



CROSSWORD

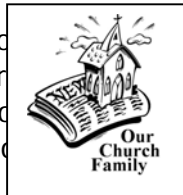
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCH OF PELHAM
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
Volume XXIII, Issue 4 April 2011

Dear Friends,

An earthquake, a tsunami and the nuclear radiation leak from power plants in Japan. Upheaval in Libya, the Middle East countries of Oman, Saudi Arabia and Yemen. An earthquake in New Zealand and more... once again we feel frightened and vulnerable.

Moderate leaders in high risk terror countries are killed and the world and our hearts go on "elevated terror alert." An unstable world causes the stocks to fall, and our spirits follow suit. The Coalition forces in Afghanistan capture a "valuable Al Queda target" in the mountains on the border of Afghanistan and Pakistan, and we feel a tinge of hope. The stocks rebound with such news, and so do we. Our child does poorly in school and we feel lost to help. Our child succeeds in school and we feel encouraged and elated. We lose our job and our self-esteem plummets. We find a job and the future looks bright again.

How often do we allow this roller coaster syndrome to shape our daily lives and define our concept of hope? Clergy and Health professionals speak about this roller coaster syndrome in their daily work. They carry the mood and emotions of one patient into the next patient visit. It's exhausting and we look for a place to stop the cycle.



One way to do so is to be at the center out of which you respond. Do not allow anyone else to be the center of your world. We marvel at the people of Japan and how they seem to be handling the crisis of a world turned upside down. And we learn that the Asian culture does

not allow the horrific reality to overtake them and determine a response. There is calmness in the approach, allowing for a confidence to give way to hope to a nation deep in shock, anger, and fear. We, as individuals, should take note of our "center", allowing the calm, compassionate, caring being to be the "rock" amongst the heavy burdens and the deep joys expressed by those around you. Many don't even consider such a "way" to exist in our daily lives.

I suggest that the message of Easter has to do with locating, defining, and acting out of our center as Christians in the midst of a world of fluctuating emotions and uncertain outcomes! Being centered as a Christian means that the Good Fridays of our lives, the days when despair and hopelessness win the day, do not define us, but neither do the days when happiness and success win the day. What then defines our center? What are our constants?

German pastor and theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer, imprisoned and sentenced to death in one of Hitler's concentration camps recounts in his poem "Who am I?" how others positively perceived him in prison and how hopeless he perceived himself. He concludes with the question "Who am I? They mock me these lonely questions of mine. Whoever I am, you know, O God, I am yours." Good Friday teaches us that the low and high days of our lives don't determine who we are. They are not our constants. Easter teaches us that the last word is yet to come, and has already arrived. Let us be reminded of our Center!

Come and celebrate the Good News of Christ's Resurrection! Alleluia, Alleluia and Amen!

Happy Easter.
Rev. Bill



FIRST FOLKS

LOSSES

Tom Wood's dad, Ernest, passed away at Pleasant Valley Nursing Center in Derry on March 9th. We send our condolences to Tom and his brother Nate.

GET WELL SOON!

Get well wishes go to Marge Friend, who is recovering from back surgery.

CELEBRATIONS

Congratulations to grandparents Sharon & Pete Hone and parents Megan & Jon Hone on the March 16th arrival of twins, Henry James & Amelia Jill Hone.

On March 20th we celebrated the baptism of Avery Dawn Strickler, daughter of Amy & Ronald Strickler.

HOLY WEEK/EASTER SCHEDULE

MAUNDY THURSDAY, also known as Holy Thursday is the Christian holy day falling on the Thursday before Easter that commemorates the Last Supper of Jesus Christ with the Disciples. We will be observing Tenebrae (Latin for 'shadows' or 'darkness'), the gradual extinguishing of candles while a series of readings are read by members of our Diaconate. A simple supper of soup and bread (6 PM) will be held before the service (7 PM).

GOOD FRIDAY

The sanctuary will be open for personal reflection and prayer.

EASTER SUNDAY

Sunrise Service 6:30 AM Harris Pelham Inn
Easter Worship 10:00 AM

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.



Please make your check payable to:
The First Congregational Church

Number of tulip pots you wish to order: _____

In Memory Of: _____

In Honor Of: _____

Given By: _____

of plants ordered: _____ Total Enclosed: _____



TRUSTEES' CORNER

The current Trustees, Angele Diack, Pete Bennett, Donna Quigley, John Hollinger, and Denise Duff send a well deserved thank you on behalf of ourselves and the congregation to Dan Murphy and Tom Seniow for their past 2 terms (6 years) of service to our Church's Trustees Board. Their helpful insight and knowledge will be missed. We also welcome back to the Trustee's Ron Schneider, who also accepted the chairman position, and our other new member, David Hennessey.



The first focus of the trustees for the coming year is to replace the front doors of the church. Anonymous Donations have been made to put this plan into place. We will be updating the congregation more as we proceed with this project.

The trustees are also focusing on several other projects for the coming year as soon as more funding becomes available.

1. Fixing the parking lot drainage.
2. Addressing the parking lot design as a whole, regarding the need for additional spaces.
3. The windows in the parlor are decaying

and need to be replaced.

4. The state of NH is requiring us to enclose the playground due to safety concerns.

As always, any donations made to the building fund can be allocated to any of these specific items you would like to help us with.

Currently the Trustees meet on the second Thursday of every month.



FROM THE DIACONATE

April's Devotional

Gracious God, may we seek the infilling of your compassion for everyone we meet, including those with whom we live in tension. Help us live so that even our enemies will open doors for us.

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Give us eyes that recognize open doors. Grant us the faith and courage to walk through them. Amen.

Here are some highlights from the March Diaconate meeting:

- Easter is quickly approaching....we look forward to seeing you at our special Easter Week services:
 - o **Palm Sunday** (April 17th): 10AM
 - o **Maundy Thursday** (April 21st): 7PM
 - o **Easter Sunday** (April 24th): Sunrise Service at Harris' Pelham Inn (6:30 AM)
 - o **Easter Sunday** (April 24th): 10AM Full Service
- **Altar Flowers:** If you would like to purchase flowers for the altar, please contact Peggy at the office. You are welcome to take the flowers home after service or you may ask a Deacon to donate them to a shut-in.
- We are encouraging ALL congregational members to wear their **name tags** on Sundays as we have many new faces that would like to know who you are.
- **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.

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 April are Jane Provencal and Bob Diack. Our greeters are members of the Diaconate.

Our next Diaconate meeting is Tuesday, April 12th at 7PM. As always, please 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 and bdiack@cio.com.

FROM THE CE BOARD

April Sunday School Schedule

April 3	Sunday School/Communion
April 10	Sunday School/Teachers' Meeting
April 17	Sunday School/Palm Sunday
April 24	No Sunday School/ Easter

March was a busy and successful month for the Christian Education Board.



On March 9, the CE Board assisted with the Pancake Palooza /Shrove Tuesday celebration immediately prior to the Ash Wednesday services. Better than sixty members of our church family joined in the delicious pancake, bacon and sausage dinner. Thanks to all who attended and especially to those who donated their electric griddles and their time to cook for and serve the community.

On March 20 we celebrated the second annual Lenten Workshop. Six stations were setup in Fellowship Hall to instruct the Sunday School classes on various Christian traditions about Lent and Easter. We invite the entire church community to contribute to a banner in Fellowship Hall recording the sacrifices and/or changes the children plan to make during Lent. Thanks to all our volunteers who prepared the

displays and the crafts. The response of the children and the Sunday School teachers was very enthusiastic!

Upcoming events

- April 17 **Youth Group Muscle and Talent Auction** after services. "Purchase" the time and talent of our strong and talented youth as a fund raiser toward our summer trips
- April 21 Simple Supper (6 PM) & **Maundy Thursday** service (7PM)
- April 24 **Easter Sunday** Enjoy the service with family; no Sunday School.

Respectfully submitted,
Maryanne Masterson
CE Board



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STEEPLETOPICS

Steepletop students were very excited during the month of March. They were visited by their friend Freckles the Leprechaun. They also did all kinds of crafts relating to St. Patrick's Day.

Now that spring has sprung, the students are looking forward to going outside to play. Crafts revolve around the theme "April Showers bring May flowers". The students engage in making ducks, umbrellas, flowers and of course their favorite of making mud pies. Since Easter is coming they will be hunting for Easter Eggs.

The teachers are hoping to take the students on a field trip to Charmingfare Farm this month depending on weather. If they cannot make it in April, it will be in May when the ground is hopefully drier.

Kelly Sauer just joined the board and will be checking on our policies and procedures.

Steepletop will be closing at 11:30 for Good Friday. The school will be closed April 25th through April 29th for school vacation.

Registration is now going on for our 2011-2012

school year. If you are interested in enrolling your child please call the school and leave a message for the Registrar.

Happy Spring!
Steepletop Board



BIBLE STUDY

2nd Monday Bible Study – April 11, 7:00 PM

Join us for our monthly Bible Study. This month's topic is discussion of the building of the Mosque at Ground Zero. We try to make our Bible Studies relevant to the issues of our times, as to see the connection between our scriptural teachings and the issues we face as people of God. Join us!

SPRING CLOTHING DRIVE

Please help support our Spring Things Clothing Drive Sunday - April 3rd.



The Youth Group and Mission Committee of the First Congregational Church of Pelham will be sponsoring a "Spring Things" Sunday on April 3rd. This service project involving a community wide clothing drive will be coordinated by the fellowship members. We are requesting that the Pelham community consider donating a new or gently used clothing item for distribution to area shelters. We are looking for spring and summer clothing items that are clean and in new or good condition for men, women and children. When organizing your spring and summer clothes during the next few weeks consider donating an item, it will make you and someone in need feel all warm and fuzzy inside and out. Think of what we could collect if each individual donates one item.

Suggested Donation Items

Sweaters	Sweatshirts
Lightweight jackets	Shorts
Short sleeve shirts	T-shirts
Blankets	Towels
Sheets	New socks

Toiletries

PLEASE NO WINTER ITEMS

Items can be dropped off at the church the week of March 28 - April 3rd.



MISSION COMMITTEE

A focus of the Mission Committee this past year has been identifying hands on mission opportunities that emphasize the giving of our time and talents. Our latest program is "Mission Possible," where individuals, families, and small groups of people can provide help to those who may need it on a schedule that works for them. Types of help that participants may offer is likely to vary, ranging from doing yard work, baking cookies, providing a hot meal during difficult times, driving persons to appointments if they

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are unable to drive, providing a sympathetic ear when someone is going through a difficult time, providing relief for persons caring for family members, and making minor home repairs for those who may not be able to do so on their own. Although we have had several people sign up and express an interest in participating in this program, we have developed a Mission Possible Volunteer form that is available on line at the following website:

https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/Mission_Possible. On March 27 we will have a Mission Possible information table set up after worship service where Mission Committee members will be available to answer your questions and hard copies of the volunteer form will be available to fill out. We know that lots of people in our congregation already are helping out in the community; this is a means to match your talents and schedule with the needs of the community as they may arise.

Friday, April 15, marks our next FREE COMMUNITY SPAGHETTI SUPPER.. Again, this is an event meant for all families or individuals. Beginning at 6:15 PM, we will show the movie Toy Story 3, which was nominated for several Oscars. The Women's Fellowship is sponsoring this event (THANK YOU!) but additional help is

always appreciated in the form of kitchen help, servers, and bringing goodies for desert. We do not accept any donations on the night of the supper. However, if anyone would like to donate spaghetti or spaghetti sauce, or monetary contributions for perishable food purchases, we would be more than happy to accept them. Please let anyone on the Mission Committee know if you would like to make such a donation or place monetary donations in a separate envelope marked "spaghetti supper." There is a method to our madness as to when we schedule these suppers; it is always on the third Friday of the third month and we serve from 5:45 to 7 PM.

Over the past few months we have been exploring possibilities for becoming involved in some manner with the Nashua Chapter of Habitat for Humanity. They hope to begin work on another house in Hudson sometime this spring. This seems to be an ideal time for us to gage the level of interest of our church in providing work crews to assist in providing housing for those in need. We will keep you posted about when work on this house is scheduled to begin and try to put together some Saturday work crews to help with this very worthy cause.

Every spring, our church accepts donations for One Great Hour of Sharing. Special envelopes for this offering will be available on March 27th and April 3rd. A portion of this offering will go to the relief efforts in Japan.

The needs at the Pelham Food Pantry remain exceedingly strong. Canned fruits, vegetables (except pumpkin), meat, fish, toiletries, and toilet paper remain in constant demand.

Have a blessed Lenten Season and a Happy Easter!

Doug Hjorth



**ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING OFFERING
APRIL 3, 2011**

One Great Hour of Sharing, as part of Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM), is one of the four special mission offerings of the United Church of Christ. Working in more than eighty countries, the offering provides hope to people in need. The UCC works with international partners, and together we provide support to health, education, refugee, agricultural and emergency relief initiatives.

For over 60 years, OGHS has been sharing your resources with those who need them the most! The most recent offering of help has been sent to Japan to help provide International Disaster assistance, to help with recovery and humanitarian relief. For more information about OGHS, please check out www.ucc.org.

Thank you for your generosity! With our help, lives are changed and hope is given!



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WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Daffodils for American Cancer Society

Daffodil Sunday, March 20, was a great success! We had orders for bouquets, pots of bulbs, and 'Bear and a Bunch', totalling \$480. Thank you so very much for your contributions/orders. Together we can make a difference in beating this disease.



Hygiene Kits

Kits were on their way to the Church World Service warehouse in Maryland BEFORE the earthquake and tsunami hit in Japan. Who knows - maybe some of our kits are helping those who are homeless or who have lost everything there. We collected items that made up 41 kits. A few extra things went to our food pantry. Thank you so much for your help with this important project!

April Meeting

Our meeting is on Tuesday, April 26, 7 pm in the parlor. Our program is on Family History. We will do show and tell of our interesting family

heirlooms, photos, etc - A lot of reminiscing and sharing. Please come and share a good time with us! There's a brief business meeting at 7, followed by the program at approx. 7:30. and then dessert and coffee or tea.

At the March meeting we had a Collage Workshop with Nancy Varnum of Pawtucket Congregational Church. Please think about coming to one of her workshops here next fall. She is so interesting and personable, and the Collages are beautiful!

Cheryl Koch



Endowment Committee

Your Endowment committee has a quiz for you this month.

Do you know who Augustus Berry and James Hobbs were? (No fair using Google)

If you look on either side wall at the front of the church you will see plaques honoring both of these men. Each contributed at different times in our history to the growth and progress of our church community. We remember them and their spirit of service to others lives on. When you look around the pews on Sunday you will see many folks who contribute in their own way to keep our congregation vital and moving forward. It's unlikely that we have enough wall space to recognize everyone who over the years has donated their time or treasure to this church.

The Endowment Fund is another way for us to continue that spirit of service to others. The fund has been set up specifically for designated donations that are only to be used for mission work and outreach. It is designed to be a perpetual fund. A percentage will be taken out each year to fund mission work above and beyond what we are able to do today. As the

fund grows and receives contributions we can expand our good works. It provides a way for us to follow in the footsteps of those who came before us and show the way for the next generations. Please consider contributing to the endowment as a way to keep *your* spirit of service alive in this congregation long into the future.

You can be sure that Augustus and James would approve.



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“FUNCERT” TALENT SHOW

Mark your calendar now! (note date change)

We will be holding our annual spaghetti supper and Funcert talent show on **Saturday evening, May 14th**. This is always a lot of fun, and we hope you and your family will plan to join us for an evening of good food and fellowship. If you would like to present a “talent” at the Funcert, please add your name to the sign-up sheet in Fellowship Hall.



**FREE
Community
Spaghetti & Meatball
Dinner
& a Family Movie**

**Friday, April 15th
Dinner ~ 5:45 – 7 PM
“Toy Story 3” ~ 6:15 PM**

Join us for an evening of delicious food, great company & entertainment. This free Community Spaghetti & Meatball Dinner is open to