

November 2008
Volume XXI - Issue 10

W CROSS R D

United Church of Christ

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

and prepared for eternity.”

God's Little Devotional Book (Honor Books, Tulsa, OK, 1984)

There is no doubt that we are all feeling the burdens and pressure of the economy and we are worried about the upcoming winter and our ability to persevere through it all. I love Native American legends for their spirituality and I think this particular one holds a message for us. If we face head-on the challenges that are before us, then without a doubt we will come out ahead. It will take a while, and, in God's time, we will come out of these challenges stronger and wiser. The steps that are taken to fix and strengthen our economy will be faced and made to work for the better. But it takes faith to believe this is so. As the Scripture says, the development of our faith involves perseverance.

We invite you to attend our **Stewardship Sunday Worship Service on Sunday, November 9th**, followed by a Stewardship brunch. Once again, as members of this wonderful church, you are being called upon to consider your "Intention of Giving" pledge even in the midst of challenging times. ***For our church to continue its ministry, we need to fulfill our obligations of giving.*** Our perseverance to complete our faith commitment will make us stronger with your support. I think it's important to note that the term "Intention of Giving" implies that the amount you are dedicating to the ministries of the church is your best intentions, but allow you to make adjustments as the need arises.

We can truly go where we have never gone before, with God's help and our faith! Please come and join us and thank you for your commitment!

Peace and Blessings.
RB

PASTOR'S MESSAGE

"Because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything." James 1:3-4

An old Native American legend says that God first created birds without wings. Sometime later, God made wings and said to the birds, "Come, take up these burdens and bear them." The birds hesitated at first, but soon obeyed. They tried picking up the wings in their beaks, but found them too heavy. Then they tried picking them up with their claws, but found them too large. Finally one of the birds managed to get the wings hoisted onto its shoulders where it was finally possible to carry them.

To the amazement of the birds, before long the wings began to grow and they soon had attached themselves to the bodies of the birds. One of the birds began to flap his wings and the others followed his example. Before long, one of the birds took off and began to soar in the air above!

What had once been a heavy burden now became the very thing that enabled the birds to go where they could never go before...and at the same time, truly fulfill the destiny of their creation.

"The duties and responsibilities you count as burdens today may be part of God's destiny for your life, the means by which your soul is lifted

The First Congregational Church
November 2008

FIRST FOLKS

Congratulations and best wishes to **Kristen Start & Reed Hayes** who were married in Georgetown,

Maine on September 20th. Kristen is the daughter of **Carol & Richard Start**.

On October 12th we celebrated the baptism of **Gabriella Salma Laher**, daughter of **Karolyn & Sahal Laher**. We send our best wishes to Gabriella and her family!

Congratulations and best wishes to **Sharon Pultar & Jon Eaton** who were married on October 5th.

Courtney Bridgeford & Donald Quinn were married in the sanctuary on October 25th. We send our best wishes to the newlyweds!

Kay Silloway was recently presented with the Boston Post Cane by her son and President of the Council on Aging, **Danny Atwood**, during a tea at the Pelham Senior Center. Congratulations, Kay!

Get well wishes go to **Wally Cibulski** who is sporting a cast after fracturing his wrist.

Eva Wormold died on October 22nd. We send our condolences to her family.

WARM FUZZY CLOTHING DRIVE

The Sr. High Fellowship is sponsoring a Warm Fuzzy Clothing Drive on Sunday November 9th. We welcome good, clean donations of winter clothes that will be donated to our local shelters for the upcoming winter season. "The Legend of the Warm Fuzzies" tells us that when one "warm-fuzzy" feeling is shared, it comes back tenfold. It is our hope as you look through your clothes that don't fit anymore, especially children's clothes, that you are able to help us fulfill the challenge of Jesus when he said "I needed **clothes** and you **clothed** me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me."

Matthew 25:36

Page

2

"FALL MORNINGS & PLEDGE CARDS"

Fall and all of its unique trappings is upon us. Brilliant colors adorn the trees. Mornings and evenings invigorate us with crisp air. Squirrels jump about preparing for the coming of winter. Baseball has ended and football dominates the attention of many. And we await the arrival of pledge cards. ***Pledge cards!***?!? Yes, pledge cards.

Did you ever wonder why the annual pledge appeal in most churches takes place in the fall? There is a very practical reason. God has called the members of our congregation together at this unique place, our church, in this time, to do specific work to His glory and in love for His creation. And God has provided an abundance of resources to do that work. But there is a little complication.

When God calls us individually or as a congregation to do God's work, we are also provided the resources to carry out that work. ***In the case of a congregation, though, God gives a portion of those resources to each individual member of the congregation.*** This provides each of the members of our community the opportunity to express their thanksgiving for God's abundance by dedicating a part of what God has provided them to work through this church. We are called to support God's work in the world. We are called as caretakers or **Stewards** of God's creation.

At the same time that we struggle with money individually, the leaders of our church deal with the responsibility of planning how we will carry out God's work in the coming year and allocating resources to support that work. That is the stewardship of our congregation's resources by our leadership. Since churches are typically on a calendar year financial basis, that requires determining in the fall how much of what God has provided the individual members of the congregation for God's work they are going to give to the church during the year to carry out that work. ***Until we tell them with our pledge cards, anything that they project is just an educated guess.***

November 2008

In most congregations it is often heard that the church is always asking for money. It's true that God makes every effort to stir us to pass on the financial resources God has provided each of us to support that work. But, with the cost of the necessities for survival, (heat, food) the messages of our consumer culture can be louder, more frequent, and more alluring. Rarely does any congregation ever have the money that is necessary to do the work to which God has called it. To be heard over the constant noise of the marketplace, the church must repeat its messages regarding our "treasure" frequently.

Prayerfully consider your pledge in support of God's work in our congregation. Some faithful members of the congregation won't pledge because they honor such a commitment and are concerned that they may not be able to fulfill the pledge that they make. A wondrous thing happens when you pledge, though. Rarely is anyone unable to make their pledge, unless there is some major upset in their finances. And, if there is, God is right there with those affected and knows their circumstances. There is nothing wrong with revising a pledge up or down as your circumstances change. We are asking you to fill out an "**Intent of Giving Pledge**" allowing us to **plan effectively**.

Prayerfully consider the work in the world to which God calls our congregation and what God has blessed you with to support that work.

Stewardship Sunday is November 9th. Please bring your Intention of Giving Pledge Card to the worship service and join us for an All Church Brunch following the service. Sign up is in Fellowship Hall.

ADVENT HANGING OF THE GREENS

On Saturday evening November 29th at 6:00 PM, please join us as we decorate the church for the Advent and Christmas season. There is a lot of work that needs to get done and all are invited to _____

Page 3

lend a hand. Christmas trees need to be decorated, Advent wreaths hung, bows to be fluffed and so much more.

A SOUP AND SANDWICH OFFERING IS REQUESTED . Bring some of your favorite soup and a sandwich or two to share.

COMMUNITY NOTES

St. Patrick's Church is holding its annual **Old Fashioned Christmas Craft Fair** in their Clubhouse on November 8th (9AM - 6PM) and 9th (9AM - 1 PM). There will be many local crafters there as well as a homemade baked goods table and raffles. This might be a great time to get started on you holiday shopping!

The Ecumenical Thanksgiving Service will be

held this year at St. Patrick's Church - Wednesday, November 26th at 7:00 PM.

FREE TO A GOOD HOME

Have you noticed that we currently have two pianos in Fellowship Hall? We are looking for a good home for the old black one. If you are interested in "adopting" it, please speak to Tom Seniow.

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

October was a busy month. Some of us went to the NH Women's Fellowship retreat at Merrovista Lodge in Tuftonboro (near Moultonboro & Lake Winnepesaukee). The subject was from Micah 6:8 - "What does the Lord require of you? To do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with Your God." We had good discussions on this and how it applies to our lives. Look for the bulletin board display coming soon with pictures of the retreat.

Our October 28th meeting on Heifer Project and Fair Trade (think SERRV) was led by Rev. Bill and the Youth Group. They learned a lot about fair

November 2008

trade while spending a week at Heifer's Overlook Farm in Rutland, MA. Women's Fellowship will then study the possibility of starting the UCC Coffee Project here at our church. We will be speaking with Diaconate and Trustees about this. We will look for the congregation's support.

November promises to be busy, too. On **Sunday, November 16th**, we will hold a **SERRV Sale**.

Come prepared to shop for Christmas presents for your loved ones. This is a fair trade sale. Money from your purchases goes back to the Third World craftsmen who made the items.

Tuesday, November 18th is our regular meeting. Our topic is **Alternative Holiday Giving**. Let's not give things that go unused or are regifted. Let's think about truly meaningful gifts and ways to give them. Come with your ideas to add to the conversation.

Sunday, November 23rd we will hold a **Bake Sale** after our 10 AM church service. Shop for Thanksgiving with us! We'll save you some time in the kitchen and profits go to our mission projects.

Come, have fun and learn something! We meet in the church parlor at 7 PM.

Cheryl Koch

STEEPLETOPICS

The children have had a very busy month of October with School Picture Day, Fundraisers, Parent/Teacher Conferences and, of course, our fun Halloween parties and parades. We hope you all had a safe trick or treat!

In November, the children will have a lot to be thankful for. There will be no school on November 4th (Election Day/ Workshop Day) and November 11th (Veteran's Day). Then all the goodies ordered through our fundraisers will arrive the week of November 10th. Thank you to all those who supported our annual fundraiser! On November 14th the children will hear from Officer

Page

4

Phil. Then we will have the arrival of the Pilgrims and the Native Americans on the 27th and 28th. Their feasts should be a lot of fun!

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.

We are continuing to accept registrations for the 2008-2009 school year. If you have a child who has turned 3-5 years old by September 30th and are interested in enrollment, please call the school at (603)635-2100 and leave a message for the Registrar.

Submitted by,
Melanie Surprenant

CHRISTMAS CHOIR

Like to sing, but can't commit to regular choir? Why not give Christmas Choir a try. Our concert will be on Sunday, December 14th. We rehearse from noon - 2 PM on Sundays, where you'll find strong singers in every section and good fellowship all around. And bring your friends! We always have folks from several churches and towns.

Questions? Call Music Director Tom Seniow at 603 898-2842. Rehearsals begin Sunday, November 2nd.