

THE WITNESS

WINTER 2011

Jan/Feb/Mar

WINTHROP CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UCC

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PASTOR'S ARTICLE

I am looking out my window today and see a sea of white snow blanketing the ground and sleeping trees with their branches covered with snow as I write my thoughts for this newsletter. It is definitely winter – the time of year when the ground is hidden under piles and drifts of snow while bulbs, roots, and seeds are getting ready to bring the green of spring and new life to us in a few months.

Winter is the time for resting and drinking hot cocoa and wandering through the magical outdoors on snowshoes. Winter is a time for us at church to look toward spring and dream about the warmth and abundance of summer; it is the time to plan and plant seeds for new growth in our community. We are indeed making plans for growth and new life in our ministry together.

Seeds are being planted for a 2012 Mission Trip to Rio Piedras, Honduras, to begin the Open and Affirming Process, to dream and plan for our special outdoor ministry at our church camp, to prepare for Lent and Easter, for five young people to be confirmed as full members of our church in May. These and other seeds will soon sprout and grow and bring new color and shape to the work God is calling us to do as people of Winthrop Congregational Church.

We had our first meeting in January of the Honduras Planning Task Force. We have decided to do our mission trip sometime between mid June and mid July in the summer of 2012. We will do construction work, possibly putting a roof on a school; do a vacation Bible School program for the children in the community and a health and/or medical clinic. There will be ways to plug in and use your particular gifts on this mission trip. We will keep everyone posted as we get more information about the trip. There will be some fundraisers over the next year and a half. We'll let you know what as we know. If you have any ideas for fundraisers please let us know. We will need at least two people who speak Spanish to be translators for the trip and at least one nurse or doctor to join us. If you have these particular skills and would like to join the trip please let me know. Our next planning meeting will be after church on February 13. You are welcome to come.

The Open and Affirming Task Force recently had its first meeting. There is more information in the newsletter about that. If you would like to join the task force, please come to our next meeting on February 27 after church. We are hoping Bill Walsh, the Maine Conference O&A Consultant, will join us for this meeting.

Winter is a wonderful time to dream about our church camp, to share those treasured memories you have of camp experiences, and to begin to bring shape and form to this special ministry God has entrusted us with. Please join us after church on March 6 and share your dreams and hopes for the camp. Joe Dressler, Doug Whittier, Wendy Dennis and Alice Anderman are coordinating our camp dreaming time.

I'll close with a quote from *The Prophet* by Kahlil Gibran: "In the depth of your hopes and desires lies the silent knowledge of the beyond: and like seeds dreaming beneath the snow your hearts dream of spring."

Winter blessings, Alice

LENTEN AND EASTER THOUGHTS

Lent is the 40 days (minus Sundays) before Easter when we prepare for Easter by participating in spiritual practices such as reading scripture, praying, meditating, studying, observing the Sabbath and reaching out to others. Following are some ways you can observe Lent at Winthrop Congregational Church.

Ash Wednesday – March 9, 7:00pm: Ash Wednesday Service with the distribution of ashes.

Lenten Study –Sundays March 13 through April 17 immediately after church. We will study about how homosexuality is referred to in the scriptures using the curriculum, *Claiming the Promise*.

Seder Supper – April 10 after church. You will experience the Passover Meal that Jesus ate with his disciples the night before he died through liturgy and symbolic foods. Our Jewish friends celebrate the Seder as part of their observance.

Palm Sunday – April 17 – Celebrate Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem with special music and liturgy during our 10:00 worship service.

Maundy Thursday Service – 6:30 pm in the vestry.

Easter Sunday – Sunrise Service and 10:00 am worship – celebrate Jesus' Resurrection.

FROM THE CHURCH OFFICE

The cost of office supplies like everything else is rising. I try to cut corners where possible, but I could use some help. If you would, please contribute your empty computer ink cartridges to the church. I can take them to Staples and get \$2.00 for each cartridge. There is a plastic bucket with a green cover in the kitchen behind the box for empty cans and bottles.

If you are unable to bring them to church, but are going to Augusta or where ever there is a Staples, just take them into the store and tell them the cartridges are for the rewards points for the Winthrop Congregational Church UCC, Winthrop Maine and they can look up our reward number so we will get the credit. I save the reward vouchers when they come to the office and use it towards paper, computer ink, staples, magic tape, etc. - whatever office supplies are needed.

This has proved in the past to help keep the cost of office supplies down a bit for the church. I appreciate your help with this project.

Peace and Blessings,
Office Administrator,
Marie Pettengill

BCCC BASICS

The one outstanding mission for this January thru March period will be our campaign for One Great Hour of Sharing. We anticipate that March 20th will be donation day for this needed project. This mission provides assistance to displaced persons who have been uprooted from their homes because of a variety of disasters. Also, support is given to enable people and communities to rise above hunger, disease and other problems they face that would deny them personal dignity.

At the request of Rev. Alice, our committee will send Margaret Imber as our representative to the Honduras task force even though Margaret will be unable to take part in the trip. Kay Webster will continue as committee chairman with the exceptional assistance of the other members of the board!!

Submitted by Kay W.



Honduras in Central America and Honduras Flag (classroomclipart.com)

WOMEN'S GUILD NOTES

Luncheon for the Ladies

On Wednesday, January 26, 2011 Debbie Burns and Carol Ellingwood invited the wise and talented elder ladies of our church to join them for lunch in the vestry. Debbie and Carol wanted this to be a time to get out of the house and have some "girl social time." A light lunch of soup and sandwiches will help warm our bones, as the conversation warms our hearts! Tea and a small dessert treat were served.

The ladies arrived to see tables in a square decorated with a colorful tablecloth, and different colored napkins. A lovely place setting was available for each lady.

Debbie and Carol had Menus listing home made food items. The ladies had choices of soups, sandwiches, desserts, and beverages.

Soup: Carrot, Cream of Cauliflower, Vegetable, and Squash, Fennel, and Pear.

Sandwiches: Turkey W/ Lingonberry Mayo, and Ham and Cheese. They had the sandwiches on a variety of breads.

Dessert: Mincemeat Tarts w/Vanilla Ice Cream, Ginger or Chocolate Tea Cookies.

Beverages: Assorted Teas, Coffee, and Water.

After the ladies had all seated, Marie P. asked God's Blessings for Debbie and Carol for providing the meal, and for those of us there to enjoy the wonderful food and fellowship. Then Debbie and Carol served us just like we were in a restaurant. We were all pampered, and boy did that feel good. Debbie and Carol took time to sit and enjoy the meal with us.

There were eighteen ladies of the church that attended this special luncheon. Debbie and Carol did all the work of making and cooking the delicious food, setting up and taking down the tables, cleaning the kitchen, and putting everything away.

Thank you Debbie Burns and Carol Ellingwood for this thoughtful gift you have given us today. It was a wonderful time had by all, and it was very much appreciated. God Bless You both.

Submitted by,
Marie P

CE MATTERS

The Christian Ed Committee has been busy making plans for the confirmands. We will be attending a service at the Catholic Church on February 12th at 4:00 p.m. with a short Q & A time with a priest after the service. The confirmands will also be participating in a church service soon. We will be raising money for their trip to Boston to feed the homeless and attend a church service on the Common.

All of our children will be selling carnations again. Delivery will be February 13th. Proceeds from the flower sale will be used to purchase additional carnations for delivery to our shut-ins. We will need help with the delivery and are hoping that we can get some volunteers to go with the children and their parents to visit and deliver the carnations. Please let us know if you would be willing to help with the deliveries.

As always, we need teachers and helpers in the Sunday School. Please let us know if there is a week that you are available to teach or help with the children. A sign-up sheet is posted outside the Sunday School door. Your participation will be greatly appreciated.

REMINDER: We are still collecting bottles and cans to help provide camperships for Pilgrim Lodge. You can just leave them outside the Sunday School room and we'll take it from there. Thanks for your support.

*Susan Mauro, Chair
Board of Christian Education*



gospelgifs.com

A VISIT TO THE UCC WEBSITE

Change the World

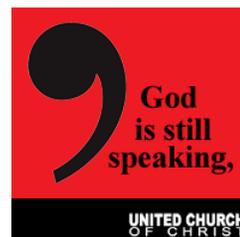
An old, popular UCC bumper sticker once proclaimed, “To believe is to care. To care is to do.” Or, as the book of James puts it in the New Testament, “Faith without works is dead.”

If there's any single trait that UCC members share in common, it's our commitment to building a better world. Our faith compels us to change things – through our advocacy, our service, our financial gifts, our prayers and our personal growth and understanding. In the UCC, ‘witnessing’ is not insisting that others must believe exactly as you do. Instead, we witness to our love and faith in Jesus Christ by working for justice for the marginalized and oppressed.

Here you'll discover how the UCC works with its members to make good things happen at home and around the world. Join us!

- Child sponsorship
- Disabilities & Mental Illness Ministries
- Disaster Response
- Environmental Ministries
- Global Ministries
- Health Ministries
- Justice
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender
- Media Justice
- Racial/Ethnic Ministries
- Refugee Ministries
- Volunteer Ministries

<http://www.ucc.org/change-the-world/>



OPEN AND AFFIRMING TASK FORCE

For some time now, our church has talked about becoming an "Open and Affirming (ONA)" church. The God is Still Speaking Campaign was a good prelude to the ONA process. The Open and Affirming Task Force invites you to join us in taking the next step.

According to the UCC website, "to say that a setting of the UCC (local church, campus ministry, etc.) is 'Open and Affirming' means that it has publicly declared that lesbian, gay, bisexual (LGB) people (or those of all "sexual orientations") are welcome in its full life and ministry. It bespeaks a spirit of hospitality and a willingness to live out that welcome in meaningful ways."

The Open and Affirming (ONA) Task Force met for the first time on January 23rd to begin to explore what it means to be an ONA church. To kick off this process, we are sponsoring a Lenten Study called, "Exploring How Homosexuality is Addressed in the Scriptures" beginning on March 13, 2011. We will meet in the vestry after church and enjoy a light lunch of soup and salad. Rev. Alice will facilitate study of the "Claiming the Promise" curriculum, which includes scripture readings from 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Galatians 3:23-29; 5:13-23:6:15; Romans 1:26-27; Psalm 139:1-18; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; 16:14; Genesis 19:1-29; Leviticus 18:22; 20:13; Luke 10:25-37; 2 Corinthians 5:17-20; Matthew 5:43-48. The Lenten Study will run through March 13th to April 17, 2011 with a break on April 10th when the confirmation class will sponsor a Seder.

We are excited to begin this process, and welcome and encourage everyone to participate. During our Task Force meeting, we talked about many issues, including how to make our church more accessible for people with disabilities and how to maintain a welcoming environment for individuals from all socioeconomic backgrounds. There is a lot for us to think and talk about! Our goal is to establish an environment where all church members feel safe expressing thoughts, feelings, concerns, or questions. So, "wherever you are" in your journey around these issues, please join us.

Submitted by Amy T.



<http://www.ucc.org/lgbt/>

THANK YOU NOTES

We want to thank all our friends here at church for all your cards, prayers, and delicious meals brought in to us this past year, in our time of need.

Bless You All,

Ethel and Sonny

My Dear Church Friends,

Thank you for thinking of us with the beautiful Poinsettia..

2010 was a difficult year for us healthwise, but we have high hopes for 2011.

And wish all of you a happy and healthy New Year too.

Sincerely,

Don & Gerry

Rev. Alice and Church Family,

I just wanted to say "Thank You" for all your prayers and hugs and such that I have gotten through this past year and before.

It has meant a lot to me to know that so many people care, and what a wonderful support group that I have in back of me.

May you and yours have a wonderful New Year.

Laurie E Rollins

Verse from the card:

It's hard to find words nice enough to thank people nice as you!

The card says it well... it really is difficult to find words to adequately convey my thankfulness for the prayers, food, telephone calls, and cards that I received following Bob's illness and after his loss, and then following my surgery.

Once again, thank you everyone. This is one super caring Congregation.

Always,

Dayle

The poinsettia is lovely! Christmas wouldn't be the same without them.

Your kindness is most welcome!

Hope

To WCC

Thank you for the lovely poinsettia I received yesterday. I am sorry I didn't hear you. I spend most of my time in bed as since I'm not feeling well.

My daughter and granddaughter are coming up Thursday. I now have my first great granddaughter, I will be seeing her Sunday. She is 7 months old now. I've only seen her twice. She lives in Mass.

I am wishing you and your families a Happy New Year.

Thanks again for the poinsettia.

Helen Scott

Dear Church Family,

Thank you so much for the gift of the lovely Christmas Poinsettia.

I am enjoying it still, as well as the thoughts of your kindness.

Dianne Maxwell

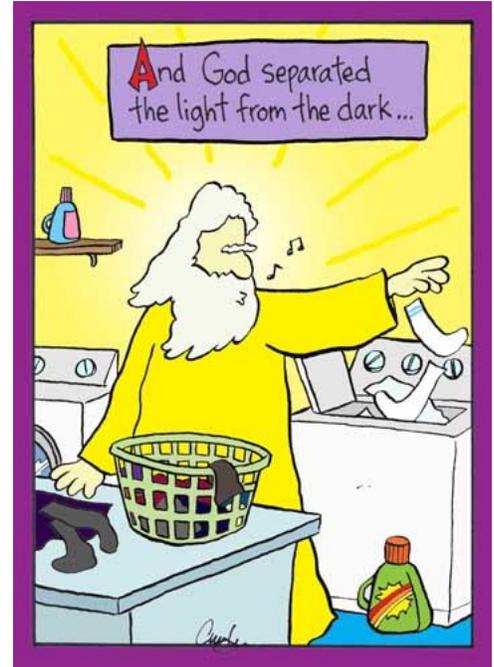
BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

January Birthdays		January Anniversaries			
2	Kelly deWolfe	1/31/76	Alan & Carol Ellingwood		
3	Helena Muller				
7	Brint Darlington				
17	Derek Hall				
18	Tom Dressler				
21	Korynne Eldridge				
24	Gerry Edgar				
28	Martha Hewett				
29	Sarah Dressler				
February Birthdays				February Anniversaries	
1	Jason Ridley			2/19/77	Ron & Nancy Dyer
3	Tom Irwin				
5	Kristin Morgner				
6	Brett Hiendlmayr				
8	Nora Conrad				
10	Dina Blodgett				
11	Irma Rice				
12	Anna Brown				
14	Pat Culp				
20	Debbie Burns				
15	Milton Hadley Jonathan Whittier				
27	Cindy McDonnell				
March Birthdays		March Anniversaries			
3	Peter deWolfe	3/5/88	Peter & Lisa deWolfe		
10	Kris Hatfield	3/20/92	Dina Blodgett & Sandra Smith		
11	Wilma Sorenson Barbara Enman				
15	Mike Burns				
25	Kristin Brown				
28	Carol Ellingwood				
29	Ruth Emerson				

If any birthdays/anniversaries were missed, or if there are any errors, please let Dina know.

PRAYER LIST

Connie & Pat	Myra
Ann Dixon	Ethel and Sonny
Patrice Merritt	Maxim
Peter Coulton	Laurie Rollins
John Richardson	Steve Gilman
Gail Richardson	Trevor
Fran Burns	Our Military Men & Women
Don Dyer	People who are suffering from violence of any kind
Dayle Ashby	People suffering from Mental illness and addiction of any kind
Ernie Henderson	
Sally Pelletier	
Roger Rollins	
Michael Hamlin	



WCC is now on Facebook

Visit us at

<http://www.facebook.com/home.php?sk=lf#!/pages/Winthrop-Congregational-Church/146739145356709>

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The Witness

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