

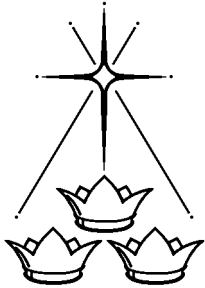
**JANUARY 2010**  
**VOLUME 173**

## **THE MESSENGER**

**The First Congregational Church of Pembroke, UCC; 301 Pembroke Street, Pembroke, NH 03275-3234**

The Rev. Jim Howard, e-mail: [pastor@pembrokechurch.org](mailto:pastor@pembrokechurch.org)

Secretary, Nancy Jackson, (office: 603-485-9639), e-mail: [secretary@pembrokechurch.org](mailto:secretary@pembrokechurch.org)



### **EPIPHANY**

*The Light shines in the darkness  
and the darkness has not  
overcome it. — John 1:5*

On January 6 we enter the church season of Epiphany. It means *manifestation*, and its origins predate the church's celebration of Christmas. Originally it was a commemoration of Christ's baptism (still recalled on the first Sunday after Epiphany—Jan. 10, 2010) as *the time* Jesus' true identity as the son of God was *manifest (revealed)*. Later on, in Western Christianity, Epiphany came to be associated with the journey of the wise men to Jesus. Jesus' true identity was *manifest* to these gentile (non-Jewish) travelers from the East. So it was seen (manifest) that Jesus came to save not only Jews but Gentiles as well.

Epiphany has always been associated with *light*. In the darkness, only shadows can be discerned, but in the light the true shape, color, and size are *manifest*. In our northern hemisphere, this season of light occurs during the darkest time of the year. What a blessing! For in the midst of outer darkness, our faith proclaims that light triumphs (note the quote from John above). This is a profound truth about life. Yes, there will be times of darkness and despair, suffering and pain, separation and loneliness, but they are not the final word or chapter nor can they *ever* defeat the powers of light: hope, promise, love, compassion, and joy—*these are victorious!*

The One whose birth we celebrate, whose manifestation to the wisemen and at his baptism we recall, is the same one whom God raised from the ultimate darkness of death that we all may have life in true abundance. This is *Good News!*

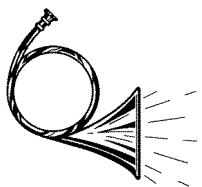
It is this same One who showered light upon the way our forbears prepared for us. It is this same One who now shines light upon the path we will follow

into this new year of 2010. Though we can scarcely see the differences and changes, this is a *new* year. "*Behold, I make all things new!*" (Rev. 20:5b) and "*For nothing will be impossible with God.*" (Luke 1:37) are our watchwords as we seek to discern God's will for this new year at First Congregational Church of Pembroke and in our personal lives. Let God's will become *manifest* as we go forward into God's new day! Look for an *epiphany!*

In this *Season of Light* we will be focusing upon what it is that gives our lives true light, that is, our faith and beliefs as disciples of Jesus Christ. So we will be looking at some historic and contemporary creeds and statements of belief to discover what they have to say about the difference faith and belief make in daily life. We will be examining why what we believe makes all the difference to how we live and the satisfaction we find in daily life. You will be inspired (hopefully) "to let your light shine" and discover your purpose in lighting up the world with Christ at your heart to your own and God's delight!

Let God's light so shine in this wintry season of darkness that there may be a true Epiphany of God's love and saving grace in you and visible in our church which radiates like a beacon to the community around us! Happy New Year!

Your Pastor and Teacher,

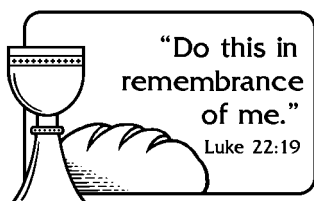


**THANKS TO  
ALL THE MUSICIANS !!**

- For a lovely Christmas Concert performed on Dec. 20!

- For our choir's festive music gracing our worship services throughout Advent!
- For our Praise Band's second appearance on Dec. 13!
- And Special Thanks to George for his skills, talents, and openness to trying and supporting new things!

**WHAT GOOD WE DO and FUN WE HAVE  
WORKING TOGETHER WITH GOD!**



**COMMUNION  
MOVES TO THE  
SECOND  
SUNDAY**

**COMMUNION OF THE MONTH  
FOR JANUARY THROUGH  
APRIL**

This was decided by the Deacons at their last meeting to avert a number of date issues (e.g. Easter is April 4).



**SUNDAY FLOWERS ...**

As always, donations of flowers are welcomed for our altar each Sunday morning. To contribute all you have to do is sign up on the Flower Sheet in the Parish Hall or let the flower committee member know.

Please contact Lynn Matava 485-8352 (January), Robbe MacKenzie 485-7295 (February) and Doris Rowden 485-3664 (March).

**PREPARED TO SERVE**

A training event for all church members in the **New Hampshire Conference, United Church of Christ**

including over 50 workshops, exhibits, worship and a time for fellowship

Saturday, February 20, 2010  
8 a.m. to 3:45 p.m.

Pembroke Academy, Pembroke NH

Cost is \$30 if registered by Jan. 15th

CONTACT: Deanna Bennett, Assistant to the Associate Conference Minister  
New Hampshire Conference, United Church of Christ

Ph: 603-225-6647 ext 109 Toll free in NH: 1-888-642-8229 Fax: 603-225-2345

Email: [dbennett@nhcucc.org](mailto:dbennett@nhcucc.org) Website:

[www.nhcucc.org](http://www.nhcucc.org)

Registration forms and details will be available on the Welcome Table in the Parish Hall. You may also contact our church secretary, Nancy Jackson, for registration forms and details or use the registration form enclosed.

**USHERS FOR JANUARY ...**

3 Dave & Nancy Bibbins and Alan & Anna Gibbs

10 Eric & Judy Pearson and Luke & Cindy Bonenfant

17 Floyd & Dot Smith and Tom & Allison Hardy

24 Kurt & Jodi Ehler, Ken Williams and Randy Shuey

31 Helen Chapman, Don & Laurie Hill and Dean Hopps

*If you are unable to usher on your given day, please contact Dean Hopps at 485-5509.*

**CHRISTIAN EDUCATION ...**

Thanks to all who helped with the Christmas pageant, and all the parents of our forest animals. What a fun group of kids and adults to work with!

Sunday School this month, "Living God's Words: Respect", includes rotations in cooking, storytelling, art, and games. We'll begin on January 10<sup>th</sup>. **No Sunday School on January 3<sup>rd</sup>**.

Sunday School on January 31<sup>st</sup> will only be for pre-K through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. The older kids are invited to stay in church to take part in the worship service, which is being planned by the youth groups. Don't miss it!

The PowerXpress rotation for February is on Making Choices.

We are still looking for teachers for April and May. Be on the lookout for details of dates and rotations.

Praise God! We are averaging 20-25 kids every Sunday! We are a growing church family, with 47 kids registered this year from the nursery through high school! The best part is that our kids are bringing friends. Keep it up!

## HOLIDAY FAIR UPDATE ...

Thank you to everyone who helped make the Fair so...successful!! We not only had a terrific time, we made a lot of money too!! We made \$5,000.00. WOW!!! If it wasn't for everyone's talents, it would not have been successful. So I extend a great big **THANK YOU!!** Sometimes, it's hard to have the faith that everyone will come through, and every year I am humbled by the generosity of everyone!!!! Again, thank-you and may 2010 bring you many blessings!!

Allison Hardy and Anna Gibbs

## WORLD SERVICE ...

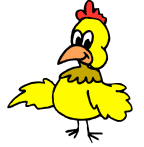
*Our Family's Table* serves a free meal on Wednesdays at 5:30pm. See Pat Hill if you have questions or would like to volunteer to help.



Every **2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday** of the month is **Brown Bag Sunday**. Especially needed are **rice and canned items – baked beans, green peas, carrots and**

**mixed vegetables** and non food items such as **toilet paper and hygiene items**. All donated items can be

left in the Parish Hall. As always, thank you for caring!



## YOUTH GROUP ACTIVITIES ....

**Friday, January 8<sup>th</sup> – Movie Night** at the Pearson's! 7-9pm. Snacks and drinks provided. If you need a ride meet at church at 6:45pm.

**Friday, January 15 – Sunday, 17<sup>th</sup> – Deep Freeze Retreat at Camp Berea.** Sam Baht will be the speaker.

## SPECIAL HOLIDAY PROGRAM

### SCHEDULED FOR JANUARY 3 IN 10

#### A.M. WORSHIP ...

We are pleased to welcome Leslie Alan Coates from the Durham Community Church to lead worship and present his wonderful holiday worship experience, "Gifts of Hope: *a festive and poignant celebration of the season in word and song.*" The program includes poetry by UCC pastor and Portsmouth Poet Laureate, Maren Tirabasi, and music by the past Music Director of the Seacoast Repertory Theatre's youth productions, Christopher Anthony Cote. What a blessed way to keep Christmas into the New Year!

## FCC TO RECYCLE ...

The FCC of Pembroke is beginning our "action" version of the Copenhagen Climate Summit. Soon you will see blue recycling bins around our church in various locations. You are asked to place recyclable items in these bins, which will be labeled as to what items are acceptable. God has given us charge of being stewards of the land as well as our souls. And we will be blessed with a cleaner environment. Thank you.