

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



Spiritual Necessity

Therefore be it resolved...

So begin countless resolutions.
And here we are in the “Season of Resolutions”

In all honesty, I have not been much of a “fan” of resolutions: probably because I have such a poor track record of keeping any of them for very long! How about you?

Though I am not making it a resolution, I am, fact, resuming the Weight Watchers regimen out of “health necessity” effective with the start of 2012.

Let me encourage you to consider a regimen for “spiritual necessity” as you enter the new year. Of course there are many options, and my experience teaches that the trick to successfully adopting one of them is to choose something that works for your temperament. For instance, you could do a daily devotional (from a booklet, online, email – the latter works best for me), a time of prayer (when you arise, as you brush your teeth, upon retiring – again your temperament will determine what works best for you). Once I used a hymnal as a devotional, since I love hymns.

In any case, the “spiritual necessity” for *something* is well attested in this passage by John L. Mason from *Let Go of Whatever Makes You Stop*, © 1994.

Give God The Same Place In Your Heart That He Has In The Universe

The most frequent prayer I pray for myself is based on Psalm 51:10. I’ve found that this prayer has been a key to momentum in

my own life. It says: “Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.” There is a supernatural confidence, expectancy and peace that comes when we have a clean heart and a right spirit before the Father.

“The righteous shall move onward and forward; those with pure hearts shall become stronger and stronger” (Job 17:9, TLB) A pure heart will bring increased strength to you life. Keep your heart right, especially when it’s sorely wounded.

Do what’s right. If you don’t want the fruit of sin, then stay out of the devil’s orchard. No one can be caught in a place he does not visit. Unchecked evil grows. Evil that is tolerated will poison you and all those that you care about.

Just be honest with yourself. That, in itself, opens many doors for God to move in your heart and spirit. Admit where evil might lead you, and then do what you have to do to say free. Keep your heart pure and be blessed. Jesus Christ says, “Blessed are the pure in heart” (Matthew 5:8). The Bible also says, “Be strong, and let your heart take courage, all you who hope in the Lord” (Psalm 33:24).

Keep true, never be ashamed of doing right; decide on what you think is right and stick to it. Hope, faith and a right spirit will literally starve despair. Despair is not handled by giving in. It is handled best by giving out. It’s nice to be important, but it’s always more important to be nice.

No power in the world can keep a first-class man down or a third-class man up. There is always a high cost to low living. Give God the place of supremacy in your heart that he holds in the universe. Allow Him to create a clean heart and right spirit in you. This will cause you to be a person of pure motives and a right attitude.

So, effective with this new year of our Lord, 2012, adopt a spiritual regimen appropriate to your personality and temperament. The common thread for everyone will be to put God first, or as John Mason put it: "Give God the place of supremacy in your heart that he holds in the universe." I'll be praying for you!

Blessings in Christ,



NEW
CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

Effective January 9th

Mondays: 10 am to 4 pm
Tuesdays: 9 am to 12 noon
Wednesdays: 12 noon to 4 pm
Thursdays: 12 noon to 3 pm
Fridays: Closed

Join the Fun!
**COME EAT
AND
PLAY GAMES TOGETHER!**

When? Saturday, January 28th at Noon
Where? The Parish Hall
Details? Bring a potluck dish to share and/or your own brown bag lunch with a salad or dessert to share.

Be sure to bring your favorite board or card games!

Hospitality Plus is organizing this daytime event for all ages and providing beverages.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Calling all who love babies! Calling all who love changing diapers! We need volunteers to help out in the nursery on Sunday mornings. The nursery is a hoppin' place these days, and we always need extra hands and eyes and smiles. Please see any of us to volunteer or ask questions.

We've had a great first half of the year in Sunday school. We'll keep things going in January with the "Out of Egypt" story!

If you would like to volunteer to teach Sunday school at any time during the year, please contact us. You don't need any teaching experience. You simply need to share God's Word with the children of the church. We have a great curriculum that gives teachers the chance to share the message in so many different ways.

Hey, 6th, 7th, and 8th graders! Join the Junior High Sunday school class! Every Sunday you have the chance to explore God's Word in a totally laid back, pressure-free way. But it only happens if you're there. So be there. We usually have food!

High schoolers: We will continue to meet every 2nd and 4th Sunday of each month. Here are the dates for the second half of the year: 1/8, 1/22, 2/12, 2/26, 3/11, 3/25, 4/22, 5/13, and 5/27. We will not meet on Easter. On days we are not meeting, we still would love to see your shining faces in worship.

COFFEE HOUR ...

Coffee Hour in **January** is hosted by the **Deacons**. Please plan to join us after worship in the Parish Hall for refreshments and fellowship.

ANNUAL REPORTS DUE

It is that time of year again for Board and Committees to submit their Annual Reports, so

please be sure your committee completes this at its
January meeting.

FLOWER COMMITTEE ...

Donations of flowers are always welcome for our altar each Sunday morning. To contribute all you have to do is let the flower committee know of your intention.

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

IF ANYONE HAS A LARGE FLAT SCREEN TV. 40" or bigger (can be used) please call 485-9639 or see Rev. Jim.

MISSING 4 WHITE TABLES!!

If you know the whereabouts of these tables, would you please **contact Marc Herring** at 485-7951 during the day. Thank you!

JANUARY USHERS ...

- 1 Harold & Lynn Matava,
Kurt & Jodi Ehler
- 8 Alan & Anna Gibbs, Helen Chapman,
Marc Herring
- 15 Luke & Cindy Bonenfant,
Tom & Allison Hardy
- 22 Eric & Judy Pearson, Don & Laurie Hill
- 29 Randy Shuey, Dean Hopps,
Rick Hocksprung, Ruthanne Walters

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

WANT TO BE ON THE PRAYER CHAIN?



Anyone interested in being on the Prayer Chain should contact Rev. Jim. You will be advised of those needing prayer. If you know of someone who is in need of prayer and wants to be included on the list, please contact the church office.

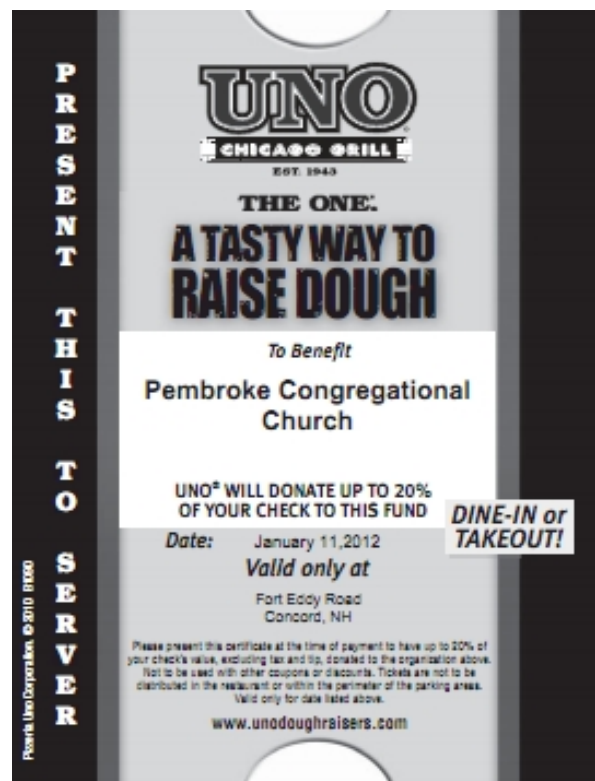
WORLD SERVICE ...

Our Family's Table serves **free** meals on Wednesdays at 5:30pm. Cooks are greatly appreciated (we can shop and help with whatever meal is going to be prepared). Please contact Pat Hill at 485-4740 if you can volunteer your time.

Please continue to bring canned goods/nonperishable items in such as cereal, baked beans, tuna, spaghetti-oes, hash, etc. **for the Food Pantry.** All items can be left in the Parish Hall.

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

Thank you to all who contributed to the Mitten Tree, Toys for Tots (for CAP) and the Veterans of the Cross (Christmas Fund).



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NEWS FROM THE WIDER CHURCH

A Day with Former UCC President Paul Sherry on January 12, 2012 in Concord

Highly respected theologian, and former United Church of Christ national leader, Rev. Dr. Paul Sherry is now Director of Policy at the Washington, DC Office of [Interfaith Worker Justice](#). Rev. Sherry will spend the day in New Hampshire on Thursday January 12, 2012 as the guest of the NHCUCC's Economic Justice Ministry Team.

There will be three distinct opportunities for UCC leaders and members to interact with Rev. Sherry beginning with a brown-bag luncheon at 12 Noon at the Conference Offices in Pembroke and followed by a 4:00 p.m. Interfaith Service at Saint Paul's Episcopal Church in Concord and a 5:30 p.m. Faith-Labor Dialogue, also at St. Paul's Church in Concord.

UCC clergy and lay leaders are encouraged to attend one or more of these sessions. Like the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, who was killed while standing in solidarity with striking sanitation workers in Memphis, Tennessee, and whose life, achievements, and vision we celebrate on the 3rd Monday of January (and beyond), Rev. Sherry also discerns that our faith calls us to be instruments of [economic justice for workers](#) within our local and global community.

For more information about the January 12 "Day With Rev. Paul Sherry," you can send an e-mail to Economic Justice Ministry Team member and South Danbury UCC [Pastor Gail Kinney](#) (pastor.southdanburyucc@gmail.com) or you can contact her by phone at 381-7324.

Mayflower UCC in Minneapolis, MN, has a long history of social activism and providing emergency temporary housing for newly arrived refugees. The house that had been used for this purpose was in need of repairs and the cost to keep it operating was becoming prohibitive. The church wanted to change the project to offer workforce housing to those on limited budgets. Only one developer in the area was willing to work with the church and they started on the new Creekside Commons. The new building has thirty units and always has a waiting list.

The Need for Love Continues

*An angel appeared to Joseph in a dream and said,
"Get up..." Matthew 2:13*

Christmas and all the surrounding hoopla are over, and it is very tempting to just sit back, digest the season, and rest from giving for a while. There are credit card bills to pay, trees to take down, and houses to clean, and that seems enough for January.

The thing about babies, though, is that they continue to need all sorts of care, and we have just celebrated the birth of a baby! Joseph was called to flee with Mary and the infant Jesus to save him from Herod's dangerous fear. Mary needed to feed him, change him, and rock him to sleep as they traveled. Seasons change, but the need for love continues.

And that's what giving springs from, is it not? Love. Parents, foster parents, grandparents, godparents, churches, and all who care for children continue to give to them in season and out because they love them. God remembers what it is like to be a child! Consider the children of your church and of your town; what kind of love do they call forth from you today? How can we continue our Christmas love of children all through the new year?

Rochelle A. Stackhouse is the Senior Minister of The Church of the Redeemer, United Church of Christ, New Haven Connecticut.

SAVE THE DATE! SAVE THE DATE! SAVE THE DATE!

PREPARED TO SERVE **"Bringing Life and Vitality to Your Parish"**

February 25, 2012
at Pembroke Academy

A special training event designed for all church members in the New Hampshire Conference, United Church of Christ! Over 50 workshops will be available on a variety of topics, including stewardship, church leadership, church finances, global missions and Christian education. Come and join us for worship, workshops, exhibits and more!