

**THE MESSENGER**

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

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**FROM YOUR PASTOR -**

Methodist pastor and contemporary hymn writer, Jim Strathdee, has written a song which focuses attention for Christians on the days following Christmas. It has long been a favorite of mine, and I find myself running the words by several times a day in the days and weeks after all the holiday activity, as life "settles down" to what we, rather naively I believe, call "normal." The song was written as a response to a Christmas poem written by the wondrously gentle and spiritual Christian pastor, writer and teacher, Howard Thurman.

*Chorus:* "I am the light of the world!  
You people come and follow me!"  
If you follow and love you'll learn the  
mystery  
Of what you were meant to do and be.

When the song of the angel is stilled,  
When the star in the sky is gone,  
When the kings and the shepherds  
Have found their way home,  
The work of Christmas is begun: *Chorus*

To find the lost and lonely man,  
To heal his broken soul with love,  
To feed the hungry children  
With warmth and good will,  
To feel the earth below, the sky above! *Chorus*

To free the prisoner from his chains,  
To make the powerful care,  
To rebuild the nations  
With strength of good will,  
To call a man your brother everywhere! *Chorus*

To bring hope to every task you do,  
To dance at a baby's new birth,  
To make music in an old man's heart,  
And sing to the colors of the earth! *Chorus*

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In short, what this song reminds me to do is to bring the light of Christ into my heart and let His light lead my life, just as the wisemen let the star lead them to Bethlehem. As we heard read in worship on the day after Christmas:

Christ has no body on earth now but yours;  
yours are the only hands with which he can do  
his work,  
yours are the only feet with which he can go  
about the world,  
yours are the only eyes through which his  
compassion can shine forth upon a troubled  
world.

Christ has no body on earth now but yours.

— *St. Teresa of Avila*

How appropriate to ponder these words as we embark into this new year, 2011. A year which sees us committed to holding our second local Work Camp scheduled for August 8-12. A year in which we are called together as God's people of this church to discover anew the Spirit's purposes for us all individually and collectively. With all this in mind, do make time—in Strathdee's words—"to learn the mystery of what you were meant to do and be."

Committing yourself: to plan for and participate in Work Camp, to more consistently worship God, to deepen your faith through Bible study, to attend a retreat, to teach Sunday School, to tithe, to sing in the choir, to participate in the Book Group, to initiate an activity, to mentor a Confirmand... In short, to commit yourself anew to the lead of the Spirit, the way of Christ, the service of God will so fill you with blessings in 2011 that you will complete the year with profound gratitude for the learnings—yes even transformations—that have occurred.

Let us all continue faithful to our calling as disciples of Jesus Christ, committed to His work through the church, and dedicated to His service.

Your servant-leader in Christ,

## USHERS FOR JANUARY ...

- 2 Eric & Judy Pearson, Luke & Cindy Bonenfant
- 9 Floyd & Dot Smith, Tom & Allison Hardy
- 16 Dave & Nancy Bibbins, Alan & Anna Gibbs
- 23 Kurt & Jodi Ehler, Randy Shuey, Dean Hopps
- 30 Helen Chapman, Don & Laurie Hill, Lynn Matava

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

## STEWARDSHIP UPDATE ...

The end of year is upon us and the pledge drive for 2011 is nearly complete. The **stewardship committee would like to thank everyone that returned a pledge card** and to date, over 117,000 has been pledged for next year. That is an increase of nearly \$4,000.00 from last year!

Last year's pledged amount was \$113,542 and it appears that we will meet that number and go beyond. Thank you to all who pledged and provided the support for our church during the 2010 year.

We look forward to the New Year and all that can be accomplished by our members.

The Stewardship team,  
Marc Herring  
Tad Curry  
Abigail Morrison

## WORLD SERVICE COMMITTEE ...

The Family Table serves free meals on Wednesdays at 5:30pm. Anyone who would like to help (cooks greatly appreciated) is asked to contact Pat Hill at 485-4740.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of the month 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. **Thank you for caring!**

A warm Thank You to all those who contributed to the Mitten Tree and also the Toys for Tots given to Community Action Program.



## THE FLOWER COMMITTEE ...

Donations of flowers are always welcome 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 know of your intention. Please contact Lynn Matava, 485-8352 (January), Doris Rowden, 485-3664 (February) and Robbe MacKenzie, 485-7295 (March).

## HOSPITALITY PLUS COMMITTEE ...

We will be holding a “Mardi Gras” **Pot Luck Supper** at **5:30pm** on **February 19**. Come and bring a friend or neighbor to enjoy a pot luck meal and fellowship. Bring a covered dish, dessert or salad to share. Be brave and try a cajun flare - if you dare!



## OUR CONFIRMANDS NEED YOU – MENTORS WANTED!

We have a wonderful group of nine enthusiastic youth, grades 8-12, who are participating in this year's Confirmation program. During the Fall we have been holding classes and working through the book, *My Confirmation*. Beginning in February, however, each confirmand needs to be paired with an adult mentor from the congregation to work together through the booklet, *Making Disciples*. Mentor pairs will meet on a schedule convenient to them, hopefully for 60-90 minutes, 3-4 times per month (February to early May). This resource uses an "apprenticeship" approach to confirmation, pairing adult mentors from the congregation with confirmation students. Through a series of thirteen learning experiences, adult mentors and confirmands are both teachers and learners at the same time, which makes this program engaging and congruent with the nature of the Christian faith, and so actually benefits both youth and adults. From having used this resource for over ten years, I can attest to the positive impact it has made on faith formation not only for the youth, but for the adults as well!

If you would be willing to offer your availability to serve as a Confirmation Mentor, please let me know ASAP. If you would like to talk about it or would like more information, please do not hesitate to be in touch.

— Rev. Jim

## CONTACT INFORMATION ...

Anyone who has not submitted updated contact information use in the Pictorial is being asked to do so as soon as possible. Please provide names of adults & children in the household, address, phone # and e-mail address. Please let us know what information **cannot** be used in the directory. Please e-mail to [secretary@pembroke church.org](mailto:secretary@pembroke church.org) or mail to 301 Pembroke St., Pembroke, NH 03275.

## CHRISTIAN EDUCATION ...

December's rotations focused on Angels: God's messengers. The high school class, too, had some great discussions about angels and demons. On December 19th, after learning that we can sometimes be God's messengers, the 4th-7th grade class wrote an email giving someone the Christmas message. Here's a copy of what they wrote:

"How are you doing? We hope you are doing as well as we are; we are doing fantastic! We love Christmas. It is the time of year when we celebrate the birth of Jesus and we learn the messages that God wants us to hear.

"Here are some of the messages that we have heard this Christmas season:

- Be nice to people
- Think about others
- Don't be quick to blame others
- Give others a chance to participate
- God forgives everything and everyone
- Don't be afraid to say you're sorry
- Jesus loves you and everyone else
- Trust in God
- Share with those in need
- Treat others the way you wanted to be treated
- Be respectful
- Be friendly
- Be caring
- Be responsible for yourself

"We realize you are probably caught up in the craziness of the holiday season. During this chaotic time, we hope you will take the time to open your heart to God's messages during this Christmas season.

"Emma, Alex, Julia, and Ben from Sunday School"

The PowerXpress unit for February is called "Jesus and the Children". The unit teaches that Jesus' words and actions showed that God values children and that children have an important role to play in the community of faith. The focus Bible verse is Mark 10:14: "Let the little children come to me: do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs."

The 8th-grade and high school class will be meeting for all four weeks in February. Stay tuned!



## Bible Study

**WEDNESDAY NIGHT ADULT STUDY  
RESUMES JANUARY 12<sup>TH</sup> 7-8:15 PM  
IN THE MEMORIAL ROOM**

You are invited to join in an 8-week Bible Study of Paul's letter to The Romans being led by Rev. Jim on Wednesday evenings from January 12 to March 2. Many adults in our congregation have realized the need and discovered the value of meeting together to study and share aspects of our Christian faith, and so we encourage you to try this out and see for yourself! No previous background or knowledge is necessary for you to participate in the class, and there is no requirement that you make all the classes. The only resource needed for this class is a Bible. (If you need one, please let Rev. Jim know in advance). If possible, please read the following passages before the first session on January 12: Romans 1:1-15 and 15:14-16:2.

## **PRAISE BAND REHEARSALS RESUME JAN. 6 ...**

Under the leadership of Luke Bonenfant our Praise Band resumes rehearsals on Thursday evenings from 7 to 9 p.m. in the sanctuary beginning January 6<sup>th</sup>. Both instrumentalists and singers are needed and encouraged to attend regularly so that we can ready some new songs to share in worship in the near future. For more information, contact Luke at 485-5642 or email him at [Luke1227@comcast.net](mailto:Luke1227@comcast.net)

## **THE WISH LIST IS BACK ...**

Item suggestions are, but not limited to:

13 gallon baskets & liners	postage stamps
trash baskets	3x3 post its
8 ½ x 11 colored paper	recycle baskets



## **WINTER CONCERTS**

**January 15, 2011 at 7pm**

**January 16, 2011 at 3pm**

at

The First Congregational Church,  
177 N. Main St., Concord,  
N.H.

Tickets are \$15 (\$12 for students and senior citizens) and will be available from members (see Rev. Jim) or at the door.

The program will include madrigals from several countries, spirituals, a medley of songs by Harold Arlen centered around the song "Get Happy", and other favorites. We will also sing several new pieces by our Director Scott Lounsbury, including one based on our motto of "Sing for Joy."

## **EXPECTING THE UNEXPECTED ...**

"The coming of the Son of Man will be like a thief in the night." 1 Thessalonians 5:2

"But you, beloved, are not in darkness, for that time to surprise you like a thief." 1 Thessalonians 5:4

"Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it." Hebrews 13:2

"Watch, therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which Christ is coming." Matthew 25:13