

CROSSWORD

*First Congregational Church of Pelham
United Church of Christ*

Rev. William Ferguson, Pastor
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PASTOR'S MESSAGE

Dear Friends,

2010!

How fast did this decade move for you? It seems like just yesterday that we were speculating about Y2K, celebrating the turn of a new century, wondering where we would be heading individually and as a nation.

It turns out that the first decade of the 21st century brought many changes and challenges. September 11, 2001 changed the world. Two wars on the other side of the world. A “collapsing” economy. The election of our First African –American president. So many firsts that will be noted in the history pages for our future generations to read and learn about.

This church has gone through many changes as well. The departure of a pastor, an Interim period and the calling of a new pastor. Challenges budget wise to be good stewards. New members joining as we said farewell to some who have passed to God’s good hands. New leaders emerging to take the reigns.

Personally, I look back and reflect on the three churches I have served, the numerous activities we attended, the number of youth group members we led to mission work across the country, my two older sons graduating college and finding work and the blessing to now be here in Pelham with this congregation.

Change is never easy! It’s not supposed to be. Our challenge for this next decade will be the same as it has always been. To lead people in the ways of the Gospel by what we do to meet the needs of others spiritually and in service in Jesus Christ’s name. Has it ever been any different? This year we will be challenged financially to support our church budget after having to make some hard decisions, yet with change, there is opportunity as well. The opportunity to “think outside the box” as a way to invite new members to our church family and continue to build our foundations built on love and sharing is an AWESOME opportunity!

So what is there to look forward to? EVERYTHING! I would like to offer a prayer for peace in the world this decade, when we can look back and see a more peaceful world where our troops are at minimum risk, mostly home with their families. I would like to offer a prayer for an

improved economy nationwide, with affordable healthcare for all. Living within our means as we discover new ways to serve and care for others. I would like to offer a prayer for a growing Pelham Congregational Church, where we continue to be a beacon in the community, identified by our care and love for all of God's children, without conditions imposed on gender, sexuality, race or any other "roadblock" to love.

My prayer is that we conduct ourselves as a church community and a world community using the four principles of peace as a guide:

COMMUNITY - that we come together in unity first with ourselves and then with others, acknowledging we are all in this together, interconnected and interdependent.

COOPERATION - finding common ground and working together as partners, sharing resources and creative solutions to problems that arise.

NON-VIOLENCE - respecting the life of all individuals with a commitment not to harm others, choosing relationship rather than force with open hearts and empathy.

And WITNESS - Living the truth of peace by being that peace that we seek in every situation we encounter.

Praying for a peaceful world! HAPPY NEW YEAR!

RB

FIRST FOLKS

Barbara Calabro died on Thanksgiving Day at Fairview Nursing Home in Hudson. We send our condolences to **Joe, Debbie and the entire Calabro Family**.

We also send our condolences to **the Harris Family** on the death of **Hazel Harris Dennison**.

Kim Oriole died on Thanksgiving Day. Also, **Janne's** mother, **Louise Smith**, died December 27th. We send our condolences to **The Oriole Family**.

To all our friends in the Church Family,

We would like to express our sincere appreciation for all the thoughts and prayers during this difficult time. We have received so many thoughtful cards and notes depicting how much Mom touched your lives.

A special thanks to the Women's Fellowship for the beautiful reception at Mom's funeral service.

The Calabro Family



BARNABUS CORNER

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

~ **Dick Koch** for building the new kitchen cabinet.

~ The “crew” that worked on replacing the handicap ramp.

~ Everyone who participated in “Hanging Of The Greens” on November 26th.

~ **THANK YOU** to everyone who helped us support the Pelham Good Neighbor Fund Christmas Project by taking gift tags from our Christmas board. This year we adopted a family with seven children, ranging in age from 1 ½ years to 19 years old. Because of your generosity, hopefully we were able to make their Christmas a happy one.

And special, special thanks to **Marcia Sweezey** who, once again, was my Pelham Good Neighbor contact.

Happy New Year!
Peggy

CHRISTMAS “THANK YOU’S” FROM RB

Tom Seniow - For your dedication to the Music Ministry of the church and directing a beautiful Christmas Cantata on December 20th

Sharon Hone - For your direction of our Bell Choir, playing in church and in the community throughout December

Sue Howard - For your usual excellence as accompanist for our Music Program

Members of Our CE Committee - For assisting our Children in the Christmas Pageant

Members of Our Youth Groups & Confirmation Class - For volunteering to read at the Christmas Cantata

Becky Manners, Amanda Andrews, Jonathan Yourtee, Kristy Boucher and Kiley Perrone - our college students who quickly and generously volunteered to read our Christmas Eve scripture lessons

Peggy Murphy - For an outstanding month of December juggling and preparing administrative tasks in the office

2010 OFFERING ENVELOPES

Our offering envelopes for 2010 are now available. You may pick up your box the next time you are at church. They are in Fellowship Hall.

CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING
JANUARY 10th, 2010 FOLLOWING 10 AM WORSHIP

ANNUAL MEETING

All members are called to the **Annual Meeting** of First Congregational Church on **Sunday, January 31, 2010** following 10 AM Worship to hear the business of the church, present a budget for 2010 and elect members of Boards and Committees for the upcoming year. The Annual Meeting is the life-blood of the Congregational Way, allowing members to direct the vision of the church. Please make every effort to attend.

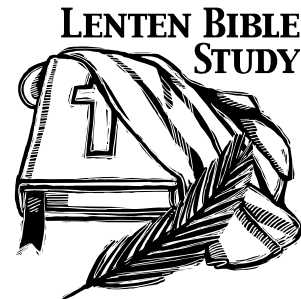
REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES

All committees and groups should submit their reports to the office **no later than January 15th**. All reports should be E-mailed to: office@pelhamucc.org.

If you have any questions or would like to look at examples of old reports from your group, please contact Peggy Murphy in the church office - 603 635-7025 or Peggy@pelhamucc.org.

LENT BIBLE STUDY

In 2007 the General Synod passed a Resolution titled "Physician Aid in Dying." The Justice Witness Ministry was designated as the implementing body of the UCC. A new study guide has been prepared to assist churches in a six-week Lenten study and discussion series on the range of choices which surround death and dying – hospice care, advance directives, removal of life-support, physician aid in dying and many other issues. Please consider attending our six-week Lenten Bible Study to reflect, learn about and discuss issues pertaining to these end-of-life decisions.



Dates will be announced in February.

DEAL A MEAL

Join us for our Second Annual "DEAL – A - MEAL FUND RAISER & POTLUCK SUPPER" on February 6th, 2010 at 6 PM.



Here's how it works. Sign up to donate a meal that will be auctioned off to the highest bidder. Last year, church members donated Lobster Dinners, Pot- Roast Dinners, and A Cake- A- Month for a year, Pizzas and a Wine Tasting Adventure. After the bidding, you will get together with the person who bought your meal and you can make arrangements when you will have the meal either delivered or shared! Last year we made over \$1,500 from the dinner. This year we are aiming higher.

DEAL-A-MEAL

PLEASE CONSIDER DONATING MEAL ITEMS and invite your friends!

NEW THIS YEAR, "POUND AUCTION" FOR KIDS

We are asking our Youth Group members to donate a wrapped food item weighing 2, 5 or 10 pounds. Only Youth group members will be allowed bid on the items!

YOUTH GROUP SUB SALE

Our Youth Groups will once again be selling Sub Sandwiches and cookies to support their treasury and Mission Trip activities. Please make sure you don't miss out on the delicious Sandwiches and treats. See any Youth Group member to order! Order forms will be available in the church office, too.



They will be available for pick-up on Sunday February 7th, 2010.

FREE COMMUNITY SPAGHETTI SUPPER

On Friday night, January 22nd, from 5:45 - 7 PM, the Diaconate is sponsoring our Quarterly Free Community Spaghetti Supper for all who would like to attend. Invite your neighbors, friends or anyone you may think would enjoy a meal.

FROM *STREET SENSE*, WASHINGTON DC

To The First Congregational Church of Pelham,

Thank you for your generous donation of \$163 to support Street Sense.

I appreciate the thoughtful contribution, and I know our vendors are very grateful as well.

With your help we are able to further our goal of empowering homeless individuals and educating the public about poverty issues. In the next few months, your donation will help Street Sense support our new vendor sales training workshops, to buy food for our vendor holiday party and print our annual report.

Thank you once again, and please pick up a copy of the paper when you are in downtown DC.

Laura Thompson Osuri
Executive Director