

W CROSS R D

I'VE NEVER SEEN THIS BEFORE

Last week, Maureen, Andrew and I ventured back over to Hampstead for their 4th Of July Fireworks and Festival, since Andrew was completing some Scout obligations as he prepares for his Eagle Scout process. It was a miserable night weather wise, rainy and foggy and a bit on the cold side.

We were able to meet some old friends and avoided any church and political discussions and really enjoyed each other's company for a few hours as we waited for Andrew to complete his volunteer work. The conversation led to the current economic recession, "*I've seen it like this before,*" commented one of the group, familiar with how the economy has its stops and starts. We spoke of our recent trip to Florida and the layover delay we had coming home and one wife of a former pilot responded, "*I've seen that before and it's getting worse and worse.*" Our friends expressed their joy that Maureen and I were doing well here in Pelham and were happy, and that they were now able to announce that their church had formed a search committee as they continue in their process to call a new Pastor. "*We have been here and seen this before*", one of the group announced, however, with a bit of dread in her voice, knowing that the process is slow to find the right fit of ministry together.

The mood seemed a bit somber with the conversations about "*seeing this before*" when the announcement came that the fireworks were going to be held in spite of the fog and rain, since they were all wired to go they could not turn back now. The group groaned because the fog was thick, dismissing any possibility of seeing the firework display.

The First Congregational Church United Church of Christ

P.O. Box 847
Pelham, New Hampshire 03076
603 635-7025
office@pelhamucc.org

But as the fireworks were set off, making the sky glow with eerie blues, greens and reds, a young child about 5 years old expressed her delight with oohs and aahs saying, "*I've never seen anything like this before.*"

It occurred to me that we often overlook things that are meant to bring us delight and joy because of past experiences, not acknowledging that all events that bring fellowship are brand new opportunities to experience joy. We don't go to a night of fireworks on a clear night and moan "I've seen that firework before". Each one is unique as each gathering with friends and loved ones is unique.

The Psalmist David wrote in Psalm 8:1-4:
"O Lord, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth. You have set your glory above the heavens. Out of the mouths of babes and infants you have founded a bulwark because of your foes, to silence the enemy and the avenger. When I look to your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established, what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them?"

Sometimes it takes the innocent and delight-filled words of a child to break our cynicism, our dreads, our past experiences (our enemy/avenger) to allow us to experience anew all the delights of the Lord. When we see all we have been given, the world, the moon and stars, we, like David, are called to ask "Who are we to have been treated and been loved so much by God to receive all we have been given?"

Cherish the words "*I've never seen this before*" and delight in that new fresh gift from God!

Peace.
RB

FIRST FOLKS

Congratulations and best wishes to newlyweds **Jennifer Murphy and Ryan Clark**, who were married here on June 7th. Jennifer is the daughter of **Marie and Dan Murphy**.

We also send our congratulations and best wishes to **Nicole Vachon and Tim Hatch** who were married here on June 15th. Nicole is the daughter of **Nancy and Marc Vachon**.

Congratulations to our recent high school Grads! From Pelham High School: **Russell Boland, Stacey Chadwick, Gregory Frecette, Heidi Fuller, Corey Young**; from Tyngsboro High School: **Pieter Reppenhagen**; From Alvrine High School: **Kate-Lyn Skribiski**; from Londonderry High School: **Kaitlyn Bean**.

The Fuller family has lots to be proud of! **Heidi Fuller** will be attending Guilford College in North Carolina this fall. Also, **Mike Fuller** (Heidi's Dad), also recently graduated, magna cum laude, from Nashua Community College, and is starting his new career as a Registered Nurse. Congratulations!

Dot Hill, May Harrington, Susan Phaneuf & Evelyn Dawson's brother **Donald Dawson** died June 3rd. We send our condolences to the Dawson Family. A memorial service will be held here in the sanctuary on July 17th.

We also send our condolences to **Carl & Lisa Nystrom** and their family on the death of Carl's father, **Bernholdt Nystrom**, on June 16th.

Sue Howard's sister Ruth died July 3rd. We send our condolences to Sue and her family.

Get well wishes go to **Marie Cibulski** who is recovering from foot surgery.

We also send get well wishes to **Fran Chadwick** who had cataract surgery on July 9th.

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July/August 2008

OLD HOME DAY REMINDERS

OLD HOME DAY CALENDAR

As you know, it takes months of planning to make

On June 8th we celebrated the baptism of **Matthew Jonathan Sprague**, son of **Jennifer and Eric Sprague**, godson of **Cory Francis, Sandy Sprague, Cheryl & Jimmy Sprague**. We send our congratulations and best wishes to Matthew and his family.

THANK YOU

I would like to thank all of our Sunday School teachers this year. Your dedication to our children is very much appreciated. Thank you for all of your time and loving care.

Cathy Miller

Sunday School Superintendent

COMMITTEE OPENINGS

With the passage of our new By-Laws last May, we now have a current and workable framework for life and ministry here at the First Congregational Church of Pelham. Part of the new By-Laws charges us to staff committees allowing us to spread the responsibilities of membership and ministry to more of you. The Nominating Committee is seeking volunteers to be considered for the following openings:

TRUSTEES - 2 New Members

MISSION COMMITTEE - 6 New Members and 1 Youth Member

NOMINATING COMMITTEE - 2 new members

BOARD OF DEACONS - 1 Youth Member

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE - 2 Members

MUSIC COMMITTEE - 2 Members and 2 Choir Members

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COMMITTEE - 1 Youth Member

If you would like to submit your name to be considered for these positions, please add your name to the sign-up sheet in Fellowship Hall or speak with Barbara Calabro or Deb Schneider.

PRAYER SHAWLS

Our Prayer Shawls Group is taking the summer off! Meetings will resume in September.

Old Home Day the success that it is year after year. Below is a list of the meeting and set-up dates that are currently scheduled. This year **Old Home Day will be held on September 6th** (rain date: September 13th).

Planning Meetings (7 PM, in the parlor):

Thursday, August 7th

Thursday, August 21st

Set Up Schedule:

Friday, August 22nd

Saturday, August 23rd

Friday September 5th

Break Down:

Sunday, September 7th

OHD AD BOOK

You still have time to be a part of the Old Home Day Book and be listed as a supporter.

If you would like to help, please fill out the form below, make your check payable to "The First Congregational Church" and mail both to:

First Congregational Church,

Old Home Day Ad Book

PO Box 847

Pelham, NH 03076

Yes, I would like to help support our 102nd Old Home Day Ad Book.

Please list me as a:

_____ Sponsor (donation of \$5-\$24)

_____ Benefactor (donation of \$25-\$99)

_____ Patron (donation of \$100 or more)

Name(s) as you would like it to appear in the Ad Book:

OHD PENNY SALE

Are you and your family/group looking for a special way to help out with Old Home Day? Perhaps you are unable to volunteer at Old Home Day, but would still like to help our church.

How about putting together a gift basket that reflects your family's or group's unique interests. Some possible themes for the gift baskets are: movie basket (movie w/candy), candle basket, Girl Scout cookie basket, bird lover's basket, game

night basket, scrap booking basket, sport themed basket, knitting basket, gardening basket, fishing basket, etc. The possibilities are endless. Let your imagination run wild and help OHD at the same time! You can also donate a new item or gift certificate that will entice people to purchase raffle tickets.

Your family/group's name will be displayed with the basket or new item at the Penny Sale. Show everyone just how creative you can be! You can drop off your donations of gift baskets or new items at the church office, or I will be happy to pick up your item at your home. Thanks in advance for making the Penny Sale a hit! Any questions, just call Sandy at 603 635-8974.

The Blanchard Family

AUCTION DONATIONS

The trailer to store donations for the Auction and White Elephant Tables has arrived and is now located on the parsonage side lawn. We are asking that when you bring your items down, that you leave them at the trailer instead of in Fellowship Hall. There will be tarps available to cover all donations.

If you have any large items that you cannot transport, we will be offering limited pick-up service. Last available date for "pick-up" will be September 2nd. For more information, please call Wally at 603 635-7607.

If you or any high school student that you know needs community service, Old Home Day is a great way to get some hours. A sign-up sheet will be available at both the church and Pelham High School in late August.

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CE UPDATE

It's unbelievable that Sunday School classes are done for another year! We had a great year, and want to thank all the children for the fantastic job they did on the Children's Sunday program. It was a wonderful service! And thanks as well to the teachers for all their help coordinating the service. It helped make it our best ever!

Congratulations to all the 1st, 2nd and 3rd grade students who received their Bibles.

We'd also like to express our gratitude, again, to all our wonderful teachers. Your time, effort and

dedication to our children's Christian Education is truly appreciated.

And, if anyone is interested in joining this terrific group and becoming a Sunday School teacher/co-teacher, please contact Nancy Webster or any CE board member.

Please note a couple of special dates during the summer:

August 10th: A Commissioning Service, for the Youth Group Mission Trip. The Youth group will be heading off to the Heifer Farm on Aug 12th, returning on Aug 16th.

August 23rd: Rev. Bill, Cathy, and the CE committee will be having a Teacher Meeting/Cookout at the Parsonage. We hope that all the children and their families have a wonderful summer, and we'll see you all again in the Fall. Sunday School registration information will be in the September CrossWords.

Sincerely,

Karen Dorman and the CE Board: Nancy Webster, Karen Rutherford, Rebecca Cummings, Sue Cerri

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Support the Nashua Soup Kitchen

For a few years the Women's Fellowship has participated in the Soup Kitchen's annual drive to provide backpacks filled with school supplies for children. We are doing so again this year. If you would like to donate to this worthy cause, please

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Speak to Alma Healey or Joyce McDevitt. We will assemble backpacks with the school supplies on Tuesday, July 29th at 7 PM in the church parlor. Any help is welcome!

At our August 26th meeting, we will gather to plan our programs for the 2008-2009 year. Come with your ideas and suggestions. We would like to print a program for the year that can be shared with all ladies of the church.

The Country Store at Old Home Day

This year the Emporium Booth and our Women's Fellowship Booth will be combined into The Country Store. We will have many kinds of baked goods (probably homemade baked beans and pickles, too) for sale. Gifts for Christmas and the home, some T-shirts, mugs and tiles of our church, and SERRV items. If you can contribute

baked goods or crafts, we'd love to have them! And if you can help sell things at our booth on Old Home Day, we need people to volunteer for 2-hour time slots. Please see Jean or Cheryl to be on the sign-up sheet. Thanks so much!

Jean Robarge

603 635-3363

Cheryl Koch

603 635-2505

WISH LIST

The Trustees are continuing to seek donations to help put a small porch on the barn side of the parsonage (this is a safety issue). If you would like to help with this project, please speak to one of our Trustees.

YOUTH GROUP MISSION TRIP

Eleven members of our High School Youth Group will be living at Overlook Farm of the International Heifer Project in Rutland, Massachusetts from August 12 – 16. During their trip, the group will be tending and caring for the over 200 animals that Heifer supplies to families around the world, including pigs, sheep, goats, horses, cows, camels and even guinea pigs! They also will be learning about Heifers philosophy of Passing on the Gift, of sustainable farming and renewable **July/August 2008**

agriculture and learning about the power that even one individual can have to change the world. We are very proud to be able to send the kids off with our prayers and good wishes for a great trip. Scheduled to go to Overlook Farm are Mariah Webster, Kiley Perrone, Andrew Ferguson, Tyler Racca, Shaun Pulter, Geordan Henderson, Emily Long, Elizabeth Collins, Shannon Oriole, Connor Patterson and Danielle Winn, along with Advisors Maureen Ferguson, Wendy Henderson and RB.

TRUSTEES CORNER

So far, this summer is a whole lot quieter than the previous one for the Trustees, with many major improvements both at the church and certainly at the parsonage taken care of at last. We hope it stays that way!

A major improvement was finally taken care of last month: a new septic controller was installed in the boiler room to automatically switch between our 2 septic pumps. Previously, our maintenance crew

had to keep a schedule of manually switching the 2 pumps out so that neither would disastrously burn out. Our new system does it automatically and without worry.

A not so major but somewhat worrisome problem was taken care of last week: There was a continuing problem with unexplained sawdust around one of the windows in the classroom under the kitchen. We feared anything from mold to termites there and envisioned major disruption to that room to repair it. But luckily only some rot and minor carpenter ant evidence was found and repaired by Dick. The problem was likely caused by water splashing through the kitchen door stairs. That problem has been solved by the new awning over those stairs, which keeps the rain far away from the building.

Financially, we are doing relatively well. We are \$1700 ahead on linear run rate for the year. "We might end up in the black" was treasurer Joe Calabro's comment. Through June, 2008, we are at \$76,792 for collections and building receipts compared to \$54,852 for the same period last year. Pretty good news! It is exciting for the

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Trustees to see this stewardship of the church from its members

Based on church by-law revisions, the Trustees will be developing policies soon on Personnel, Property, Budget Preparation, and Financial Management.

Happy summer!

Donn, Dick, Ron, Dan, and Tom

STEEPLETOPICS

The end of the school year went very well. We all enjoyed our beach parties and field days, as well as a yummy ice cream party. Our Kindergartners put on a great performance at their Graduation. I hope everyone is enjoying their summer.

As we look forward to the end of August and the beginning of a new school year, we will be welcoming our parents back for a Parent Tea on August 28th and welcoming our students back for Orientation on September 2nd for 2-day Preschool and September 3rd for 3-day Pre-K and Kindergarten. School begins for 2-day Preschool

and Kindergarten on September 4th and for 3-day Pre-K on September 5th. We look forward to seeing you all soon.

We are continuing to accept registrations for the 2008-2009 school year. If you have a child who will be age 3-5 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.

The SKN Executive Board will hold their next meeting on Wednesday, July 30th, at 7 PM.

**Submitted by,
*Melanie Surprenant***