the Endowment Committee. The committee will work out all the details necessary to establish an Endowment Fund and the related policies and guidelines required. **A Congregational Meeting will be held after church on Sunday, March 28th, 2010** for church members to discuss and vote on the amendment. The proposed amendment is provided below

for review before the vote on March 28th.

**Submitted by,
Dan Murphy, Board of Trustees**

PROPOSED AMENDMENT

**ARTICLE VIII -
COMMITTEES OF THE CHURCH**

The Endowment Committee:

The Endowment Committee shall consist of four (4) members proposed by the Church Council. One member shall be a representative from the Board of Trustees. Thereafter, members shall be elected at an annual meeting for a term of two (2) years. No member shall serve more than two (2) consecutive terms without the lapse of one (1) year.

The Committee shall be responsible to the Board of Trustees.

The Endowment Committee shall establish a new and separate fund to be known as THE ENDOWMENT FUND in order to enhance the mission and general operation of the Church. THE ENDOWMENT FUND shall be funded through bequests in wills, trusts, charitable gift annuities, life insurance assignments, and transfers of property (cash, stocks, bonds, real estate, etc.)

The Committee shall be the custodian of THE ENDOWMENT FUND.

The Committee shall establish guidelines regarding the administration, management and operations of THE ENDOWMENT FUND.

The Committee shall meet at least quarterly, or more frequently as deemed necessary.