

**Old South First Congregational Church
United Church of Christ**



Dear Church Family,

As I write to you today, we are in the middle of the church season called “Epiphany,” which stretches from the wise men’s following a star to baby Jesus, to the transfiguration of the adult Jesus on top of Mt. Horeb. Epiphany is a season of light; it literally means “visible appearance,” or “divine revelation.” Just as the infant Jesus was a divine revelation to the wise men, so Jesus in his ministry and transfiguration was the visible appearance of God’s love at the heart of humankind.

I often see God’s light shining in our congregation. This past Saturday, as I told some of you, I stood in the happy noise of our monthly Community Lunch and realized that I was witnessing the grace of God. The original vision for this outreach into our wider community to feed both those who need food and those who need fellowship, was right there before my eyes. People were there not only to eat, but to have fun and to share with each other. There are now several “regulars” from the wider community who are happy to be back together – as well as new people each time we serve this special meal. And the Old South kitchen crew, from Chef Stan and organizer Rocell to the dozen or so who faithfully show up to help each month, enjoy both serving others and the chance to catch up with each other!

By the time you receive this Telstar, Epiphany will be almost over, though God’s light will continue to shine through the monthly Community Lunch and other ministries at Old South Church. Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent, is on February 6th this year. As you will read more about later in this issue of Telstar, Lent is a more meditative, prayerful season in the church year. In Lent we seek to rid ourselves of whatever stands between us and God, as we join Jesus in the wilderness. This wilderness time may seem

dark in comparison with Epiphany, but remember – the wilderness is a place of opportunity and promise as well as a place of danger and temptation. When Jesus came out of the wilderness and his temptation by Satan, his real ministry of healing and wholeness began. What ministries might we be called to strengthen or to develop? Our Lenten meditation may lead us to some answers.

In the meantime, thanks be to God that we are on this journey of faith together, listening for the still-speaking God!
Cathie

p.s. As we move forward together, I encourage all of you to attend our February 10th Annual Meeting – making decisions about our church together is what Congregationalism is all about. Members are particularly encouraged to attend and to vote – and friends are more than welcome to come and listen!

***Rev. Cathie is out of town February 18-24.
Please call the church office in a pastoral
emergency.***

Attention!

Annual Meeting – February 10, 2008

Please plan to attend our Annual Meeting, and bring a finger food to share! The meeting is right after worship, and childcare is provided. If you would like a preview of the reports, they will be available in the narthex at least one week before the meeting. If you take a copy and plan to come to the meeting, please bring your copy back with you.

Don't
Forget! 

NOTICE

**TO THE MEMBERS OF THE
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCH, UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST, OF
FARMINGTON, MAINE:**

**YOU ARE HEREBY
NOTIFIED that in accordance
with the By-Laws of the
Church, the ANNUAL
MEETING thereof will be held
on Sunday, February 10, 2008,
immediately following the
worship service -**

- 1. To approve the 2006
Annual Minutes, taken
February 11, 2007.**
- 2. To receive annual
reports and consider the
same.**
- 3. To elect officers and
members of boards and
committees.**
- 4. To approve the annual
budget for 2008.**
- 5. To approve the
formation of an ad hoc
Financial Study
Committee.**
- 6. To approve the
recommended changes
to the current By-Laws.**
- 7. To transact such other
or further business that
may properly come
before said meeting.**

**Dated at Farmington, Maine,
January 10, 2008.**

Brenda Scribner, Clerk

Thanks to our retiring volunteers!

This is a time of thanksgiving for those volunteers who have worked so hard for our church family!

Stewardship: Dale Bardo

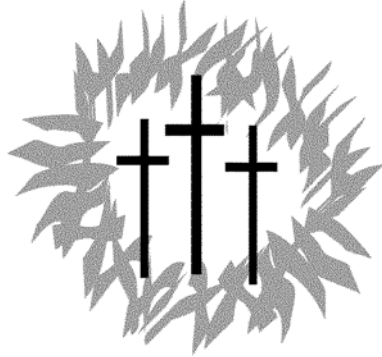
Diaconate: Wendy Huish and Stan Wheeler

Outreach: Erica Connolly

Hospitality: Jean Longyear and Marilyn Hylan

Franklin Association: Myrna Vallette and Shirley Waddell

And a special thank you to our retiring Treasurer, Charley Murray, who stayed on an extra year to help out!



The Church Season of Lent *February 6-March 22, 2008*

Lent is “in between” time. It is that season between Epiphany and Easter, between Jesus’ transfiguration on the mountaintop and the shouts of “Hosanna!” and “Crucify him!” as we strain our necks and push our way through the crowds to glimpse Jesus in Jerusalem during Holy Week. The “in between” time of Lent is forty days, not including Sundays. In this time, we, like the nation of Israel and Jesus before us, are called into the wilderness to prepare for something new. We may be reluctant to go. The wilderness can be a place of blinding sands, heightened senses, and heavy thoughts.

But it is here, in the wilderness, that we might meet Jesus. For the wilderness is, in Lent, both our destination and our way ahead. It is a stark landscape where we confront our limitations and failures. But it is also an

opportunity to take a reflective break from our busy lives. It is the path to newness.

Lent, from the Old English word for “springtime,” starts on Ash Wednesday, February 6th. Historically, Ash Wednesday is the start of a season of repentance; the ashes have represented our mortality. But Ash Wednesday can also mark the beginning of a time for healing, for self-reflection. The journey from ashes through the darkness of Good Friday is not easy, but we do not make it alone. The wilderness leads us, after all, to green pastures and new life.



**Service of Ashes and Healing Prayer,
February 6th, 6 pm, Newman Wing Chapel**

Our annual service of ashes and healing prayer will be held in the chapel. The cross of ashes on our foreheads signifies our mortality and our need to turn to God (the word “repent” means “to turn”), as well as God’s love for us in all of our humanity. The healing prayer emphasizes the beginning of Lent as a time of self-reflection and healing. Join us for either or both of these spiritual traditions, or just to be a part of our worship together as we begin the journey of Lent.



**Wednesday Evening Lenten Worship
Opportunity**

February 13 and 27; March 5 and 12

In addition to Ash Wednesday, there will be worship services in the Newman Wing Chapel at 6 pm on four Lenten Wednesdays. Each service will include prayer and responsive music, drawn from the Taizé and Iona communities. Please join us as we journey together during Lent. And please let Rev. Cathie know if you would like childcare provided for this or any other Lenten worship opportunity.



Our Lenten Worship Calendar (in addition to our regular Sunday worship celebrations)

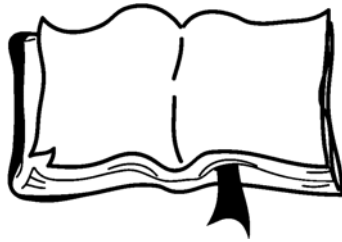
- Ash Wednesday, February 6th, service at 6 pm in the Newman Wing Chapel.
- Wednesday evening Lenten services: February 13 and 27; March 5 and 12.
- Maundy Thursday Worship, March 20th, 6 pm.
- Good Friday Ecumenical Service, March 21st at noon, at Henderson Memorial Baptist.
- Easter Sunrise Service on Voter Hill.
- Easter Worship Celebration, 9:30 am (after our traditional Easter Breakfast!)



2008 Lenten Reflection Book

Available

Thanks to our dear Stu Cameron, who has collected and collated this year's Lenten Reflection Book, you will be able to pick up a copy starting on February 3rd in the narthex. Thank you, Stu!



Our February Lectionary Readings

When she plans Bible Study, Rev. Cathie usually chooses texts from the Revised Common Lectionary that is used by the majority of mainline Protestant churches in the U.S. The lectionary for February, with the themes offered for each Sunday by the UCC, is as follows:

- *February 3rd, Holy Encounter: Exodus 24:12-18; Psalm 2 or 99; 2 Peter 1:16-21; Matthew 17:1-9*
- *February 10th, Wilderness Encounter: Genesis 2:15-17, 3:1-7; Psalm 32; Romans 5:12-19; Matthew 4:1-11*
- *February 17th, Respect and Challenge: Genesis 12:1-4a; Psalm 121; Romans 4:1-5, 13-17; John 3:1-17 or Matthew 17:1-9*
- *February 24th, Water, Word, Witness: Exodus 17:1-7; Psalm 95; Romans 5:1-11; John 4:5-42*

The Close of a Chapter: the Heart of Christianity Group Finishes the Book!

Since September, 19 individuals in our congregation (plus Rev. Cathie) have been reading and meditating and challenging each other and loving each other and worshipping together in the group that has been reading Marcus Borg's The Heart of Christianity. They are: Rina Bardo, Babbie Cameron and Stu Cameron (before their departures), Karyl Condit, Roger Condit, Nelia Farmer, Penny Hood, David Jenckes, Sherry Jenckes, Gretchen Legler, Chris Magri, Amanda Murray, Charley Murray, Roy Scribner, Shirley Waddell, Dick Waddell, Tim Wallace, Donna Wheeler and Stan Wheeler. January 31st was our last gathering, when we shared our faith in different ways and broke bread together. And - in the ending are new beginnings!

DEACONS' CORNER:

Introduction of our new peace globe in worship on February 10th!

In February we will be introducing a new symbol and worship aid to our sanctuary: an illuminated Peace Globe to be located in the place of the Advent Candles that grace our sanctuary for four weeks in December. Other UCC congregations in Maine have peace globes already. As we focus our eyes on the light and the cross of Jesus Christ, each Sunday the globe will direct our line of vision to the amazingly beautiful and fragile earth we inhabit. Our plan is to use the globe to pray for particular regions of the world -- perhaps asking for an end to strife and pain, perhaps hoping for a reversal of environmental degradation, perhaps including in our intercessory prayers the well-being of our UCC mission personnel and volunteers who serve overseas. The globe can be turned to illuminate a new part of the world, as needed. The light from inside the globe will guide our prayers for peace and justice in various corners of the earth according to Rev. Cathie's leading.

The idea for a Peace Globe originated in Old South's Justice and Witness Ministry, and was approved unanimously by this group on December 11. From there the proposal was presented to the

Diaconate, which unanimously approved it on December 16, and then finally to Executive Council, which unanimously approved it on January 9. We hope that you will come to be as enthusiastic about this development as we are.

The Peace Globe is a prayer tool for all of God's world, all of God's beloved children, similar to the Peace Poles some of us have seen in various sites. As the Prince of Peace came into the world to reconcile all people to God, so, too, our prayers for reconciliation, healing and an end to suffering for this beautiful planet will rise up like incense before God, illuminated, inspired by the visual aid of a new Peace Globe.



***Mark Your Calendars for the 2008
Women's Retreat – August 8-10 at
Rockcraft Retreat Center***

The 2008 Retreat Committee is already at work planning for our time together in August at the holy ground that is Rockcraft Retreat Center, on Sebago Lake. Sign-ups will begin in April; scholarships are available. We will keep one-third of the spots open for women who have never attended. Keep an eye out for them and mark your calendars!



We hold in our prayers

Cheriese and Romany Shanti and their new daughter, Rowan Fionn

Tom Marcellino's mother

Lewis Holbrook's mother, Sylvia

Roy, Brenda and Michelle Scribner, and Chris Hunter

The Waddell Family on the loss of Dick's brother, Bill

Shannon and the Russo Family

Harry Wyckoff

Michal and Michele

Lewis and Shirley Holbrook's granddaughter and her husband,

Kim and Dustin, both in Iraq

John Anderson, Ruth Haszko's brother, deployed to Iraq

Service men and women and their families

Victoria Hilton

Barbara Keirstead's cousin, Suzanne French

Carrie, Carl Backman's cousin, on the death of her husband

Nelia Farmer and her family

Candice Giles

Rachel & Gerard Silverstone

Noah and his children

Chris Merchant's family at the loss of her mother

Gretchen Legler and her mother

Noah and the Folger family

Patricia Hayden's granddaughter, Brieanna

Randall Parsons

DeeDee and Duke Ramsey

Jackie and Fred Ranco, Arin Hilton's parents

Pattie Schoen's niece, Gabrielle Grace and her family

Cheriese's friend, Melissa

Tom and Rocell Marcellino's aunt, Norma "Bunny" Saltmarsh

Linda Fournier's daughter and granddaughters

Mary Catherine Vernig, Dale Bardo's niece

Chris Hunter's friend, Vicki Walker

Kathleen, the daughter of Chris Hunter's friend

Priscilla Ames

Christian Nickerson

For those who are in abusive relationships

For those with Alzheimer's, and for those who care for them

For those caring for their aging parents, and for those parents

For those continuing to be affected by past natural disasters

For all who are struggling with substance abuse problems

and for those who love them

The people of El Junco and our brothers and sisters in Honduras

If you have a prayer request that you would like to have added to the prayer list that appears in our bulletin each Sunday, please call the church office (778-0424). Thank you.



Lend a Hand



To Those In Need

Outreach and Mission at the Eastward

If you are interested in being part of a local housing ministry, this opportunity might be for you.

Join Old South's 3rd annual work crew for Mission At The Eastward's summer housing program. We will be working for one week at some point during the summer doing general repairs, painting and small carpentry projects for local senior citizens or low income families. Everybody is welcome even if (like me) you can't drive a nail straight. There is something for everyone to do. If you would like to help out but can't come for the whole week,

that's ok too.

Please let me know soon if you are interested (or sign up in the Vestry). Also let me know if there is a certain week that you know you won't be available.

Shelley Griffith

Thank You!

Hats and Mittens 2007

It was great to see the box overflowing with mittens and hats for SAD #9 which you so generously donated in December. The totals were 19 pairs of mittens, 10 pairs of gloves, 17 hats, 1 pair earmuffs, 1 scarf and 1 pair of socks. these were given to the school nurse, Pat Mellen, and will be distributed as needed. The school teachers write me that they are very grateful for these gifts from Old South. Thank you to all who contributed.

Polly Howatt
for the Outreach Committee



JUSTICE & WITNESS MINISTRY

In January, Justice & Witness Ministry showed a film, "Why We Fight", by Eugene Zarecki. It was a sobering look at the political, industrial, military process that has brought the U.S. to its current position of dependency upon war, as warned by former President Dwight E. Eisenhower in his farewell speech. The movie is educational and insightful. Watch for notices about future movie nights.

Justice & Witness meets on the second Tuesday of each month, at 7 pm, in the Newman Wing Chapel. All are welcome.

FARM BILL UPDATE

Otto von Bismarck famously said that laws are like sausages: it's better not to see them being made. The making of the 2007 Farm Bill has indeed been ugly to watch. In December, not long after our congregation sent a second batch of letters to our senators, the U.S. Senate took up the bill -- with underwhelming results. The Lugar-Lautenberg "FRESH" amendment, which would have cut the massive subsidies for five commodity crops (corn, cotton, rice, soybeans, and wheat) and redirected those funds to programs favored by us and by Bread for the World, failed by a 37-58 vote. The Grassley-Dorgan and Klobuchar-Brown-Durbin amendments would have provided more limited reforms, capping subsidy payments at \$250,000 per household and ending payments to couples making more than \$750,000 in net farm income. Frustratingly, these two amendments failed despite receiving majority votes in favor (56-43 and 48-47): in order to avoid a filibuster by Sen. Blanche Lincoln (D-Ark), Democratic leaders in the Senate agreed to require 60 votes for passage. At least our letters may have made a difference with the Maine delegation, as Sen. Olympia Snowe voted for two of these three amendments and Sen. Susan Collins voted for all three (and cosponsored the FRESH amendment).

The unamended \$286 billion Farm Bill then passed the Senate 79-14. It has some positive features, such as over \$2 billion dedicated to "specialty crops" (a.k.a. fruits and vegetables), but it is disappointing overall given the diversity of groups nationwide that had pushed hard for serious reform this year. But don't lose hope, it's not over yet! The Farm Bill now goes to conference to iron out differences between the Senate bill and the House bill passed in July; looming over the negotiations will be President Bush's threat to veto any bill that looks like the current House or Senate version. (The Bush

administration favors much deeper subsidy cuts -- as do we.) The Senate bill passed with a veto-proof majority but the House bill did not (231-191), so the threat is meaningful. We'll keep you posted as the sausage-making proceeds.



GIFTS OF TIME AND TALENTS

Many thanks to so many of you who filled out and turned the Time and Talents forms Jan. 6! So far we have received 52 forms. We are delighted to have your names matched with the various categories. This makes recruiting so much easier for the many activities in our church community. If you have not filled out a form, we would encourage you to do so. The forms are available at the church or the church office. Any questions you might have please call Betsy Riley at 645-2884 or Shirley Waddell at 778-9915.

REACH OUT

Community Luncheon

The January Community Luncheon was another successful venture by any measure. We served 130 meals total, the vestry was nearly full, and everyone seemed to enjoy both the meal and the fellowship. AND, we had new people who came for the first time! Cathie spoke with one group of people who came for the first time and they said they would be going right home and marking the date on the calendar for February's meal. Cathie told us that as she looked out to all the folks sitting in the vestry waiting for the meal service to start, she felt as if the "vision" had been attained. A special thank you to Sherry Jenckes, Anne Wehrman and Wendy Oakley who combined efforts to make 11 dozen biscuits!

The February menu will be: Roast loin of pork, applesauce, mashed potatoes and gravy, and mixed vegetables. In honor of Valentine's Day, we will serve chocolate cake for dessert.

The sign up sheet will, as always, be posted on the kitchen door. As our ministry continues to be successful, we are always in need of folks to help out. Please check on the sign up sheet for ways in which you can be a part of this ministry.

Stan Wheeler
Rocell Marcellino, Co-chairs

InnerRhythm Beat – Karyl Condit

In this column, I have been sharing from the book When the Drummers were Women: A Spiritual History of Rhythm, by Layne Remond. (Our drums are Layne Redmond drums).

With the arrival of Aryan conquerors to Europe, Middle East and Egypt (1500 B.C.) came patriarchal religions. Their traditions fused with the indigenous goddess cultures to create a great, sometimes confusing, body of mythology of the classical times. In the classical world of male and female deities music and rhythm was central to every ritual. “Its power could protect and purify; it could drive away negative influences. It aligned the consciousness of the devotee with the divinity.” In ancient ritual, “to pray was to dance to the rhythm of the frame drum.”

By the second century B.C. as society progressed from agrarian to trade-centered, from worshipping the feminine to those who followed a patriarchal religion, the drum’s new function shifted to military purposes. The effort to supplant goddess worship with worship of a masculine god (the Storm God) became a battle of good vs. evil. We can read in the Bible in Kings and Chronicles that this was no easy task. In 2 Kings 17:41, we learn that “even while these peoples were worshipping the Lord, they were serving their idols. To this day, their children and grandchildren continue to do as their fathers did.”

The desire to connect with the Divine Feminine remained strong even as Christianity spread in the region. In an attempt to suppress women’s voices and music, “Women are ordered not to speak in church, not even softly nor may they sing along or take part in the

responses, but they should only be silent and pray to God.” (Circa A.D. 375) “Christians are not allowed to teach their daughters singing, the playing of instruments or similar things because, according to their religion, it is neither good nor becoming.” (Circa A.D. 576)

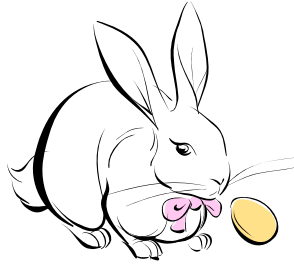
It would seem that change came hard in those times, as it does today. Fortunately ,today in the United Church of Christ we embrace worship in many forms. Christian “rock” music, sacred dance, peace chants, dramatic depictions of scripture, art, drumming....are all means of worshipping and celebrating the One who created and loves us all It is our hope that InnerRhythm will bring to our worship that connection with our ancestors who expressed their faith through their God-given gifts of music, rhythm and dance.

InnerRhythm welcomes new members at any time. Drums are available. We practice on Tuesdays at 5:30 P.M. in the Nursery of the Newman Extension. For more information, feel free to call Karyl at 778-3722.

JOIN US!

The Foothills Freestyle Drum Circle, featuring a variety of percussion, meets the first Friday of the month at 6:30 P.M. in the chapel of the Newman Wing. Come join us!
For more information, feel free to call Karyl at 778-3722.

YOUTH CORNER



GOURMET EASTER BREAKFAST

Join us for Food and Fellowship

When: Easter

Where: Old South Church

Time: 8:00am

This free breakfast is sponsored by the Youth Group as a thank you to everyone in the church for supporting us! See you there...



I would like

to thank Rebekah Dunham and Tracy Ladd for all your help with the 4th and 5th grades youth group. Together we had a lot of fun and fellowship!

Sueli



Christmas Offerings: a Wonderful Abundance!

At both of the services held on Christmas Eve at Old South, we collected an offering for the Franklin County Ecumenical Heating Oil Fund – and took in over \$2,300 – what a wonderful abundance! Thanks be to God!

*With Heartfelt
Gratitude*

Thank You to the Old South Community

Words can never come near to expressing our gratitude for the love and concern shown to our family since Roy's illness. From the bottom of our hearts we thank everyone for your prayers, cards, letters, phone calls, emails, food, snow removal, visits to the hospital, financial assistance, providing transportation and rides for

Roy to go to appointments and meetings. But most of all we thank you for the love from which all of this flows. The Old South community is truly a “Love Zone” and we have been lifted up on the wings of your prayers and that love.

Thank you,
Brenda, Roy, and Michelle Scribner



Join in . . .
A Volunteer Opportunity
Fellowship and Coffee Hour

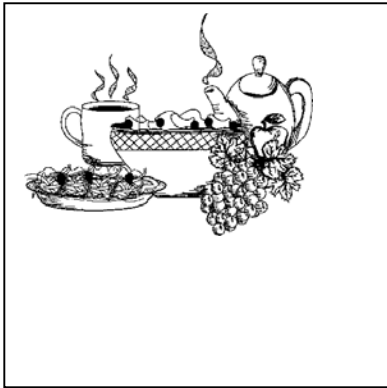
Please sign up for coffee hour! The Hospitality Committee invites you to help them serve up fellowship on Sundays in 2008. Members of the Committee are always on hand to help, but they need additional assistance from volunteers on a regular basis. There is a sign up sheet posted in the vestry by the stairs coming in from the university parking area. Please sign up today to help host, provide food, etc. For more information, you may speak with Debbie Davis Robinson or any coffee hour host on Sundays!



Altar Flowers

If you would like to sign up to provide flowers, please see the sign up sheet posted in the vestry to sign up for a date. You can make

the arrangements for the flowers to be delivered to the church or bring them to the church on Sunday mornings. If you would like your flowers noted in the bulletin as a memorial or celebration, contact Phyllis at 778-0424 by Wednesday of each week. Thank you!

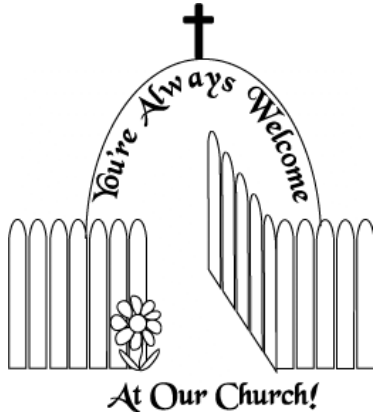


Attention Retirees:

Please join us at the February Retiree Lunch on February 4th! Please bring a dish to share with others at this fellowship meal. We look forward to seeing you there!

Telstar deadline

The deadline for submitting articles for the March Telstar newsletter will be **February 12**. Please note, this three day earlier deadline is due to the fact that Phyllis will be taking some time off during the week of February 17, and she will need time to get things ready for printing before she is able to leave. Thanks for your help!



*Please join us for worship on Sundays at 9:30 am!
Communion is served on the first Sunday of every month, and on Communion Sunday you are invited to bring food contributions for the local food pantry.*

A thought to take with you

Grace is a large word. It includes unmerited love, forgiveness, second chances, surprises, reframings, epiphanic breakthroughs, whole paradigm shifts. It is a word that reaffirms the gift character of all that we are and have. It is an organizing force in every life story. Grace comes to us before birth and sees us through. Grace is the context in which creation lives and moves and has its being. We dwell in it. We float on it. We are saved by it, again and again, and so can afford to risk and venture and fail and fall, because we fall into the arms of a gracious God who allows us to try again.

Marilynn Chandler McEntyre

