

**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)From the  
**Pastor****THE 3 R'S:  
REAFFIRM,  
REFORM,  
RENEW**

As I compose this in late October, we are nearly half-way through our current worship theme, "The 3 R's." So far we have considered "Reaffirm" — re-setting our life priorities to allow for what truly matters most to be reflected in our daily lives; "Reform" — surrendering our will to allow God to re-make us in His image; and "Renew" — discovering the joy of life in faith which lifts us up as on eagle's wings. We shall repeat "The 3 R's" during the first three Sundays of November, but this time incorporating your comments, thoughts, struggles, and ideas (many of them coming from the 3x5 cards filled out after the sermons in October).

On my computer monitor at home is a saying I placed there at a very challenging time of my life some years ago: "Let the Spirit Lead." It is there to remind me daily to subordinate my will to God's will, to get out of the way so that the Spirit can lead me and guide me throughout the day. I have found infinite joy and satisfaction when I have followed that advice: Mountains have indeed become like molehills, serendipitous surprises have overcome worries and fears, manifold blessings have replaced what felt like insurmountable adversities!

That little phrase, when lived out, has cultivated a grateful heart and generous spirit. "Let the Spirit Lead" has created in me and for me a lifestyle of Thanks-giving. In other words, I've gone through the cycle: "reaffirming" God's will; allowing my life to be "reformed" to more closely resemble what God has always intended it to be; and I have felt transformed and "renewed" which has issued forth into an ever present, deep, and heartfelt gratitude to God.

But this is not just my story, it is our story. We all are followers of Jesus Christ who seeks in holy love to have us reaffirm our trust in God, reform our lives, and be renewed. It is in this spirit that Jesus can say, "Behold, I make all things new!" (Rev. 21:5) — even you and me, even the downtrodden and destitute, all who will call upon his name.

May you and yours cultivate grateful hearts, celebrate your blessings, and express your heartfelt thanksgivings each day, but especially as you gather together on Thanksgiving Day.

**THANKSGIVING BASKETS ...**

The Annual (and utterly amazing) compiling of the community thanksgiving baskets (boxes) will occur in our Parish Hall at 1 p.m. on Sunday, November 21st. Your assistance is welcome (and it is great fun, too, seeing it all get done in less than 10 minutes). Those individuals and families needing baskets should register with the town welfare dept. in either Allentown or Pembroke ASAP. The baskets (boxes) will be distributed at the Parish Hall at our church on Monday, Nov. 22, beginning at 9 a.m.

**THANKSGIVING EVE SERVICE ...**

On Wed., Nov. 24th at 7pm, we, Grace Capital and the Suncook Methodist churches will gather at St. John The Baptist Church, 10 School St., Allentown. Please bring canned goods for donation to the Interfaith Food Pantry.

**USHERS FOR NOVEMBER ...**

- 7 Peter, Sharon & Eric Chase, Rick Hochsprung
- 14 Eric & Judy Pearson, Floyd & Dot Smith
- 21 Dave & Nancy Bibbins, Helen Chapman, Marc Herring
- 28 Kurt & Jodi Ehler and Alan & Anna Gibbs

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

## WORLD SERVICE ...



The *Family Table* serves free meals on **Wednesdays at 5:30pm**. Anyone wanting to help cooking or serving is asked to contact Pat Hill at 485-4740.

Those who have been collecting change for **NEIGHBORS IN NEED** - if you could **please cash in your change** at the bank **before the Nov 7 collection** it would be appreciated.

Every 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday is **Brown Bag Sunday** to benefit the **Interfaith Food Pantry** which is open on **Wednesdays** from **1-3pm** and **5:30-6:30pm**. currently needed are: Apple juice, Corn Beef Hash, Beef Stew, Ramen Noodles, SpaghettiOs, and Baked Beans and other canned goods. Additional items such as paper products and personal items can be used as well. All items can be left in the parish hall. **The food pantry served approximately 143 families this past month – approximately 3000 meals!**

**THANK YOU** to all who participated/contributed in this year's CROP WALK. On the day of the walk the amount counted was more than \$12,211.00 raised from 25 institutions represented totaling more than **150 walkers and volunteers**. (Our Church team collected approx \$342.00 for CROP WALK).

## 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 Doris Rowden 485-3664 (November), Robbe MacKenzie 485-7295 (December) and Lynn Matava, 485-8352 (January).



## THE YOUTH GROUP ...

On Friday, **November 5**, beginning at 6:30pm the **senior high** will gather at the Pearson's for a movie night.

There will be a **Jr. High** meeting held at the church on Friday, **November 19** from 7-8:30pm.

## CHRISTIAN EDUCATION ...

In November, our PowerXpress Sunday school rotation will focus on the story of Rebekah, in Genesis 24 and 25. Rebekah was a strong and determined woman who was chosen by God. God chooses, us, too, and like Rebekah, we can show hospitality and kindness to others. The Bible memory verse comes from Isaiah, 43: 10: "My

people, you are my witnesses and my chosen servant. I want you to know me, to trust me, and understand that I alone am God. I have always been God; there can be no others." (CEV)

**NOTE:** We WILL hold Sunday school on the Sunday **after** Thanksgiving, **11/28**.

The October High School class was a success - - the Holy Spirit was definitely guiding our discussions, and as usual more questions were raised than answered. The next class will begin on 11/28 and run through 12/19. Eighth graders and up, JOIN US!

In December we will study the unit called Christmas Messengers. We will not present a Christmas play this year, but stay tuned – our children will still be involved in worship during the Advent season!

As Thanksgiving and Christmas come around the bend, pray that God would show you a friend or another family that would be open to coming to church with you. Advent is a great time to introduce people to God!

## STEWARDSHIP UPDATE ...

The Stewardship committee would like to thank the entire church for all that you do to support the church and its missions. We just concluded our *Tithe for a Month Challenge* and we had 15 members who accepted the challenge and another 23 who said they would consider participating.

We know that the blessings gained from giving off the top are profound and real. The annual pledge drive has begun and we look forward to our members continuing to accept the challenge and blessings that come from tithing.

## ADVENT WORSHIP PLANNING TEAM

If you would like to assist Rev. Jim in planning worship for the four Sundays of Advent (Nov. 28 - Dec. 19), please let him know (via email, phone, or in person) that you would like to do so *no later than* Nov. 7<sup>th</sup>.



