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THE MESSENGER

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



PASTOR

Some of you may be aware that I have been meeting with a small group of colleagues for about a year to read, share, and discuss about "The Emerging Church." This rather amorphous phrase/topic is tough to nail down, but here is one definition/description that I find helpful:

Eddie Gibbs and Ryan Bolger, in their book, *Emerging Churches: Creating Christian Community in Postmodern Cultures* (Baker Academic, 2005) define the emerging church in this way:

Emerging churches are communities that practice the way of Jesus within postmodern cultures. This definition encompasses nine practices. Emerging churches (1) identify with the life of Jesus, (2) transform the secular realm, and (3) live highly communal lives. Because of these three activities, they (4) welcome the stranger, (5) serve with generosity, (6) participate as producers, (7) create as created beings, (8) lead as a body, and (9) take part in spiritual activities.

I am intrigued by this phenomenon and find it a very hopeful re-creation of what it means to do and be followers of Jesus Christ in the living body of the church in the 21st century. This is especially significant given, as my Baptist colleague and professor at Andover Newton, Jeff Jones, puts it: "Everything we know about how to do and be the church doesn't work anymore."

Well, you and I are currently living out – discovering as we go and being led by the Spirit – what does work for us. Believing that the Spirit is at work through the gathered community of believers, we are discerning together those new practices, behaviors, outreach, and missions that work, that speak meaningfully to us, and that build up the church. We each have a role in this discovery and discernment, so prayerfully consider where and how you will participate. Your faith is emerging, revealing new realities and truths to you. Our church is emerging, discovering new worship practices, welcoming behaviors, and outreach opportunities. We are all being led by the Spirit, individually and as a church, forward in faith into God's new day. Let us then, "run with perseverance the race that is set before us!" (Hebrews 12:1 NRSV)

P.S. If you'd like to know more about the Emerging Church, I recommend Phyllis Tickle's book *The Great Emergence: How Christianity is Changing and Why*. You might also like to check out <http://www.emergentvillage.com>

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 Robbe MacKenzie 485-7295 (**May**), Doris Rowden 485-3664 (**June**) and Lynn Matava (**July**) 485-8352.

USHER SCHEDULE FOR MAY ...

2 – Helen Chapman, Don & Laurie Hill and Marc Herring

9 – Peter & Eric Chase, Don Hill and Luke Bonenfant

16 - Harold Matava, Lynn Matava and Eric & Judy Pearson

23 - Dave & Nancy Bibbins, Rand Shuey and Dean Hopps

30 - Peter, Eric & Sharon Chase and Dean Hopps

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

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.

The **Interfaith Food Pantry** is open on Wednesdays from **1-3pm** and **5:30-6:30pm**.

Mother's Day, **May 9th** is **Tools & Blanket** Collection. Please use the envelope in this newsletter for your giving.

A **thank you** to all who gave to **One Great Our of Sharing** with \$300+ having been given.

All are welcome to attend a **Communities Responding to Homeless Families** forum on **May 20th, 7pm** at the Wesley United Methodist Church. This event will present a program which has been quite successful in other communities, including two in New Hampshire, which directly involves faith communities in providing shelter and support to families experiencing homelessness. The program is called **Family Promise**. More information can be found at www.familypromise.org. Come find out what it's all about!

LETTER CARRIER'S FOOD DRIVE ...

On **Saturday, May 8th** the **Suncook Post Office** will again participate in this drive. Simply leave your non-perishable food donations in a bag by your mailbox and the postal service will deliver it to a local food bank. **Families and individuals in the area community need your help!!**

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COMM ...

April's Sunday School school unit on Forgiveness taught kids what the Bible says about forgiveness. Lessons revolved around food, games, arts, crafts, and of course, Veggie Tales. Ask your kids about forgiveness! The Sunday School topic for May is Anger Management. Students will encounter Biblical responses to this topic from the Old and New Testaments. For a head start, explore these Bible verses with your kids: James 1: 19-27; Ephesians 4: 17-5:2; Matthew 5: 21-22; and the story of David and Abigail in 1 Samuel Chapter 25.

The High School class just concluded a study of Colossians, in which Paul puts a church back on a Christ-centered path. They also had some great discussions on how to pray out loud with other Christians and privately in public places.

Youth Sunday is planned for June 13th! The entire congregation will have an opportunity to be involved with this exciting morning of worship, when the Sunday School comes to the worship service! In preparation for this Sunday School on June 6th will be all ages: pre-k through grade 12. We encourage high schoolers to observe Sunday School classes on May 23rd and 30th, as well.

Applications for the CE scholarship, for graduating seniors heading off to further education, should be turned in! Get them to us. If you need a copy, ask Tad for one. Email him at thaddeuscurrey@comcast.net.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO HELP PLAN WORSHIP?

Rev. Jim is recruiting 2-4 folks to help plan worship services from late June through August. Please email (pastor@pembrokechurch.org) or speak with him by May 15 if you are interested. (You do not have to speak in public or be present every Sunday to be a worship planner!)