



The North Church

BEACON

The deadline for the next BEACON is at **9 a.m. Monday January 23, 2012**. Send entries to 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
<http://www.fccucc.org>

January 9, 2012

Worship

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Pastor and Pew

2

S L & W

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Youth / Seniors / EG&F

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M&O / Administration

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Looking Ahead in Worship

January 15

- 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. Fellowship time follows in Wright Pavilion.
- 11:30 a.m.** - Communion conversation in Davidson Lounge, hosted by our Education Growth and Fellowship Team.

January 22

- 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. Elsa Peters will give the message. Fellowship time follows in Wright Pavilion.

January 29

- 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.
- 11:15 a.m.** - Congregational meeting to approve a 2012 operating budget. Followed by fellowship in Wright Pavilion, and the third communion conversation in Davidson Lounge, hosted by our Education Growth and Fellowship Team.

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:

Fran Rowell following eye surgery;
Ruth Upshall following surgery for a dislocated hip, now at the Cedars;
Ann Kilgore recently hospitalized.
Jane Howard, having treatments for Early stage cancer; **Geraldine Cole**, Mike Chadbourne's mother, with cancer; **Mike Quinn**, home following knee joint replacement.

In our extended family:

Jayne Sawtelle and her family on the sudden death of her mother, Celia, in Monmouth, Maine; **Tom Saturley** and family after the murder of his second cousin, Matthew Saturley, in Coronado, California, on New Year's Day; the people of the **Thorndike Congregational Church** whose building was destroyed by fire two weeks ago; **Beryl Brink**, an active member of the choir and church many years ago, who died in Massachusetts at the age of 80. She had moved to Nashua, New Hampshire about 20 years ago and was a member of the First Church UCC there, where her funeral was held on January 9. Liza Little's mother **Patsy Little** who is receiving Hospice care.

Building Community

In the new year I finally finished a book that's been sitting on my shelf since seminary. There's enough satisfaction in this fact – but it's a topic that I feel particularly drawn to right now. I'm wondering how we build community *right now*.

Like me, you might remember how we used to do it. You may remember a time when you joined a club or found solidarity with a group of people embarking on the same journey. But, something has changed. Something huge has changed in our world so that the ways we used to make community no longer work. You can finger point at those kids with their cell phones all you want. It happened long before that. I beseech you. Please stop blaming our kids. Instead, consider how you've seen the church change. Notice how your ministers lead. Pay attention to who makes the decisions. Notice where and when people in our church really connect.

Our ministers don't have all the power. This is part of our heritage in the United Church of Christ – but this book co-written by one of my seminary professors points out that this is happening in hierarchical churches. Our tradition informs us that the individual members of our church make the decisions, but this is more widely embraced as an ideal for communal life. It's the very ideal held by the occupations on Wall Street and Lincoln Park. Decision-making is communal. There is no one person that gets to make all of the decisions. When you remove that kind of leader, something more organic happens. I've watched it in Lenten Studies and Mission Trips and really any opportunity where I don't lead. There's something that happens when people connect. It's mysterious and powerful. It's the reason that so many of us come to church. We're looking for a place where we can find that space where our spirituality connects with the rest of our lives – and we need others to be in that space with us.

In this book, *Re-imagining Life Together in America: A New Gospel of Community*, the authors Hal Taussig and Catherine Nerney seem to suggest that churches innovate with this format. What could be if we rejected the idea of a single leader? What would happen if we more fully relied upon our own answers? What could happen if we made more intentional space to pray, to share and to study together? Could we build transformative community?

There's already one group of men in our church that are trying to live into this question. They have a set of materials to lead them on the journey – but there's no leader. They will trust each other. If this sounds like something you'd like to try with members of our church, let me know. Let's see if we can truly build community.

Elsa

STEEPLE LIGHTING

The steeple is lighted the week of **January 15** in loving memory of **Virginia May Skillin** by daughter Stephanie Skillin Ambra and family; and in loving memory of **John, Madelyn and Gary C. Stephens** from Glenn and Jane Foster and family.

The steeple is lighted the week of **January 22** in loving memory of **Diane Onos** from Jerry Onos.

The steeple is lighted the week of **January 29** in celebration of **Gordon Adams'** 81st birthday from his wife Gretchen, daughter Cynthia Blanchard, son Robert G. Adams and their families.

JANUARY FLOWER & GLOBE MEMORIALS

The mission globe on the altar **January 15** is lighted by Darla Harris and family in loving memory of **Bill Harris**.

The flowers on the altar **January 22** are from Karen Westerberg and Nick and Alex Ratta in loving memory of their Father and Grandfather **Frank Westerberg**.

The flowers on the altar **January 29** are given in loving memory of **Wayne Lockwood** by Pat, Bruce, Ann, Rachel and Andrew Lockwood.

Communion Conversations

No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey, you have some thoughts about what happens when we partake of bread and cup together. Whether you have only shared in this ritual a few times, or have practiced this sacrament for many years, you have some particular ideas about what is happening at the table.

The Education, Fellowship & Growth Team invites our church family - parents, children, visitors, long-time members - to share in conversation around their understandings of communion. This isn't a conversation for experts so John and Elsa will not be leading the conversation. The Education, Fellowship & Growth Team seeks to engage you on your faith journey so that you can articulate what you think is happening when we share in this sacrament together.

The Education, Fellowship & Growth Team has asked members of the Adult Faith Formation

Committee - including Scott Berry, Gretchen Reynolds and Mike Kasputes - to serve as facilitators for this conversation. **There will be three opportunities for these conversations on three different Sundays on January 8, January 22, and February 5 (note date change) after worship at 11:30 a.m. in Davidson Lounge.**

To prepare for this conversation, we encourage you to obtain a copy of the pamphlet entitled *Communion: A Faith Practice in the United Church of Christ*. In these four pages, you'll learn what we officially believe about communion as a United Church of Christ. You'll also find the questions that Scott, Gretchen and Mike will use to lead the conversation. The Education, Fellowship & Growth Team hopes that you will come to this conversation to listen to the many expressions of this faith practice so that you can better express what you believe about this holy sacrament.

Spiritual Life & Worship Team Update

The **Spiritual Life and Worship Team** welcomes **new member Margaret O'Connor**. She has been a member since 2000, and has sung in our Meetinghouse Choir. Margaret joins Elaine Brownell, Tex Haeuser, Debbie Riley, Sue Stevens, Claude Vachon, Dana Wiggins, Sandy Hansen, and Betsy Keiter in facilitating worship services and supporting our ministers. Responsibilities of the SL&W Team include overseeing acolytes, communion and baptism, chancel arrangements, altar

flowers, greeters, ushers, worship leaders, and music.

We meet on the first Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m. in Davidson Lounge and welcome visitors. If you'd like to make a suggestion or ask a question you can email Dana Wiggins, dwwiggins@llbean.com.

Youth Ministry Calendar

Save the date for these upcoming events for our youth. Please contact Jerry Reynolds with any questions at youth@fccucc.org.

Sunday January 22
@ 9:15 AM/11:30 AM
Superbowl Sub Sale

Sunday January 29
@9:15 AM/11:30 a.m.
Superbowl Sub Sale

Saturday February 4
@4:30 PM
Lock in at the church

But, I Still Have Questions... Update

This is the second year that we've tried to innovate with some continued program for our youth post-Confirmation. We've tried to encourage that Confirmation is not a graduation but a beginning to the life of faith. We've tried to provide an opportunity specifically for our youth to capture this spirit. We called it *But, I Still Have Questions* which was led this year by **MaryAnne Wallace, Mike Kasputes and Tex Haeuser** on the first Sunday of each month.

Fortunately or unfortunately, this

hasn't generated much enthusiasm with our youth this year. Maybe it's because they are too busy. Maybe it's because this isn't the formal space they need. It's neither good nor bad. It's a mere awareness that this isn't the right thing for our youth right now – so we're going to cancel the remaining conversations for 2012 as we continue to ask our youth what they might need to support them on their faith journey.

Elsa A. Peters
elsa@fccucc.org

Thinking of Church Membership?

Join us for the next Inquirer's meeting on Tuesday, January 31, 7 p.m.

Are you new to the church? Have you been worshipping for a few weeks or few months? Have you been around for a long time and never (quite) gotten around to becoming a member?

You're warmly invited to join us **Tuesday, January 31, 7 – 9:00 p.m.** in

Wright Pavilion for an informal **Inquirers' meeting** where we'll get to know each other, talk about the church, and answer questions so you can decide whether you're ready to become a member at the 10 a.m. worship service on February 12. Please call the church office (799-3361) or send us an email (office@fccucc.org) to say you'll be there.

Men's Retreat – March 10-11, 2012

The 2012 annual Men's Retreat will be at the **Beachmere Inn, Ogunquit**, on **Saturday and Sunday, March 10-11**. Hold the date and watch for more information. Estimate cost is about \$100 including three meals and overnight lodging. There will be

plenty of time for conversation, fellowship, and free time. Contact mensretreat@fccucc.org.



SENIOR ACTIVITIES

Thursday, January 19 - Soup Luncheon at noon in Wright Pavilion. Bring your own place setting and enjoy soups and treats made by the SAGES. Please RSVP by January 13.

Thursday, January 26 - Breakfast at I-Hop at 9:00.

Thursday, February 2 - SAGE meeting at 1:00.

Wednesday, February 8 - Lunch at SMCC at noon. The price of \$14 includes tax and gratuities. Please RSVP by February 1.

Thursday, February 16 - Lunch and Fun. 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, March 1 - 1:00 SAGE meeting.

HILLTOP GUILD

The Hilltop Guild will be meeting next on **February 9th at 2:00 p.m.** More detailed information will follow in the weeks ahead.

SPECIAL THANKS

Special thanks to the **Monday Morning Bridge Group** for their thoughtful supportive donation of \$50 towards the heating of Wright Pavilion.

Cyndi Alden
cda@fccucc.org

**BEACON DEADLINES
2012**

January - 23

February - 6 & 27

March - 12 & 26



April - 23

May - 7 & 21

June - 4 & 18

As a reminder, articles should be received as you would like them to appear by 9 a.m. on deadline dates. Please email articles to beacon@fccucc.org.

Have you contributed to your Maine Conference "Per Capita Contribution" yet? The amount is \$15 per member. Please note "Per Capita" on your check in the memo line. Thank you.

Cyndi Alden
cda@fccucc.org

Thank You from Community Crisis Ministries

Thank you to all of you who supported the Community Crisis Ministries Christmas gift program this year. We helped 35 families to have a joyous Christmas, including 74 children. This gratitude goes to everybody

who shopped, wrapped, donated gift certificates, gave out presents, drove shoppers to stores, delivered presents, and also those of you who prayed for the families. Thank you for helping!

Kathy Sahrbeck
outreach@fccucc.org

Count Yourself Blessed

Good News! Thanks to you we finished our 2011 budget year in a strong position - expenditures a little lower and income a little higher than the budget we approved last January.

The Challenge! Now our Church Council's budget committee is hard at work preparing a 2012 proposed budget. *Their preliminary report shows pledges are 6-8% lower than for 2011.* So, the challenge is to maintain ministries, staff, and outreach, without incurring a significant deficit. They believe we can do better.

On Sunday, January 29, right after the 10 a.m. service, we'll hold our annual congregational budget meeting to look at Council's 2012 budget proposal(s). Please mark your calendar for this important conversation.

Before the Council finalizes the 2012 budget proposal at their January 19 meeting, consider this: if you haven't yet made a pledge or giving estimate for 2012, do so today. Every household can do something. If you're able to increase your 2012 commitment, please do so today. A small increase from each of us will have a big impact. You can:

- pledge online at www.fccucc.org/about/2012-pledge-form/
- email pledge@fccucc.org
- use a pledge card from the pew rack, or
- phone Cyndi Alden at 799-3361, ext. 103.

We can do this together.
There's Good News all around us.
Thank you. And thanks be to God!

Supper and Multi-Cultural Conversation

The Cape Elizabeth United Methodist Church invites the community to a **supper conversation on immigration, joblessness, and justice on Sunday, January 15, 5 - 7 p.m.** The time begins with a brief worship service then guided conversation,

then pizza and salad. The church is located at 280 Ocean House Road. For more information call 799-8396.

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