



COME TO WORSHIP

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The North Star

OFFICE HOURS

Monday through Friday

8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Phone: 603.225.5491;

Fax: 603.717.7037

E-mail:

secretary@concordsfirstchurch.org

Worship and Church School at 10:00 a.m.

Rev. David B. Keller, Pastor

pastor@concordsfirstchurch.org

Rev. Donald F. Jennings,

Pastor Emeritus

Upcoming Events

- February 7 Fifth Sunday after Epiphany (*UCC Women's Week*)
- February 14 Last Sunday after Epiphany/Transfiguration
(*Racial Justice Sunday / Valentine's Day*)
- February 21 First Sunday in Lent
- February 28 Second Sunday in Lent
(*Seminary Sunday / Church Vocations Sunday*)

The First Congregational Church of the United Church Of Christ

177 North Main Street
Concord, NH 03301-5039

**THE FIRST
CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
CONCORD, NH**

VOL. LXV NO. 2 - FEBRUARY 1, 2010

**GATHERED SINCE 1730
SERVING, WELCOMING, GROWING IN CHRIST**

As the New Year opens, our church is off and running in what feels like a dizzying array of ministry initiatives.

- We have begun a delightful new member program which we are calling 'the Welcome Mat.' The program is designed to build relationships as much as to share information, and it is receiving support sufficient to accomplish both goals.
- Our Stewardship Campaign is enjoying enthusiastic support from a wide variety of people eager to tell the story of First Church. I am encouraged by the early response, as well as by the hopeful spirit surrounding the effort.
- Our Cold Weather Shelter, under the capable leadership of director Sarah Greene and Volunteer Coordinator Susan Flower, is running smoothly and coordinating well with other service providers.
- Our Cabinet and other leaders are in conversation to clarify the process for receiving and managing the extraordinary gift we have received from the estate of Richmond Hoyt, and at the same time, are beginning to develop our budget for the 2010-11 fiscal year.

Our Church School is filled with children who really enjoy participating in our program, and our Christian Education Committee is exploring strategies for recruiting new teachers.

I know I could add more items to the list. It is an exciting and encouraging time in the life of our church. Two thoughts come to mind as I reflect on the work we are doing.

First, we would be making a mistake to think that all these programs don't need further support. There are some very dedicated people doing some excellent work, but their shared message is how much they would appreciate more involvement from more people. In fact, a few people in critical leadership positions are facing some significant personal challenges which are difficult to balance with their service to the church. So I simply urge any of you who may be looking for any level of increased participation to ask, 'how can I help?' I guarantee you that it is easy to match your abilities and schedule with some way to participate in the ministry and program of this church.

Second, those who are serving with such devotion and diligence need 'Sabbath time', time to rest, to realize that we may till the soil, but God gives the growth, time to reconnect with the spiritual foundations for all the work we do in Jesus' name. It can be dangerous to think that we have to keep plugging away at all these programs without giving ourselves time for rest, reflection, and renewal. In the annual rhythm of our church, January through April is our busiest time. Even during these busy months, it makes a difference to give ourselves 'mini Sabbaths,' time for prayer and reflection about what we are doing. But I would also hope that we would plan to give our leadership a generous opportunity in the spring to attend to our corporate need for renewal. I welcome anyone sharing thoughts about this with me at any time.

CONCORD UNITED CHURCHES OF CHRIST GATHER FOR ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE

For the second year in a row, the United Churches of Christ in Concord will gather to begin the season of Lent with an **Ash Wednesday service on February 17, beginning at 7:00 PM. This year, West Church, on North State Street, will host the service.** We will once again be blessed with music in the Taize tradition, supported by a choir gathered from the four congregations. Plan now to attend this service, which is not only a spiritually rich event, but an excellent affirmation of the unity of our four congregations. If you would like to sing with the choir, check with Faith Greene, Music Director at First Church.



OUR LIFE TOGETHER

FROM THE CABINET...

Cabinet has been very busy this month. We are heartened by the support of the congregation for the "Repairers of the Breach" campaign. It has helped the church maintain our current level of support for several programs. Cabinet sponsored the third annual Silver Tea at Havenwood. It was wonderful to spend time with our Havenwood residents and to see members who are no longer able to attend church. We are most grateful to Linda Lovering for her expertise and flair. The Great Room looked marvelous.

There are many sign-up sheets around in the Assembly Room. Cabinet encourages everyone to check them out, see which speak to you and sign up to attend. They range from attending meetings with new, prospective and old members to teaching Church School. There is even a sign up for our February 13 supper! Many hands are needed, many hearts will be blessed.

~Karen May

STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN CELEBRATES RECEIVING 'GRACE UPON GRACE'

"From Jesus' fullness we have received, grace upon grace." (John 1:16) This is the theme for our campaign for First Church this year. The campaign kicked off January 23 with a well attended reception during which Esther Murray challenged us to 'expect a miracle, and then work to make it happen!' We celebrated the ministries our generosity supports, and looked at what levels of giving would successfully underwrite the cost of ministry in and through First Church.

On the Sundays between January 24 and February 14, various people will invite our generous support of this current campaign. This church encourages giving by pledging, which gives each donor an opportunity to estimate the amount of your gift for our fiscal year, which runs from April 1 – March 31. You may mail in your pledge card or place it in the box in the sanctuary during worship.

Last year, this church adopted a budget which included a deficit of nearly \$60,000. Much of this deficit was paid by drawing down principal of our investments. Along with this, we agreed to make painful cuts in mission support and staff compensation. In order to avoid a deficit and even partially restore the cuts we made last year, member giving needs to increase by \$40,000, to about \$190,000. This is a significant, but important challenge. We hope every person associated with First Church will prayerfully consider a significant increase in your support of our church and its ministry. We have received so much; may we give as we have received.

FROM THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY...

The forms for giving to your church electronically are now available on the church's web site; or from the Financial Secretary. Once the form is complete bring it or send it to the church.

You can continue to make one-time donations via a credit or debit card to **First Congregational Church** at **www.YourDonationPlace.com**. Simply visit **www.YourDonationPlace.com** and follow the onscreen instructions. Secure donation services on the site are provided by Vanco Services, the same company that processes electronic donations for **First Congregational Church** and more than 10,000 other churches and non-profit organizations. We are excited to have this new way of giving available.

NOTES FROM THE DEACONS...

The Deacons met on Wednesday, January 20th. We discussed our role in the Welcome Mat program. We are responsible for the January 30th breakfast and tour of the building and the lunch on March 7th following worship.

We discussed the use of Friendship Pad information and at a meeting on January 29th talked about how we will utilize this information. We hope to have a Chrismond workshop in October for those wishing to donate an ornament.

We will use eco-friendly palms on Palm Sunday.

We discussed recruiting new deacons for the coming year, as many of us have served our terms. We believe 12 deacons is a good number. Anyone interested in doing deacon work please contact us.

WELCOME MAT

Our new member program attempts to explore our faith, our covenantal relationship with God and each other, our history and ministries, and develop relationship between new comers and established church goers. So in effect this Welcome Mat program involves all of us. On Sunday, February 28th from 3:30-5:00 p.m. we will explore our core values. **A festive lunch will occur on March 7th following worship** with sharing from current members and newcomers. New members will join our church on Sunday, March 14th with a reception following our church service. The Welcome Mat is out!

OPEN AND AFFIRMING NEWS

The Open and Affirming Committee of First Church thanks the many people who attended the showing of "The Bible Tells Me So" in December. The discussion was heartfelt and helpful. Currently, the committee is reviewing some ideas to frame our congregation's exploration of this issue. We do not have public events scheduled for the month of February. But we do value your thoughts and ideas. Members of the committee are: Gary Martin, chair, Paula Cheney, Sally Kelly, Bill Swenson, Donna Muir, and David Keller.

CHURCH SCHOOL

This is a most important ministry of First Church. We are blessed with delightful children eager to learn the faith, an excellent and user-friendly curriculum, and a capable and spirited Christian Education coordinator in Karin Swenson. All we are missing is enough teachers to sustain the program! The program is designed in such a way that people can teach for as few as two weeks at a time. If you are interested please see Karin Swenson or Eleanor Kimball (the chairperson of our Christian Education Board), or call the church office at 225-5491.

FROM THE BEYER GROUP...

The Beyer Group will celebrate Valentine's Day at their next meeting on **February 11 in the Guild Room at 2:00 PM**. Bring a wrapped gift to exchange in a "Yankee Swap" and an item for the Food Pantry. Louise Parenteau and Dot Cassidy will be our hostesses. Carolyn Andrews will lead devotions.



CHURCH WORLD SERVICE

SERVICE KITS

Beyer members invite the whole church in collecting items for Church World Service kits. We do try to make up as many Hygiene Kits and School Kits as we can. However, there is a need for all kits. A list of kit components can be found in the Assembly Room. Pick one up and try to fill as much as you feel you can, whether a partial kit or a whole kit. Or several members may join in and make up a kit. The Beyer Group plans on assembling these kits at their April meeting. Thank you.

Church World Service (CWS) is helping to meet emergency needs in the aftermath of the devastating January 12 earthquake. Within 24 hours after the quake, CWS and its partners began providing basic supplies, prepositioned in the Dominican Republic. It is working with partners to provide water, food, temporary shelter and health assistance. Having worked in partnership in Haiti since 1954, CWS will also help to support communities in the long struggle to rebuild

CWS KIT ASSEMBLY:

Hygiene Kit contains:

one hand towel (approx. 16"X 28", no fingertip or bath towels)
one washcloth
one wide-tooth comb
one nail clipper
one bath-sized bar of soap
one toothbrush
Six Band-Aids
Items should be sealed in a 1-gallon plastic bag with a zipper-like closure.

School Kit contains:

one pair of blunt scissors
three 70-count spiral or tape-bound pads of 8" X 10 1/2" ruled paper. (no filler paper, please)
one 30 cm. ruler (12")
one hand-held pencil sharpener
six new pencils with erasers
one large eraser
one box of (24) crayons
All items should be packed inside a cotton cloth bag (approx. 12" X 14", or 14" X 16" finished-sized) with handles. Patterns for the bag are available.

Baby Kit contains:

six cloth diapers
two t-shirts or undershirts (no onesies)
two washcloths
two gowns or sleepers
two diaper pins
one sweater or sweatshirt
two receiving blankets (one can be a hand-knitted or crocheted baby blanket)

Founded in 1946, Church World Service is a relief, development, and refugee assistance ministry of 35 Protestant, Orthodox, and Anglican denominations in the United States. Working in partnership with indigenous organizations in more than 80 countries, CWS works worldwide to meet human needs and foster self-reliance for all whose way is hard. Within the United States, Church World Service assists communities in responding to disasters, resettles refugees, promotes fair national and international policies, provides educational resources, and offers opportunities to join a people-to-people network of local and global caring through participation in CROP Hunger Walks, the Blankets+ Program, and the Kit Program.

For more information about Church World Service, visit www.churchworldservice.org

PROGRAMS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

....A Place for Bible Study

This season's study will explore the Old Testament book of the Prophet Hosea. Hosea was a prophet who spoke passionately of God's compassion for God's people in spite of

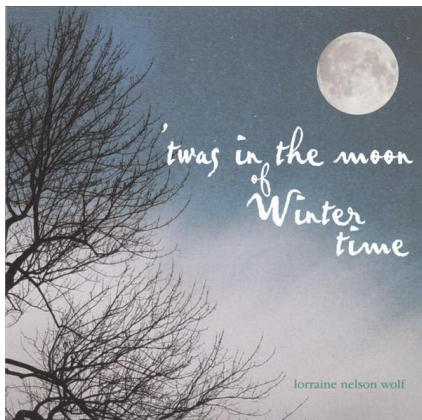
the people's disobedience and worship of false gods. He used his own marriage as an illustration of God's love – he had married a woman who left him, and then they reconciled. Such is God's love for all God's children – ready to receive us when we are ready to return. The study will run through March, always on **Thursday's at 10:00 a.m.**

CONCERT AND SPECIAL WORSHIP CELEBRATES CLOSE OF STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN

We have engaged the exceptional music ministry of Lorraine Nelson Wolf in concert **Saturday evening, February 13, and as worship leader on February 14.** A pianist, accordionist, harpist, and composer, Lorraine has played on the stages of Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center, and the Lincoln Center. She composed the theme music for CBS's NASCAR series! She also has been a deeply committed church musician in her home denomination, the Reformed Church in America. Most recently, she was the organist and choir director of the Hopewell Reformed Church in Hopewell Junction, NY.

The concert Saturday evening will follow a dinner in our dining hall which will begin at 5:30. This dinner is served, except that we are asking people to bring home-made breads in celebration of our Stewardship Campaign theme. We will accept an offering for Lorraine, her husband and daughter, who will be performing with her. *This is a must-hear event! Plan to attend, but also, invite friends to attend!*

On Sunday during our regular worship, Lorraine will present an original song written for and about us, and will share more of her remarkable ministry of music with us as we conclude this year's Stewardship Campaign.



NEW ENGLAND UCC WOMEN GATHER FOR CELEBRATIONS VIII IN MARCH

Ladies: there is still time to register for Celebrations VIII being held in Burlington, VT **March 12, 13 and 14.** Registration forms are in the Assembly Room or you can register online at www.uccwomenscelebrations.org, or email Eileen Lovett at eslovett@msn.com.

This year's theme is TOGETHER BUILDING BRIDGES...a time to break down and a time to build up...Ecclesiastes 3:3. An impressive and varied list of forums and workshops based on building bridges to peace, understanding and love are planned.

A United Church of Christ Women Leaders of New England event, "Celebrations" began 32 years ago and is held every four years. The Women's Guild of First Church has offered scholarship aid to those attending.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH



FOOD PANTRY NEWS

"Someone will not go hungry tonight because of what you do today."

February begins the doldrums in the life of the Food Pantry. The holiday giving by individuals and groups has been used and enjoyed by the almost 2400 people we served in December and January. Winter weighs heavily on those in need of food. Lugging groceries home in the rain, sleet, and snow becomes difficult.

Meanwhile, the Food Pantry personnel are visiting the Food Bank in Manchester more frequently looking for bargains. We pay .18 cents per pound for food there, however often there is free food on the floor or in the freezers at the Food Bank. We are very thankful for all who remember the Food Pantry each week with a can of food or a donation of money. A gift of shampoo, soap, zip lock baggies, teabags or instant coffee will be appreciated by all. Thank you for your faithful support of this mission which feeds the hungry of our community.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH CONTINUED...

FROM THE BOARD OF MISSIONS...

HAITI EARTHQUAKE APPEAL RECEIVES GENEROUS RESPONSE

As of January 25, First Church has passed over \$1600.00 along to Church World Service, whom we have designated as the recipient of our concern for the victims of the earthquake in Haiti.

Church World Service has successfully shipped emergency supplies into the disaster area, and has set up field operations in a border town in the Dominican Republic and in the Christian School of Parisien. Some of the hygiene kits our Beyer Group assembles are now finding their way to Haiti! You can learn more about Church World Service's efforts by clicking on the link on the home page of our Web site. You can donate by placing your gift in the Sunday offering, or online from that link on our web site.

David and Lindy's daughter Grace is in Haiti with a group called Mutual Aid Disaster Relief for Haiti. The teams associated with this organization are working in the camps, offering first aid care and injury assessment, and transporting people who need more extensive care to available hospitals. Grace expects to be in Haiti until February 3. You can learn more about her group's work at www.mutualaiddisasterrelief.com. She is with Team Two.

FROM OUR COLD WEATHER SHELTER DIRECTOR...

COLD WEATHER SHELTER PLANS EXTRA TRAINING

People continue to express interest in volunteering in our Cold Weather Shelter. We are blessed with an exceptional team of volunteers – as many as 150 people make this important program possible. We are well covered this year, but we do have open positions on our 'backup' teams – people who agree to be on-call in the event that a regular volunteer cannot serve.

We are offering a brief orientation for new people interested in volunteering on **Tuesday evening, February 2, from 7 – 8:30p.m.** Anyone is welcome to come.

We are pleased to be cooperating with the emergency family shelter being set up in the Crutchfield Building. People who come to the volunteer training here will receive information about how to volunteer in that program.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION...

PEACE AND JUSTICE TASK FORCE

In accordance with our conference Peace with Justice Task Force we are offering an opportunity to sign letters to our senators Judd Gregg and Jeanne Shaheen urging ratification of the COMPREHENSIVE NUCLEAR TEST BAN TREATY. We will have the letters to sign after church during the month of February.

~Sally & King Kelly and Atossa & David French

H1N1 CLINIC A GREAT SUCCESS

The Capital Area Public Health Network administered a free H1N1 Flu Clinic in our building on January 5. A total of 130 people received the vaccine at this clinic. Many of those receiving the vaccine were students in the ESL class which meets in our building. We also had people who use our food pantry and shelter receive the vaccination, along with a few church members.

Leigh Cheney, the Public Health Coordinator who organized the clinic, sent us this note:

"We really enjoyed the clinic and your staff was absolutely gracious and welcoming. The morning ESL participants were so much fun to serve. They were so happy and positive. The Lutheran Services staff was a tremendous help! We had several interpreters and were able to get them through the process without any hitch.

"The experience left a lasting impression on me and has given me the enthusiasm to finish up this vaccine season! Honestly, that day was what this is all about-serving people in the community who might otherwise not have access to H1N1 vaccine. Thank you for facilitating a very successful vaccination clinic!"

PLEASE LET THE CHURCH KNOW IF YOU ARE HOSPITALIZED

For reasons unknown, many people from First Church who have been hospitalized recently have not come up on the church list. Please, if you or someone you know is hospitalized call the church office and let us know.



BLESSINGS AND THANK YOU

RICHMOND HOYT LEAVES BEQUEST TO FIRST CHURCH

The estate of Richmond Hoyt, a longtime member of First Church who died in 2004, recently announced a

bequest to First Church in the amount of \$578,000. This is the largest bequest which this church has ever received. At this time, the bequest remains with the trust company which had been managing it as church leadership clarifies the process for receiving it.

Richmond Hoyt was born in 1910 to parents who were members of this church. He was confirmed into membership here in 1926. He worked in the payroll unit of the NH State Highway department, and brought his understanding of sound financial practice to his service here at First Church. He was twenty-five years old when our previous sanctuary burned in 1935, and he served on the committee which oversaw the building of the new sanctuary. He also served as a Deacon, a Trustee, and a Head Usher, and late in life he was among the group of people who gathered to assemble our newsletter. After serving in the Second World War, he married Elizabeth, a lifelong member of South Church. The couple had no children, but were close with a number of nieces and nephews. When Richmond died in 2004, he had been a member of our church for 78 years, longer than anyone else! Richmond's estate provided for Elizabeth's care until her death, which took place in the spring of 2009.

The Hoyt bequest is the latest in a number of generous bequests by which loyal members of this congregation leave a legacy which continues to support our ministry. It reminds us of the great importance of planned giving, by which we may continue to support this ministry after we have died. We thank God for the generosity these loyal members. If you are giving thought to your legacy, and would like to explore ways by which you can remember your church, please contact Pastor Keller or Treasurer Linda Baines. We can put you in touch with a trained counselor who can help you explore options.

MANY THANKS

Thanks to Rev. David Keller for his visits and prayers, to my friends for the cards and calls, and of course to the Women's Guild for the beautiful yellow carnation. God Bless

~Carol Parker



Helen West passed away January 4, 2010. Cards can be sent to her husband George West at 36 Edgewood Drive, Contoocook NH, 03229.

Priscilla Briggs passed away January 7, 2010, predeceased by her husband Arthur.

IN MEMORIAM

To John and Anne Hoar's 15th great-grandchild, Ryder Stone Mousseau, born January 27, 2010 to Melanie and Jordan Mousseau.



February Birthdays

February 2010

- 3 Bradley Huntoon
- 3 Margaret Lower
- 3 Earl Young
- 6 Kent Huntoon
- 7 Erik Hardy
- 11 Christina Pollock
- 12 Ruth Dodge
- 12 Beverly Smith
- 13 Nancy Ward
- 19 Elizabeth Hardy
- 20 Carol Hovey
- 21 Gary Martin
- 24 Mark Langille
- 24 Harold Todd Jr.
- 25 Ryan Colby
- 25 Karin Swenson
- 27 Mildred Pearl
- 27 Dot Riley
- 28 Norma Ordway

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2 1pm Female Charitable Assoc. 7pm Shelter Training	3 1:30pm Pastors Aid Mtg 6:30pm Cabinet Mtg	4 10am Bible Study 7pm Chancel Choir	5	6
7 10:00am Worship & Church School Communion Sunday 3:30 Welcome Mat Program	8 7pm Women's Guild at Havenwood	9	10	11 10am Bible Study 2pm Beyer Group 7pm Chancel Choir	12	13 5:30pm Dinner and concert w/ Lorraine Nelson
14 10:00am Worship & Church School	15	16 9am Merrimack Assoc. Ministers Bible Study	17 5:45pm Exec. Comm. Mtg. 6:30pm All Boards	18 10am Bible Study 7pm Chancel Choir	19 9:30am Spiritual Directors Peer Group	20 9am Prepared to Serve
21 10:00am Worship & Church School	22	23 7pm Bell Choir	24	25 10am Bible Study 7pm Chancel Choir	26	27
28 10:00am Worship & Church School 3:30pm Welcome Mat Program						
						March 14 "Welcome New Members"!

WOMEN'S SUNDAY

Our annual Women's Sunday will be celebrated **February 7** at First Church. Members of the Beyer Group taking part in this service are: Roioli Schweiker, Jeanne Cate, Carolyn Andrews, Louise Parienteau, Esther Murray and Dot Cassady. Add the bell choir playing and a special communion service will make this a service you do not want to miss!



PRAYER MINISTRY

We continue to pray in the Walker Chapel from 8:30 a.m.-9:00a.m. Monday through Friday. We pray for our members during their birthday month, we pray for those who need healing, we pray for the activities of our church, and for our church employees. We pray for those whose life situations are changing, we pray for family and friends who have a dear one pass away, and we pray for our brothers and sisters in Zimbabwe.

If you have a prayer need please leave your request in the prayer box located in the right hand niche of the Walker Chapel as you walk in. Our prayer is for a new year of God's abundance of all good things from above.