



The North Church

# BEACON

The deadline for the next BEACON is at **9 a.m. Monday February 27, 2012**. Send entries to [beacon@fccucc.org](mailto:beacon@fccucc.org).

First Congregational Church  
 United Church of Christ  
 South Portland, Maine 04106  
 Phone (207) 799-3361  
 Fax (207) 799-4095  
 E-mail: [office@fccucc.org](mailto:office@fccucc.org)  
<http://www.fccucc.org>

**February 6, 2012**

**Worship**

**1**

**Pastor and Pew**

**2**

**S L & W**

**3-4**

**E G & F**

**3-6**

**Seniors**

**6**

**M & O / Administration**

**7**

## Looking Ahead in Worship

### February 12

- 8:30 a.m.** – Chapel worship  
**10:00 a.m.** – Sanctuary worship with the Meetinghouse Choir.  
 Reception of new members. Sunday school classes through the sixth grade and Worship Discovery for grades 7 & 8.  
 John McCall will give the message.

### February 19 – Diversity Sunday

Based on Psalm 139 and the theme: *Known... Loved... Included... Remembered*

- 8:30 a.m.** – Chapel worship  
**10:00 a.m.** – sanctuary worship with the Meetinghouse Choir.  
 Sunday school classes through the sixth grade and Worship Discovery for grades 7 & 8. Mike Kasputes will give the message.

### February 22 – Ash Wednesday

- 7:00 a.m.** – Communion breakfast (Wright Pavilion) and communion (Sanctuary)  
**8:00 p.m.** – worship

### February 26 – First Sunday in Lent

- 8:30 a.m.** – Chapel worship  
**10:00 a.m.** – Sanctuary worship with the Meetinghouse Choir.  
 Sunday school classes through the sixth grade and Worship Discovery for grades 7 & 8. John McCall will give the message.

Remember to bring non-perishable items for our food pantry. The need is greater than ever.



### PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

*For peace and peacemakers; for the end of US military involvement in Iraq; those in the military and their loved ones; for all who live without sufficient food, water, shelter, safety, love; for all who advocate courageously for justice in our economy that should serve all of God's people; for our elected leaders; for those affected by proposed cuts in Health and Human Services funding.*

#### **Concerns:**

**Ruth Upshall** home from rehab following surgery; **Elaine Pitkin** home after foot surgery; **Jane Howard**, having treatments for early stage cancer.

*In our extended family:*  
**Kathy Cotter's** mother, dealing with ongoing illness in Connecticut.

### FEBRUARY ALTAR MEMORIALS

**The dates of February 12<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> remain open for donors.** If you would like to remember a loved one, honor a dear friend, or celebrate a special time on one of these Sundays or anytime in the future, please contact Louise Nisbet at [Lnisbe91@maine.edu](mailto:Lnisbe91@maine.edu) or 767-2375.

I often find life's experiences grab on to each other like Velcro. One thing elicits memories and emotions of another. Andrea and I recently sat in the enthusiastic audience for South Portland High School's production of *Fiddler on the Roof*. We've come to expect these annual musicals to be top notch and have never been disappointed. Of course, we saw lots of neighbors and friends both on stage and in the hall, and many from our church. The story centers on Tevye, the father of five daughters in a small Russian village named Anatevka, in 1905. He struggles to keep the tradition as he carries on a lively dialogue with God and faces the dilemmas as three of his five daughters fall in love and marry without their father's approval or the match-maker's scheming. The third daughter, Chava, marries a Russian soldier in front of a Christian Orthodox priest and Tevye cannot bend that far. He tells his wife, Goldie, "she is dead to us...". At the end of the story the whole village is abandoned at the order of the Tsar and the family scatters to safety. The story, which opened on Broadway in 1964, is timeless - I encourage you to see it next weekend if you can.

This wonderful story grabbed two other recent experiences for me: one was the recent opportunity to sit with a wonderful group of junior high students at Congregation Bet Ha'am, the Reform Jewish congregation here in South Portland and answer their questions about Christianity (in return, Rabbi Jared Saks just met with our Confirmation class). It was fun and enlightening to answer: *Why is it important that Jesus walked on water? Why do Christians believe they have to make everyone else believe what they believe? Why did they sometimes resort to violence to convert non-Christians? Why do Christians put so much stress on the afterlife and less on this life?* More importantly, I wanted these young people to know that we are Christians - as are many - who want to build mutual respect, understanding, and harmony among religions. Watching *Fiddler* reminds me the Jewish story is rooted in Abraham, a wanderer who found a home land, and many generations since who have had to wander or flee in order to escape persecution. Their thank you note warmed my heart, saying: "we appreciate your openness and knowing we have a friend in the neighborhood."

*Fiddler* also brought tears to our eyes as we heard the poignant lament "Sunrise, Sunset" about children growing into adults. Just the day before, Andrea and I helped Ben move to Quincy Massachusetts, to his first apartment since college graduation, to soon begin his job as a paralegal at a law firm in downtown Boston. He had tried for months to find work in southern Maine but we all know the reality of the market. Of course, we hope he'll make his way back some day. There are few promises... only that time moves forward and the best we can do is realize that each moment matters. How we raise our children, treat our families, welcome others' opinions and convictions, converse with our God - let's remember in our busy lives that these things matter.

Gratefully, faithfully,  
John



### STEEPLE LIGHTING

The steeple is lighted the week of **February 26** in memory of **Gordon Mitchell** by Marilyn Mitchell and family, and in loving memory of **Elizabeth Liston** by her mother Virginia Baker and sister Sue Lang.

The weeks beginning February 12<sup>th</sup> and February 19<sup>th</sup> remain open. If you are interested in lighting the steeple in memory or celebration of a loved one, please contact the church office at 799-3361 or [office@fccucc.org](mailto:office@fccucc.org) for more information.

### A NOTE OF THANKS

I want to say thanks to the many folks who made gifts in honor of my brother John and sent messages of sympathy and support. He is a great loss to our family and to the community. Your kind words warmed our hearts and helped us to move forward.

Shirley L. Neilsen Curry

# God So Loved the World?

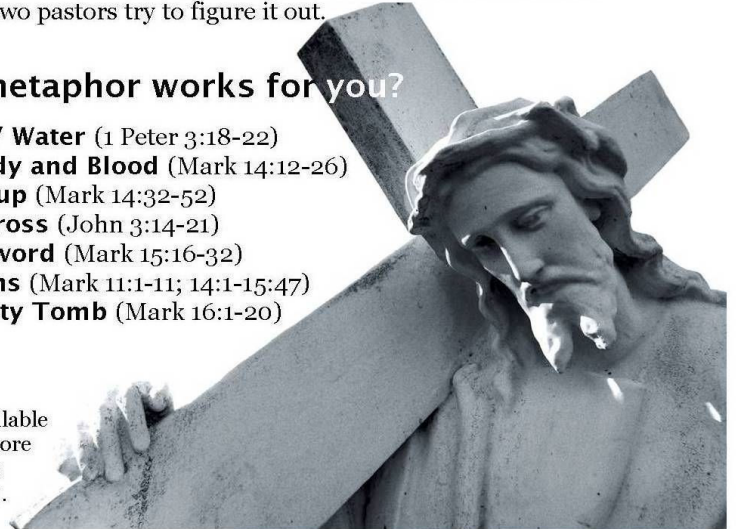
Lent is the season where Christians think about suffering. But maybe you suffer enough. Maybe you need more love. So what do you do with the violent metaphors in the end of Jesus' life? Come listen to two pastors try to figure it out.

## What metaphor works for you?

**Sunday February 26 // Water** (1 Peter 3:18-22)  
**Sunday March 4 // Body and Blood** (Mark 14:12-26)  
**Sunday March 11 // Cup** (Mark 14:32-52)  
**Sunday March 18 // Cross** (John 3:14-21)  
**Sunday March 25 // Sword** (Mark 15:16-32)  
**Sunday April 1 // Palms** (Mark 11:1-11; 14:1-15:47)  
**Sunday April 8 // Empty Tomb** (Mark 16:1-20)



Faith formation opportunities available for all ages. For more information, visit: [www.fccucc.org](http://www.fccucc.org).



## The Longfellow Choral Festival - Concert and Event Schedule March 3, 4 & 5, 2012

### SATURDAY, MARCH 3, 2012

**12:30 PM Film:** *Ole Bull's Fairy Tale* (Norwegian Television Corporation, 1982). Arve Tellefsen narrates the story of Ole Bull's seven-decade-long life. Meet Mr. Tellefsen before the show in Nickelodeon Theater.

**4:00 PM Concert Matinee:** Violinist Arve Tellefsen performs Ole Bull and Edvard Grieg concert pieces with The Longfellow Chorus Orchestra. First Congregational Church of South Portland.

**8:00 PM Concert:** *Scenes from the Saga of King Olaf*, a cantata by Edward Elgar, with Arve Tellefsen, violin, as storyteller Ole Bull, and Brian Arreola, tenor, Deborah Selig, soprano, Bradford Gleim, baritone and the Longfellow Chorus and Orchestra.

### SUNDAY, MARCH 4, 2012

**1:30 PM Recital:** *New Longfellow Songs and Choruses*. First Congregational Church of South Portland.

**3:00 PM Concert:** *Scenes from the Saga of King Olaf*, a cantata by Edward Elgar. First Congregational Church of South Portland.

### MONDAY, MARCH 5, 2012

**4:00 PM Film:** *Ole Bull, Conqueror of Heaven*. (Visions AS, 2006). A documentary film with English subtitles. Henning Kraggerud, who portrays Ole Bull in the film, will make a personal appearance at Nickelodeon Theater.

**7:30 PM Recital:** Henning Kraggerud performs violin music of Ole Bull, Edvard Grieg and other Scandinavian composers. First Congregational Church of South Portland.

For ticket purchase and more information call 207-232-8920 or visit [www.longfellowchorus.com](http://www.longfellowchorus.com).

## Elder Nominations

Please send us the name(s) of one or more members who you think should be recognized as an **Elder for 2012**. It will help if you include a brief explanation of why you feel the member qualifies, whether for diligent service in various church roles

over an extended period or for other reasons. Please send your names **by Friday, March 9** to Tex Hauser of the Spiritual Life and Worship Team, in care of Jen Dealaman in the Church office. Thank you!

## God So Loved the World? A Faith Formation Question

For many Christians, this is an exclamation or even a statement of conviction. For other Christians, this phrase leads to more questions than answers. For those Christians, it is difficult to reconcile violence, suffering and even sacrifice with the love that God might have for us. For surely, it can be difficult to understand why a loving God would require such hardship and brutality of God's people. It's hard enough to hear the stories of Jesus being whipped, dragged, pierced and crucified. Even if there is good news on the other side of this violent death, is this what God's love requires of us?

This Lent, we will explore this question through a preaching series led by your pastors -- but the question will not be answered only by your pastors' words. Your pastors seek to offer a variety of experiences for you to ask these questions together.

John McCall will continue to explore the themes suggested in worship in **two Davidson Conversations**. In these post-worship discussions, John will provide a brief overview of atonement theory as he explores the metaphors explored in worship. Mark your calendars for the **Sundays of February 26 and March 25 at 11:30 a.m.** to share in these conversations.

Parents, mentors and Sunday School teachers will find a handout tucked into the "Please take one" folder on

the Children's Faith Formation bulletin board outside of Wright Pavilion. This handout provides an overview of how to talk about this difficult part of our faith with your children. Though the children will not explore the same texts as those in worship, this conversation will continue in Sunday School as the children explore the significance of the cross.

Elsa Peters will lead a **book study of *Proverbs of Ashes: Violence, Redemptive Suffering and the Search for What Saves Us* by Rita Nakashima Brock and Rebecca Ann Parker**. This was one of the most engaging and most challenging books Elsa read in seminary. In this book two pastors reflect on the particular stories of church members that believe

RITA NAKASHIMA BROCK  
and REBECCA ANN PARKER  
**P R O V E R B S  
O F A S H E S**  
VIOLENCE, REDEMPTIVE SUFFERING,  
and THE SEARCH FOR WHAT SAVES US



"A sewing indictment, personal and experiential, pastoral and theological, of the most unfortunately successful idea in the history of Christian thought."

JOHN DOMINIC CROSSAN  
author of *Jesus: A Revolutionary Biography*

## COMMUNION SERVERS WANTED!

Do you have a desire to get involved in our church, but not sure where to start or how much time you want to commit to? Then consider becoming a Communion Server! Serving communion is a deeply meaningful way to serve your church family and would only require a commitment of approximately 4 Sunday mornings a year. Please contact the church office (office@fccucc.org) or Betsy Keiter at 767-6182 to express your interest today!

## CHOIR INVITATION

Anyone who would like to be part of our choir for the **Good Friday evening service** may do so by attending all of the rehearsals on Sundays at 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. from now until then. We are working on the Faure Requiem and a couple other anthems.

We would love to see you!

Shirley L. Curry  
Choir Director

**MEN'S  
RETREAT  
2012**

Please join us on **March 11 & 12 from 10:30 a.m. Saturday to 11:00 a.m. Sunday.** We'll have 4 sessions (approx. 1 ½ hours each) led by our own members. Mike Quinn, who scheduled his double knee surgery so that he could be with us, will lead off in the morning. Additionally, Jeff Sandler ("Mr. Fish") and Scott Berry will lead as well - - and a fourth person. My hope is that maybe YOU might volunteer to lead the fourth session on the subject of your choice; otherwise I will have to draft someone. (I hate that!)

We usually have about 15 +/- guys attend. The cost is \$110. for everything (room & board) and the fellowship.

LAST – Please notify me at 767-4746 or the office ([office@fccucc.org](mailto:office@fccucc.org)) of your intention to attend. No deposit needed until the end of this month.

Thanks for reading,  
*Jerry Onos*

**... A Faith Formation Question (cont.)**

God wants them to suffer. The conversation between these two pastors is heartfelt and eye-opening to those of us who have ever said Christ died for our sins. A limited number of books have been ordered at Nonesuch Books in Mill Creek and will be available on February 18 at 10% off the cover price. We will

read the whole book together and gather three times over the season to share in conversation. If you are interested in joining these conversations, please mark your calendars for the **Mondays of February 27, March 12 and March 26 at 7:00 p.m.** in Davidson Lounge.

*Elsa & John*



**SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES AT  
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH**

ATTENTION: ALL GRADUATING SENIORS AND STUDENTS CURRENTLY ENROLLED IN POST-HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION

YOUR CHURCH CAN HELP YOU WITH SCHOOL COSTS. SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS ARE AVAILABLE **MONDAY, JANUARY 30** FROM THE CHURCH OFFICE AND THE DEADLINE IS **MONDAY, MARCH 12, 2012.**

The **Loretta Thompson Pond Scholarship**, established in 1995, is for graduating high school seniors who are members of this church. Criteria for the Pond Scholarship include service to the church and the community; involvement in church activities, academic achievement, and financial need. Letters of reference and written essays are required in the application process for the Pond Scholarship.

✓ Applicants for the Pond Scholarship will complete the General Scholarship Fund Application, the Loretta Thompson Pond Scholarship Application, and the Church Financial Aid Form.

Award considerations include church involvement during and after high school.

✓ Applicants for the First Congregational Church Scholarship will complete the General Scholarship Fund Application.

**We're going electronic and encourage you to email your request for an application to [scholarship@fccucc.org](mailto:scholarship@fccucc.org) and then to complete the Word document and return it to the same address.** We will also accept hard-copy applications which are available from the church office. Questions? Please call the office at 799-3361.

The **General Scholarship Fund** is available to church members who are studying at the college, university or graduate level.

Scholarship Committee:  
*Jeri Sides, Sally Sutton, Lee Taylor,  
Jane Taylor, Margaret Thibodeau,  
& John McCall*

## Sunday School Sightings

Sunday school is good, Sunday school is great!! Smiling, laughing, serious, questioning faces. It is heartwarming to move from room to room and see all these expressions on our children's faces,

Pre-school kids love being together as they begin the early explorations of sharing, learning and talking about our favorite Bible stories.

K, 1 and 2 is a very lively, large group with lots of energy. They have completed several projects: A Giving Tree, God's love pond. The art work is very expressive and fun to see.

Grades 3 and 4 recently made beautifully woven crosses as they raise questions and have interesting discussions. We welcome Karen Verdelli as a new teacher, another blessing for us!

Grades 5 and 6 have created a very interesting Wisdom and Worship Wall which is an on going project. They also designed cards for Baptism reminding everyone "You are a child of God's". We have passed these on to Rev. McCall.

Christ Kid's Club continues to be enjoyed, we have discussed, stewardship, Baptism, Advent, Epiphany and now Lent. The kids voted to consider a

sacrifice for themselves as well as trying to improve themselves by readjusting something in their lives. You will hear more about this. We recently took a trip to the gym and how joyous it was to witness 5 and 6 graders working with the younger ones on learning basketball skills. A perfect example of Christian love, sharing and learning. They also had a great game of basketball. Lots of fun!

Worship Discovery has taken on a new format due to Confirmation. We have a smaller group now and Carrie Skeffington has graciously offered to lead. She will be in church the first two Sundays of each month to sit with the class while they worship and reflect. The remaining Sundays will be class time in the Laity Room. Meet Carrie on those Worship Sundays in the Narthex.

Please feel free to contact me at any time with suggestions or questions.

*Carolyn Foster*

Sunday School Coordinator  
sundayschool@fccucc.org



### SENIOR ACTIVITIES

**Thursday, February 16 - Lunch and Fun at noon.** Bring your own food and come for good conversation during lunch. You might want to stay afterwards for a lively Domino game with lots of laughter.

**Thursday, February 23 - breakfast at I-Hop.** Join us at **9:00!**

**Thursday, March 1 - 1:00 SAGE meeting.**

Stay tuned for dates in **March** including an interactive cooking class at Kitchen and Cork (then you eat the food prepared by the instructor), a lunch at Anjon's Restaurant, and a movie date.

### A SABBATICAL ADVENTURE

The Hilltop Guild will meet on **February 9th at 2:00 p.m.** in Wright Pavilion. **Nancy Foran will speak about her four month sabbatical experience** when she traveled to Peru, Scotland, and Canada and about building a labyrinth on the family farm in Naples.

All are welcome. If you are not a Guild member and would like to attend, please call Joan Dennison at 799-3193.

*Kathy Cotter*  
Program Chair

### FOOD PANTRY VOLUNTEER NEEDED

Food Pantry is looking for a volunteer to be on call for **six Wednesdays from February 22 through March 28**. This would be to fill any food request orders that come in that day. Please contact Cyndi Alden @ [cda@fccuc.org](mailto:cda@fccuc.org) or 799-3361 if you are interested.

### MISSION TRIP 2012 INFORMATION MEETING

Our dates are set! We're headed back to Cherryfield, Maine to volunteer with the Seacoast Mission **Sunday, July 22 – Saturday, July 28**. If your interest was peaked after our Mission Trip worship service in the fall, please plan to come to an **informational meeting on Monday, February 13<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m.** in Davidson Lounge to learn more about the Seacoast Mission and to ask questions about this wonderful mission opportunity.

Make a commitment to be a part of this mission adventure by signing up in the church office or outside the church library by **Sunday, February 26**.

Please call Scott Berry (767-0236) or Betsy Keiter (767-6182) if you're unable to attend the informational meeting, but are curious and have questions!

## Lenten Prayers for Hungry People

In the first 11 days of November our church community participated in Mission 1: a UCC event to raise awareness of food insecurity and famine in this country and around the world with discussion, letter writing and donations. As a congregation we also fed our neighbors here at home at Thanksgiving. Every week we help families through our own Emergency Pantry. The Mission and Outreach Team hopes this series of weekly Lenten prayers and actions provided by Bread for the World organization will keep us ever mindful of the hunger that persists in our community and the blessings we receive in our continued service against it.

The first two weeks of Lent are published here. The rest of lent will follow in three more Beacon publications.

### First Week in Lent (February 26 – March 3)

*Prayer:* "O Christ, we rejoice that you bring God's kingdom into our lives. Grant us faith in this good news so that we may raise our voices on behalf of those who hunger in our world. Amen.

### Per Capita Contribution

As a member of the Maine Conference UCC, our church pays a per capita contribution in May every year in the amount of \$11,220.

For each active member of our church we pay dues of \$15 per person. Look in your March envelope packet for the "Per Capita" blue envelope.

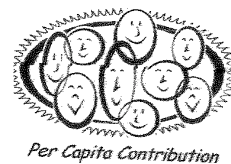
If you would/could contribute to your portion of the dues, you could help us carry the financial load of this commitment. If you don't receive envelopes, and would still like to

*Action:* During Lent, many Christians give up some favorite food. Others participate in special fasts as a way to remember those who are hungry. You may prefer to fast for just one day – or simply skip one meal. Contribute the money you save to our church or another appeal.

### Second Week in Lent (March 4 – 10)

*Prayer:* "Oh, God, you desire that all people should eat and be satisfied. As we follow Jesus and are transformed by his death and resurrection, may we spend our lives so that all may share in your bounty. Amen.

*Action:* Bread for the World's 2012 Offering of Letters urges Congress (as we can urge our own State Legislature) – during this time of intense debate about budget deficits – to protect funding for nutrition and development programs that are the lifeline to hungry people in the U.S. and abroad. Write letters to all those who need to hear your voice.



contribute for your dues, you may do so by noting "per capita" in the memo line of your check. There are also white envelopes in the pew racks where you can check the box Per capita contribution. Thank you for your all of your contributions!

Cyndi Alden  
[cda@fccucc.org](mailto:cda@fccucc.org)

**THE NORTH CHURCH BEACON**  
Published by the First Congregational Church,  
United Church of Christ  
301 Cottage Road, South Portland, ME 04106

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Portland, ME  
Permit No. 944

**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**

Post Office  
Time Sensitive Newsletter

Find us at: [www.facebook.com/fccucc](http://www.facebook.com/fccucc)