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The First Congregational Church United Church of Christ

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Dear Friends,

As I sit in my office wondering where the sunny days of August past have gone, as I wait for the "return" of our September routine, I received my daily devotional phrase from Daily Guideposts, one of the websites to which I subscribe. I am given a phrase to contemplate, "Spirit Lifting Thoughts for Every Day of the Year." There is always something from the devotion of the day that seems to be appropriate to my spiritual life at the moment. What would happen if suddenly, all of us were aware of our "spiritual ness"?

We live in a time where we are conscious of many other things in our lives. We are aware of our physical health, our financial health and even our social status. These three seem to have become slightly more important for many than the health of our own spiritual soul. I have to admit that it gets discouraging sometimes when I see that spiritual welfare has become a low priority for many people. We can look around and see people jogging or biking a couple of miles or more a day, or walking or swimming, lifting weights, doing aerobics or other things to keep their bodies in shape. Some are willing to hold down two or even three jobs a week, working into exhaustion to try to stay ahead to get ahead in life. We attend "toomanytocount" social activities during the year or encourage our children to participate in numerous social functions, not always for the right reasons, but to be seen with the "right" crowd. These are important functions in life, I admit, if we can

control them, understand them, and not be overwhelmed by their so-called "importance."

But where does God and our spiritual health fit in our lives? Jesus said, "*Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you!*" (Matthew 6:23) Do we intentionally exercise our spiritual souls each day with quiet devotional or prayer time? Are we aware of the benefits we receive by devoting time and energy to God and this church? Are we willing to attend Sunday Worship services and participate in the life of the family of God, as we are to attend functions in the community or at school?

When I think about our church Family of the First Congregational Church of Pelham, I think about our spiritual well being. I pray that we all, young and old, think about and do something to strengthen our God's Spirit in our lives.

As we begin our official "church-year", we invite you to participate in our worship services, volunteer with our various committees and groups, take advantage of attending our Bible Studies, our Family Fellowship events, our Youth Group programs, our Women's Fellowship Group, our Mission events and so much more! Your souls will be refreshed, as we "get busy"! This is what we have been waiting for!

Welcome home!

RB

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FIRST FOLKS

Get well wishes go to: Cheryl Andrew's mother, Georgette Bellemare, who recently fell and broke her hip; Melanie & Kenny Surprenant's niece, Jessica Guerin, who is recovering after being struck by a hit-and-run driver in July; Susan Hornbeck Bundy who is recovering from knee surgery.

Jenna Hollinger was hospitalized with pneumonia in July. We are so glad that you are feeling better now, Jenna!

We send our condolences to: Doug and Lorrie Hjorth and their family upon the death of Doug's mother, Charlotte, on July 17th; Paul & Milli Knudsen on the death of Paul's mother, Becky, at the age of 92; Glennie Edwards and her family on the death of her brother Kenny Boutwell on August 19th.

Congratulations to Great Grandma Fran Chadwick on the arrival of her new great grand daughter - Madison Elizabeth on July 26th.

Congratulations and best wishes to Deborah Pucillo and Thomas Hill who were married here on August 9th.

The civil union of Darcy Crisp and Becky Steed was also celebrated here on August 9th. We send our congratulations and best wishes to Darcy and Becky.

MUSIC NOTES

Chancel Choir rehearsals begin early this year- Wednesday September 3, 2008. Chancel Choir rehearses every Wednesday from 7:30- 9:00 p.m. and would love to have you join them! We have a strict attendance policy: Come when you can; don't feel guilty when you can't. There are strong singers in each section who not only make it easy but make it fun. If you like to sing, please give Chancel Choir a chance.

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FROM OUR SUNDAY SCHOOL

SUPERINTENDENT

I hope everyone has had a wonderful summer. Sunday School will be starting soon. Rally Day will be September 14. Look for registration information in the mail. Please return the information card.

We are going to need help this year in Sunday School. We need teachers for several of our younger classes and substitute teachers. Please think about volunteering an hour of your time. Your time spent with our children will make a difference for our church family. We try to have two teachers for each class to accommodate people's schedules. If you can help, please speak to a CE board member, or my email address is cathymiller30@gmail.com.

Cathy Miller

"GOOD READING"

There's nothing better than sitting back and relaxing with a cool drink (or cup of coffee) and a great book. We would like to know what you are reading. Let us know with an e-mail to office@pelhamucc.org with your recommendations!

RB's Summer Reading- **THREE CUPS OF TEA** – Recommended by Ron Schneider, this true story chronicles the adventures of Craig Mortensen, a part-time nurse, who after getting lost on his attempt to climb K-2, ends up being nursed to health in the village of Korphe, Pakistan. To return their hospitality, Mortensen promised to return and build them a school for the impoverished village. Having no idea how he would do this, and faced with a society not trusting Americans in a post 9/11 world, the Taliban, tribal feuds, con-artists, tribal elders and Muslim clerics, Mortensen established the Central Asia Institute and has built over 50 schools in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Incredible story!

THE SHACK – by William Young- Grieving over the kidnapping of his daughter on a camping trip

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and the fallout of the situation, a father receives a note to go to a shack where evidence of his daughter's death is found. The note, it turns out, is a written invitation from God, who leads the father

through his grief and pain with love and grace. The first part of the book is painful but it is a wonderful message.

WHAT ARE YOU READING?

FALL WORSHIP SCHEDULE

We will return to our 10AM Worship schedule on Sunday, September 7th.

OLD HOME DAY UPDATE

PENNY SALE: If you have made up a basket for the Penny Sale, please get it to Sandy Blanchard by noon on Friday, September 5th. For your convenience, you may drop it off at the church office.

SET-UP: We will be setting up all day on Friday, September 5th. Please stop by when you can and give a few hours of your time. This is a lot of work, and we need as much "manpower" here as possible!

CLEAN UP: Sunday Morning - EARLY, 7 AM! We need lots of help here. We will take a break at 10 AM to gather in the Sanctuary for worship.

AUCTION: If you have large items for the auction that need to be picked up, please call Wally Cibulski (603 635-7607). The last date for "pick-up" is September 2nd. Items that you can transport yourself may be left at the storage container on the Parsonage lawn. There will be tarps there to protect your donations from "the elements." If you want to help at the auction on OHD, please speak to either Wally or Bob Sherman about when you are available.

COMMUNITY SERVICE: If you know of any high school students who need community service hours, there are sign-up sheets in Fellowship Hall and at Pelham High.

Many thanks to all who have worked so hard in planning our 102nd Old Home Day.

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10 THINGS ABOUT THIS YEAR'S OHD RAFFLE

1. It's a fun way to support our church's outreach programs.
2. We saved the cost of an additional mailing by including tickets in the last issue of CROSSWORD.

3. Both the tickets and prizes make great gifts - even to yourself!
4. 30 chances to win (hourly and grand prizes) with each ticket.
5. Gas prices (& everything else) went up. Raffle ticket prizes stayed the same!
6. You got to cut them out!
7. There are still more tickets available.
8. You can get more tickets at the Church Office until noon, Friday, September 5th.
9. The sun WILL shine on the Raffle Booth at Old Home Day - stop by! (We'll have more raffle tickets for sale)
10. You might win - NEATO!

Raffle tickets and checks have been "flooding" the mail bin since the last edition of CROSSWORD "floated" out to you! (Forgive me....) Thanks for your support.

Judy Reid 603 635-7438

COUNTRY STORE: We need help working at the Country Store! If you could donate an hour (or 2), please call Cheryl Koch (603 635-2505).

WE NEED PIES!

Hi Everyone,
It's hard to believe it is almost Old Home Day again. It's time to think about the pies that will be served at the dinner at the end of the day. Serving pies for dessert at the Old Home Day dinner has been a tradition for many years now.

Could you please help us by providing a pie (or two) for our dinner on September 6th? Any type of pie will do! Apple, blueberry, cherry! Whatever you feel like bringing on that day will be greatly appreciated! We do ask that you do not bring any pie that needs refrigeration, as refrigerator space is VERY limited on that day.

Please bring your pie to the church parlor by 2:00 PM on September 6th. This will allow us plenty of time to cut the pies before dinner.

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THE PRETTY PIE CONTEST

Lets not forget our church's favorite contest - the Pretty Pie Contest! This contest is open to anyone who loves to make those wonderful looking, great tasting pies. Please bring your pretty home made pie to the church by noon on September 6th. This will give the judges plenty of

time to pick the prettiest pie of Old Home Day 2008!

Thanks for all your help. If you have any questions about the pies for Old Home Day, please call me at (603)-635-3363.

See you all on September 6th.

Jean Robarge

PRAYER SHAWLS

With Fall fast approaching, the Prayer Shawl Group will resume their monthly gathering on Thursday, September 11th at 7 PM in the church parlor. If you would like more information about this group, please speak to Jean Robarge.

FROM THE DIACONATE

Make a difference

I look forward to Old Home Day with mixed feelings – a wonderful time for seeing neighbors and friends, contributing to our church and community by helping with the setup, breakdown and working during the day and, oh no, the unofficial end of summer.

This has been a trying a summer for many of us – uncertain economic times, gas prices through the roof and it seems that it has rained every other day since I can remember. However, as we dance around the raindrops, we still find time for barbeques, camping trips, trips to the beach, sharing time with family and friends, the things that make a New England summer special including the natural beauty that God gave us here in NE.

However, fall will soon be upon us, marked by OHD and the beginning of school. Please celebrate the change of seasons by making a difference and helping out with OHD. Just come, bring the kids and help set up, work a booth

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or breakdown. There is plenty to do. It is a nice life lesson for your children to see you giving your time and efforts to our church and community. And, in this case, every little bit really does help. Come by the Penny Sale and say hi! Or better yet, feel free to pitch in and help out!

Please say a prayer for the safe return of those who serve our country and the innocent civilians

who live in harm's way or who have become refugees as a result of hostilities. Please say a prayer for the leaders of our country and other countries involved in hostilities that the Holy Spirit may touch them and provide the wisdom and courage to resolve our differences.

Charities

Feel Christ in your heart as you contribute and make our church and community stronger. Please consider the Pelham UCC giving site. As many of us return to church and look at the envelopes that have piled up during the summer, think about how much easier it would have been to make that contribution electronically. Safe and easy!

Sunday Worship time change for the fall

Beginning September 7th, the Sunday worship service will be held at 10 AM.

Prayer List

Please help us keep the prayer list current and up to date. Please call Peggy and let her know when someone needs to be added or removed from the list or needs a visit or call from Rev. Bill.

Diaconate Responsibilities

Just a reminder - The Diaconate is responsible for the worship and spiritual life of our church, the mission budget, care of ill or hospitalized members and a regular review of the church membership. If you have any comments, concerns, questions or compliments about the worship service or the church spiritual life, please let us know at deacons@pelhamucc.org. Jane Ambargis and Doug Hjorth are the co-chairs.

Peace,
Steve Blanchard

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CE UPDATE

We hope you all had a terrific summer- boy it went by fast!!

Please be on the lookout for a postcard with Registration Information for the upcoming Sunday School year. We'd like to get a jump on updating information on all our returning students, as well as inputting and greeting any new Sunday School

members. **First day of classes is Sunday September 14th!!**

Before we begin classes, we are in need of several teachers/co-teachers. We need 2 co-teachers each for grades 1, 2 and 4, and one co-teacher for pre-k. Please, please contact any CE member if you are able to help!! You'll be able to contact us easily on the way into church, as the CE committee will be the Greeters for the month of September. We'll be right there to help with information about registration for the new Sunday School year, and to answer any questions about being a new teacher volunteer!

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

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP FALL RETREAT

The NHUCC Women's Fellowship is sponsoring a Fall Retreat inviting all NHUCC women to attend. It will be on Friday, October 17th and Saturday, October 18th, at Merrowvista Educational Center in Tuftonboro, NH. The theme is "What Does God Require of Women Today?" The Rev. Gail Murphy will be the Retreat leader. Rev. Murphy is the Pastor of the Northwood Congregational Church UCC.

For further information and/or a registration form, please speak to Alma Healey or Jean Robarge.

Our retreats are generally well attended and appreciated. It would be nice to have a group from our church attend.

Alma Healey

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TRUSTEES' CORNER

It continues to be quiet for the Trustees this summer, and none of us are complaining. We are **September 2008**

STEWARDSHIP MOMENT

Top 10 Reasons to check out the First Congregational Church of

continuing to discuss policies for fiscal management, building use, and personnel. Our financial situation continues to be good. We are currently \$7,000 ahead of contributions at this point last year!

Phil Currier updated us on the State of NH DOT's plans for the town center and how it might impact the church, particularly the "Parson's Pasture" property that we own behind the fire station. We appreciate Phil's continued vigilance on that.

Dick Koch performed some major painting in the Steepletop bathrooms downstairs. We tried to no avail to find some other unfortunate volunteer to do that unpleasant job. Dick had the least patience and did it himself, and quite nicely too!

We are getting quotes to replace the kitchen and basement outside doors. Though it is beyond our budget for church maintenance for the year, high oil prices might make replacing those leaky and rotting doors a wise move.

**Sincerely,
Donn, Dick, Ron, Dan, and Tom**

STEEPLETOPICS

It's hard to believe summer is over. Steepletop will open its doors on Thursday 8/28 for our Parent Tea. Our orientation days are 9/2 for 2-day classes and 9/3 for 3-day classes and Kindergarten, and school officially begins on 9/4. We look forward to seeing all of you.

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, please call the school at (603)635-2100 and leave a message for the Registrar.

**Submitted by,
Melanie Surprenant**

Pelham United Church of Christ

10. What if church is like brussels sprouts ?

You know, like something that you hated as a kid but you love as an adult because you eat it in ways that suit you much better. Guess what? A lot

of people are having the same sort of experience with church. In our church, things are often quite different and worth checking out.

9. Flavors ...

Our church tends to mold themselves to fit the people we feel called to serve in our local community. The result: A wide variety of traditions, expressions and values that have integrity and purpose. From conservative to liberal and everywhere in between, we're not short on flavors!

8. No apologies...

You are what you are...and so are we – we like ourselves just fine. We hope you find our church a place where you will fit in, be nurtured and challenged to grow.

7. No waiting...

You don't have to join to be active. If you want to get involved, many of our churches will find a place to help fulfill your need to give – whether or not you decide to join. But we also hope you will consider joining with us!

6. No boxes...

God can blow the lid off any box, unfold it and turn it into a dance floor. We tend to be the “out of the box” people. Our mission opportunities, events, small groups and worship are waiting for you to enjoy and be filled with the Spirit.

5. One God, One Faith, One Baptism for All...

We believe that baptism places each of us into the “body of Christ” and lasts forever. Baptism is big enough, strong enough and cleansing enough

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to last forever. We believe that everyone – old, young, straight, gay, physically or emotionally challenged, rich or poor, sure or unsure, lost or found, has a place in the body of Christ.

4. Good News People...

We believe that No. 5 is good news!

3. “Party” Church...

God is having a party and we are all invited. At God's party our spiritual hungering is fed and our thirsting is satisfied. At God's party we get strength, stamina and community support that helps us through the tough times that come to everyone. Feeding our spiritual hunger helps reduce those, “I can't believe I'm so stupid” moments – but we'll never eliminate them all.

That's why we need friends and companions and not judges (no offense to judges) for the journey.

2. Spiritual Guidance...

It's all about relationships. The most important relationship is our relationship with God. Second most important is our relationship with the rest of the human family. These relationships produce justice amid injustice, kindness in the face of meanness, and the humility of self acceptance that comes as we sense the presence of a God who knows our inmost thoughts and loves us uncontrollably – just as we are. Spiritual journeys can be like the exercise equipment we buy and leave under the bed. Without coaches and workout partners, most of us don't stick with it.

1. We're waiting for you....