

Old South First Congregational Church
United Church of Christ



2008 **JANUARY** Telstar

Dear Church Family,

Welcome to Epiphany, the church season of light! We celebrate the coming of the light of the world, Jesus the Christ, for five Sundays. This is a time of holding fast to the light that shines in the darkness – a light that the darkness can never overcome.

Epiphany is my personal favorite of the seasons of the church. If we are happy at this time in our lives, our joy is magnified by God's light. If we are saddened or feeling alone, Epiphany reminds us that our God will never leave us, and that even when it seems dark, the light of God is holding us.

Certainly, there is much that is light at Old South these days, even in the darkness of winter. We celebrate the light of the world, Jesus Christ, within and among us. We celebrate the kids and youth on our chancel steps – their questions and their laughter. We celebrate our music and our musicians. We celebrate our elders, whose wisdom and strength continues to inspire and guide us. We celebrate the Spirit of Love in our community and the ways this Spirit moves us out of our comfort zones and into a living of our faith.

*We have much to be thankful for in this season of God's light. God is good, all the time!
Blessings and love,
Cathie*

Rev. Cathie's Door is always open!

While Rev. Cathie has office hours one day a week, her door is always open by appointment, so please don't hesitate to call (778-0424) or e-mail (cathiewallace@aol.com)!

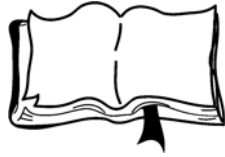
Offering of Time and Talents on Epiphany Sunday – January 6th!

On Epiphany Sunday, January 6th, we will celebrate the gifts that we offer to God through Old South in a special dedication. If you don't have your copy of the Time and Talent questionnaire from our December Telstar, there are copies available in the narthex (the room that you enter just before coming into the sanctuary) for you to pick up. At the offering time, our gifts of time and talents will be brought up the aisle to put in the manger that Stu Cameron lovingly created for us before he and Babbie left for Arizona. Just as the wise men of old brought gold, frankincense and myrrh to baby Jesus, so we offer our gifts of love and service to the God we worship. Thanks be to God!

One special time and talent offering that is being given to our church family each month is the opportunity to receive monthly blood pressure check ups from our own Wendy Huish. Wendy will meet with those of you who would like to be checked in Room Matthew in the Newman Extension just behind the kitchen on the last Sunday of each month following the church service. Wendy will be available on January 27th this month. Thank you, Wendy!

Attention!

Save the date: Sunday, February 10th
after church is our Old South Annual Meeting and Potluck! Only church members vote, but all are welcome! Bring a finger food to share.



Monday Bible Study Continues in January!

We gather again on January 6th, 14th and 28th! All are welcome at this open Bible Study - each session is freestanding, based on the Bible passages Rev. Cathie is preaching the following Sunday. It is casual and you don't have to talk if you'd rather not - all are welcome!

Lectionary Readings for January

January 6th: Isaiah 60:1-6; Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14;
Ephesians 3:1-12; Matthew 2:1-12.

January 13th: Isaiah 42:1-9; Psalm 29; Acts 10:34-43;
Matthew 3:13-17

January 20th: Isaiah 49:1-7; Psalm 40:1-11; 1
Corinthians 1:1-9; John 1:29-42

January 27th - Isaiah 9:1-4; Psalm 27:1, 4-9; 1
Corinthians 1:10-18; Matthew 4:12-23



*Want to join a small dinner group?
Please call the church office (778-0424)!*

Stewardship for 2008

This fall's Stewardship effort focused on the intergenerational nature of giving at *Old South*. We have noted that one-third of today's operating income comes from an endowment bequeathed by our predecessors. In the same spirit of giving forward, we have advocated accelerated payment on the Church's loan so that the next generation inherits a church unencumbered with debt.

The response of our church family has been gratifying. As of mid-December, 82% of people who pledged for 2007 have pledged again, and there are five pledges from people who have not pledged before. The total amount pledged equals 88% of goal, and we are reasonably confident that pending pledges will fulfill the remaining 12 percent.

Pledges are welcome whenever people feel able to make them. However, the Executive Council must finalize a proposed 2008 operating budget in early January—so a prompt response would certainly facilitate the budgeting process.

While emphasizing past and future generations, we should also recognize the generation that inhabits *Old South* today—those who encourage each other's faith and spiritual growth, those who provide sanctuary for individuals who feel discouraged or oppressed, those who create an atmosphere of joyful worship, and those whose hands reach out to people in need.

May God continue to infuse this church community with a spirit of infectious generosity.

The Stewardship Committee,

Rocell Marcellino Eric Gunther Stu Cameron
Carl Backman Megan Roberts Dale Bardo



Justice & Witness Ministries will be showing the movie *"Why We Fight"* Tuesday January 8th - 7:00 pm at Old South. It focuses on President Eisenhower's farewell address in which he warns the U.S. about the power of our military-industrial complex to be our undoing as a nation. It then goes on to look at the escalating dominance of that very system in our common life over the past decade. It presents a very evocative picture of where we are today and how we got here. Please join us!



***Martin Luther King, Jr. Ecumenical Service,
January 21st***

The FAEM Martin Luther King, Jr. service will be on January 21st, at Franklin Memorial Hospital, at noon. Observing the 40th anniversary of Dr. King's assassination, there will be a film of Dr. King as the centerpiece of our worship, which is co-sponsored by the hospital. All are welcome!

A DIRECTORY OF OFFERINGS AT OLD SOUTH

In response to requests to the Outreach Committee, here is a listing and description of the major offerings we accept contributions for during the year at Old South in addition to our regular pledged giving. We hope that this will make your giving planning easier.

THE FIVE YEARLY UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST OFFERINGS:

† ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING (FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT)

The money from this offering is used for world-wide ministries of the UCC. The focus is three-fold: to build sustainable communities, to respond to world-wide disasters with both short-term and long-term assistance and to advocate for the over 30 million refugees in the world.

† STRENGTHEN THE CHURCH (PENTECOST SUNDAY)

This offering supports leadership development and growth, especially in new or struggling congregations. It furthers the UCC's commitment to be a multiracial and multicultural church.

† NEIGHBORS IN NEED (FIRST SUNDAY IN OCTOBER)

Neighbors in Need supports justice and compassion ministries throughout the United States and Puerto Rico. One third of the offering goes to advocacy for American Indians. The rest is dispersed in the form of grants to organizations or congregations that seek to address justice issues either through public policy advocacy or through direct service.

† THE CHRISTMAS FUND (THE SUNDAY BEFORE CHRISTMAS)

The Christmas Fund honors clergy and other church workers in the form of supplemental pensions, health premiums and emergency assistance to low-income, retired church staff members and their families.

IN ADDITION TO THESE FIVE SPECIAL OFFERINGS, OLD SOUTH ALSO PROVIDES FOR THE FOLLOWING MISSIONS EITHER THROUGH SPECIAL OFFERINGS OR BUDGETED GIVING:

OUR CHURCH'S WIDER MISSION

OCWM is the administrative umbrella for all UCC offerings, national ministries and conferences. The amount we send to OCWM each year is proposed by the Outreach committee and voted on with other budget considerations at Annual Meeting in February and is part of what you support with your pledge.

In addition to OCWM, there are other missions that are contributed to through our church budget each year with our pledges. You can refer to your annual reports to have a list of this mission giving.

CHURCH WORLD SERVICE OFFERINGS

The Church World Service is an ecumenical organization comprised of 35 Protestant, Orthodox and Anglican denominations in the United States. The Church World Service partners with indigenous organizations to offer world-wide disaster-relief and tools of self-reliance "for all whose way is hard". At Old South we participate in two CWS programs:

- * **TOOLS AND BLANKETS SUNDAY (MOTHER'S DAY)**
Through this offering CWS responds to disasters throughout the world, providing "blankets" and other supplies for immediate relief as well as "tools" to help rebuild disaster-stricken communities.

- * **CHURCH WORLD SERVICE KITS PROGRAM (APRIL)**
At Old South this offering is known as "Material Aides". Each year we assemble items needed to build three different types of kits:
 1. **BABY KITS** for young parents and their newborns who are victims of disaster or poverty;
 2. **SCHOOL KITS**, school supplies for children in refugee camps or extreme poverty;
 3. **HEALTH KITS** containing basic articles of hygiene for disaster victims.

The Church World Service distributes these kits to people in need all around the world.

HEIFER PROJECT (CHRISTMAS SEASON)

Heifer International provides farm animals to impoverished families around the world and teaches each family the skills needed to care for them. In return, these families agree to "pass on the gift" by sharing their animal's offspring and how to care for them with other families in need. Each year, at Christmas time we have the opportunity to buy shares of these animals as alternative gifts.

CARE AND SHARE FOOD CLOSET (FIRST SUNDAY EVERY MONTH)

Each month we collect canned food items and toiletries to benefit Farmington's food pantry. At Thanksgiving, the children collect special holiday items to assemble into Thanksgiving dinner baskets. Money is also accepted on behalf of the Food Closet.

OPERATION SANTA CLAUS AND THE ABUSED WOMEN'S ADVOCACY PROJECT (CHRISTMAS SEASON)

Each Christmas these programs provide opportunities for Old South members to support local at-risk families with needed items and Christmas gifts.

CHRISTMAS EVE COLLECTION

Each year, at our Christmas Eve services the offering that is collected supports a local mission in the past this offering has helped everything from the Ecumenical Fuel Assistance Fund, coats for children at local schools, the local food closet and more. The supported mission is identified in each year's Christmas Eve bulletin.





The next **Fair Trade coffee** order will be placed on Monday, January 28. We order by the case (e.g., a case can be as small as 6 packages of 12-ounce coffee for \$31.50) at wholesale prices . To see the product list, go to <http://equalexchange.stores.yahoo.net/>.

Please call Myrna Vallette at 778-4387, or email her at mjvallette@beeline-online.net, if you want to order any products or if you want more information about fair trade.

Youth Corner

Dear Congregation, **HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!!**

I would like to thank all of you for your support to the youth mission work at Old South throughout of the past year. We received monetary /gifts donations from the congregation for Operation Santa Claus/AWAP which permitted us to go shopping in December for both causes. We had a great time shopping and going out together for dinner.

Thank you again for your generosity.

Sueli Gaewsky



HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH /HONDURAS FUNDRAISING

I would like to thank all the youth who participated in the babysitting night at the church. We had 20 kids joining us for an evening of fun. The money raised will go to the Franklin Association/ Honduras account for youth scholarship. Thank you all!!!!

YOUTH GROUP SINGS AT PIERCE HOUSE

The 4th and 5th grades had the opportunity to sing at the Pierce House in December. We had a great time singing and visiting with the residents. Also the kids decorated holiday cookies and gave to them as a gift.

I especially would like to thank Jody Gunther for playing the piano for us, and Elisabeth Cooke for helping with the kids.

We had a great time!!!

YOUTH HELP WITH FAIR BANKS FOOD PANTRY

Youth all ages and adults had a great experience volunteering at the food pantry in December. We help to put together 500 boxes of food. Many of the kids were surprised of the little amount of food that the people got for 6 weeks. Some of them commented how lucky they are and that we should be giving more to the food pantry. The youth really have an understanding of helping others. Thank you all who came to help. Good mission work!!!!



Time to think about Lent – here are some dates!

Lent begins this year on February 6th, Ash Wednesday. That evening, we will have our first of six Wednesday evening Lenten services in the Newman Wing Chapel. These worship celebrations will begin at 6 pm and end by 6:45 pm, in time for choir rehearsal. They will be meditative services, with music from Taize and Iona. **Last year, we had a potluck supper every Wednesday at 5:00, before worship. Would a few folks like to set up for that this year?**

There will also be a Lenten Centering Prayer Group, using the book Forty Days to a Closer Walk with God by J. David Muyskens. We will set aside at least a half hour a day for reading and prayer on our own, starting on Ash Wednesday (February 6th), and the group will meet for an hour to an hour and a half (depending on the number of participants) on the six Lenten Sundays for prayer, reflection and sharing. Because we will need to order books by mid-January, Rev. Cathie is posting a sign-up in mid-December. If you have questions about this group opportunity, don't hesitate to call or e-mail her (778-0424, cathiewallace@aol.com).



Lenten Devotional

Barbara Brown Taylor, in her memoir, "Leaving Church", laments an exodus of poets from the life of the church. They are driven to other, dare I say healthier venues by the easy, rule driven, life suffocating suppositions that make impossible claims of truth and 'rightness', and seems to be driving the debates of the faith seeking.

"Bring Back the Poets" is the cry of one who is not 'leaving church'. The church which welcomed the sick and sin-filled world into its warm embrace at its inception is still the church which dares us to push the limits of our faith into realms of uncertainty with every confidence in the God who understands our thoughtful doubts. Lent seems a good time to reflect on where our faith lies, and where it might have become stuck in rigid formation. With this in mind, I am looking for poetry submissions for a Lenten devotional with a little 'bite' to them, things that push us out of comfortable centers into that which seeks to expand our horizons, even when it makes our lives a little less certain. Send your submissions by email, please, but if that is not possible, mail them to:

**70 Geronimo Drive
Sedona, AZ 86336.**

I will have to receive mailed entries, have them in my hands, by the 15th of January. The email cut off date will be January 20, 2008.

Stuart Cameron

stu_cameron@beeline-online.net



Altar Flowers

On December 2nd, altar flowers were provided by Debbie Davis Robinson in loving memory of her mother, Gayle Davis. 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 morning. 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!

Welcome!

Men's Fellowship

The January meeting of the Men's Fellowship will be on January 19th at 8:00 a.m. The menu will be waffles and bacon. The Fellowship is just that, a fellowship of the men of the church who gather informally and break bread together. It is open to all men of the church (of any age) and we welcome anyone to come join us. It is our custom to collect a \$5.00 offering at the meetings to defray the cost of the breakfast and to build up a cash reserve to be used for projects within the church.

**For more information, contact
Stan Wheeler at 778-3462.
SEE YOU THERE!!!**



Community Luncheon

The December Community Lunch was a great success! It is possible that we set a record for meals served, although we don't really keep very good records in that department. However, the vestry was full by noon, with a few people standing while we set up another table. Including some 20 + meals that we delivered we served about 160 meals in all.

Our menu for December was Stan's meatloaf, which has proven to be quite popular. Coming up on January 12th, we will be serving chicken stew over biscuits, with bread pudding for dessert. As usual, we will be asking for donations for the non meat items and dessert. We will provide a recipe for bread pudding if you need one.

As always, our need remains great for people to work at the Luncheon. Come at 10:30am to help set up tables, or 11:30am for serving and cleaning up. We also have a "peeling party" on the Friday before, usually at 9:30 or 10:00am. There will be a sign up sheet posted on the door to the kitchen. As we have discovered, the need in our community is great for people who are hungry and/or lonely, especially during the dark days of winter. If you have never helped at one of the luncheons, come on out and discover the joy of giving. If you are a regular helper, we look forward to seeing you again!

**The deadline for the
February Telstar is
January 15. Please
have all articles to
Phyllis in the church
office no later than this
date! Thank you!**

A Thought to Take with You

*When the song of the angels is stilled
When the star in the sky is gone
When the kings and the shepherds
Have found their way home
The work of Christmas is begun.*

*“I am the light of the world!
You people come and follow me!
If you follow and love
You’ll learn the mystery
Of what you were meant to do and be.”*

Jim Shraithdee, written in response to a
Christmas poem by Howard Thurman

